REVIEWS AND ANNOTATIONS

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The new issue of Prague Law Faculty's open source electronic periodical offers a set of working papers on various topics. The following provides a general outline of their content. Their full versions can be downloaded free of charge from http://www.prf.cuni.cz

Helena Hofmannová contributed a paper titled **"Small, but Ours": The Czech Features of Authoritarian Methods of Governance.** In her paper she tries to show the changes in the constitutional rule of law system of the Czech Republic from the inside to provide readers the relevant information accompanied by a critical analysis of the domestic context. She argues that we should certainly not be appeased by the fact that in other Central European countries the dismantling of constitutional democracy is at a much more advanced stage, for the steps are taken slowly and usually tend to be difficult to identify at the beginning. At one hand, the critical evaluation of political dynamics may seem disproportionate from the point of view of constitutional law, because in every constitutional system we find certain phenomena that can be considered to be within the boundary of acceptability. At the same time, the situation of the Czech Republic does not reach the seriousness of neighboring countries, such as Hungary or Poland, because there are no negative normative changes to the constitutional order. However, in relation to both arguments, the analysis of constitutional risks stemming from political programs aspiring to authoritarian forms of government should be highly critical. The risks to the constitutional system cannot be underestimated, especially with regard to the values at stake and the knowledge that the possible deconstruction of democratic rule of law is a very difficult process to remedy.

Ondřej Svoboda focused his paper on **The EU Investment Policy in Asia in the Light of 'Dawn of An Asian Century in International Investment Law'**. He argues that after its gradual establishment, the investment policy of the European Union experienced turbulent times when the EU and the United States commenced negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Trade and Investment Partnership. While the public and political focus concentrated on the transatlantic relations with the United States (TTIP) and Canada (CETA), the EU has steadily progressed at different paces with third countries in Asia where it commenced trade and investment negotiations with Singapore, Vietnam, Myanmar, China, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia among others. His paper seeks to evaluate how the Union has been successful in its "Asia strategy" in the field of investment negotiation and promotion of its reform approach to the investment protection regime. It offers an overview of the EU investment negotiations with the individual partners in the Far East and explores these relationships and their potential implications. It concludes that it is not surprising that the EU already persuaded the first countries in this region about its novel approach because of their strong motivation to conclude agreements with the EU that will 'modernise' and 'harmonise' the existing investment protection. On the other hand, challenges persist as it remains to be seen in which direction Asian actors will push for in the development of global investment governance.

Miroslav Jakab wrote a paper about **Effective Regulation, Legal Certainty and The Conundrum of Online Platform Self-Preferencing.** His article deals with the phenomenon of online platform "self-preferencing" – a situation when an online platform provides more favourable conditions for its own activities on the platform related to the offering of goods or services in comparison with its competitors present on the platform. This phenomenon is described from the viewpoint of competition law and the new regulation dealing with online intermediation services and internet search engines. The latter regulation specifically aiming at online platforms does not allow for many substantive conclusions on the topic. The recent competition law case law also does not give many clear

hints how to treat self-preferencing activities of online platforms, which can be viewed as problematic at least. In absence of clear sector-specific regulation dealing with substance, it will remain the task of competition authorities to set more complicated remedies ordering concrete action of the undertaking instead of a simple prohibition. The author believes that competition law does not necessarily have to be the best suited tool used to resolve some of the more general questions concerning online platform self-preferencing. Instead, a case for substantive sector-specific regulation is made.

Heorhi Kolas devoted his contribution to **New Trend in the Constitutional Law of Post-Soviet Autocracies. Transit of Power: To Leave Without Leaving.** His article deals with constitutional reforms in post-Soviet countries and identifies a new trend in constitutional development in the region. The purpose of this article is to distinguish specific waves of reforms in the constitutional order of post-Soviet countries that had the aim to prolong the rule of presidents, giving special emphasis to countries with authoritarian regimes. The article mostly focuses on the reforms in Kazakhstan in 2011 and 2017 and a newly proposed draft law on constitutional amendments in the Russian Federation. Apparently, "to leave without leaving" scenario is most acceptable for authoritarian leaders. Therefore, parts of it have already been adopted in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. However, recent news from Russia may indicate that it is no longer a privilege of the Asian patrimonial regimes, but rather a trend in all post-Soviet autocracies. And lawmakers in countries such as Azerbaijan and Belarus will certainly keep the "Kazakh scenario" in mind in the nearest future. And, of course, the further spread of this trend in the creation of new "almighty-authorities" and "super-governmental bodies" with titles like "the Father of the Nation" undoubtedly will raise even more challenging issues in the science of constitutional law.

Václav Šmejkal*

* Associate Professor, JUDr. Václav Šmejkal, Ph.D., Charles University Law Faculty, Prague and ŠKODA AUTO University, Mladá Boleslav, Czech Republic