

# Editorial

In his introductory remarks to the first issue of *Perspectives*, issued in 1993, Otto Pick, the first Chairman of the Editorial Board, eloquently highlighted the main reasons for launching the journal. Among these reasons, the need for an academically relevant publication written by Central Europeans about Central Europe was the most outstanding one. Looking back at the two dozen issues of the journal published so far, we cannot but conclude that this plea was fulfilled – *Perspectives* has succeeded in presenting a wide variety of views from both academics and political leaders, whose contributions have covered virtually all aspects of political relations between Central European countries.

Yet in the course of years, the focus of *Perspectives* has been changing – not so much geographically, but rather concerning the type of articles published. In this sense, the journal has not only provided commentary on topical developments in international politics in Central and Eastern Europe, but reflected the evolution of relevant academic disciplines in post-communist societies. Originally, the vast majority of contributions to the journal were translations from the two Czech-language journals published at the Institute of International Relations, and *Perspectives* thus constituted a platform instrumental in promulgating these internationally. Similarly, the average article's length did not usually exceed six or eight pages, thus being just a brief, albeit concise, introduction to the subject rather than a full-length article exploring new academic territories of international politics.

However, the growing emancipation of the disciplines on which the journal drew, and greater confidence of authors began to bear fruit some five years after the inception of *Perspectives*. The first articles with a theoretical edge gradually started to appear in the second half of the 1990s – to name just a few notable examples: Jiří Šedivý's exploration of theoretical aspects of Czech foreign policy; Ondřej Čísař's analysis of the shifts in ideational structures about international institutions; and Pavel Barša's essay on the limits of the nation state. This increasing theoretical awareness has been accompanied by formalisation and greater rigour in the reviewing process. A strict peer review by at least two anonymous referees is now required for all published articles, and contributions are consequently divided, in accordance with generally accepted scholarly standards, into research articles, discussions and consultations. Efforts in this direction have been rewarded by the rising reputation of the journal internationally. The two most welcoming developments have been first, the considerable expansion of the range of authors to include scholars from beyond the Czech Republic and the region; and second, the growing number of databases which index and abstract articles appearing in *Perspectives*, including EBSCO, ProQuest and ABI/INFORM Global.

All of these trends being sound and healthy, the switch to two co-editors (Petr Kratochvíl and Petr Jehlička) is not meant to divert the above-described evolution, but to accelerate the process by inviting more articles dedicated to

theoretical explorations of the key challenges for Europe, and Central Europe in particular. To illustrate this point, in the issues to come we would like to address such topics as neutrality and its compatibility with European integration, and theoretical approaches to the EU neighbourhood. The heightened emphasis on theory will be accompanied by a more active PR strategy, aiming both at more publicity for the journal in the region and Europe and at the expansion of the ranks of contributors both from the region and further afield.

Although the changes the journal will experience in the next decade or so are likely to be somewhat less radical than those of the past 13 years, they will nevertheless be critical for fulfilling our ultimate goal of making *Perspectives* the leading forum of scholarly exchange on Central European international politics. While we as editors-in-chief are dedicated to this goal, it will largely be up to you – contributors and readers – to fulfil this ambition.

*Petr Kratochvíl and Petr Jehlička*  
*Editors-in-Chief*