

## Preface

The major social and structural upheavals in Hungarian society since the collapse of communism, coupled with increasingly open discrimination, have had a disproportionately large and negative impact on Roma, whose low social status, higher unemployment rate, lack of access to proper education, and isolation make them relatively unable to defend themselves and their interests.<sup>1</sup> These facts – almost unchanged in the last decades – underline the growing responsibility of actors of different social spheres, so thus representatives of social sciences are also addressed.

The science of public administration is rather a whole collection of sub-disciplines dealing with public administration using distinct methods. Nevertheless, some disciplines do have a major role, as they consider the study of the main aspects of public administration their key task. These are the science of administrative law, political science and management sciences. Related to our topic – the Roma and public administration in Hungary – it's an intrinsic question that scientific researches must show this 'inner multidisciplinary', because of the fact that there are huge gaps between the content of political statements, the content of legal instruments and the facts of everyday life in many aspects. Accordingly, this volume tries to give a complex analysis revealing facts and connections concerning the relationship between Roma organisations and governmental entities.

During the presentation of the structured connection of the Hungarian public administration and the Roma and their organisations, the consideration of at least two examination aspects is necessary: first the approach sketching the main features of the law system, the broader legal system and those of law enforcement practice is reasonable, second – almost as importantly – the examination which describes and assesses 'reality' in a wider social scientific framework and through (public) policy features and processes. At the same time, it makes it possible to compare the given phenomena with the similar phenomena of other countries, which, on the one hand, gives the opportunity to broaden the research involving further scientific actors, and on the other hand, may provide more objective results.<sup>2</sup>

Among both the general features of the legal system reflected in administrative law and in its broader public policy features there are some which are relatively stable – providing a high level of stability and permanency even in case of certain political and legal changes. This is why we are able to detect several broader contexts of the given issue, by which the authors were led to further conclusions, as well.

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1 Rights denied. The Roma of Hungary. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, 1996. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1996/Hungary.htm> (20. 04. 2015)

2 See e.g. Martina Künnecke, Tradition and Change in Administrative Law: An Anglo – German Comparison. Springer, 2010. 266.

The current publication was realised by the members of the Lajos Lőrincz Research Centre for Public Law of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Fortunately, since 2009, the Roma ministry has been the main mission focus of the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), and so RCH – as maintainer of the Károli Gáspár University, Budapest – consciously and generously supports a wide range of scientific researches concerning the Roma in Hungary.

We have to add that the given project doesn't have serious scientific antecedents, so the results may serve as a base (starting point) for further analyses. The lack of accessible scientific results also comes from the fact that even if there are publications based on investigations concerning the administrative aspects of the Roma issue in Hungary (Roma self-regulation, minority self-governments, discriminative practices of Hungarian public administration against Roma people, the social relations of public administration in general, the various consultation mechanisms), these publications are usually not reachable in English.

This volume makes an attempt to introduce all the most important aspects of the relationship in question. The scientific analysis of the whole of Hungarian public administration, or its particular authoritative or functional fields, is traditionally presented from three aspects – the *task*, the *organisation* and the *staff*.<sup>3</sup> In the era after 1990 new emphasis was laid on constitutional and (public) policy issues and their (more) extensive analysis. So, we tried to introduce our topic along these four 'traditional' aspects.

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3 Public administration is at the same time an activity, a specific organisational structure and a 'mass' of people (staff). See: Lőrincz Lajos: A közigazgatás alapintézményei. HVG-ORAC, Budapest, 2005. 19.; Ficzer Lajos (ed.): Magyar államigazgatási jog. Általános rész. [Hungarian administrative law. General Part.] Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1998. 7–8.; Fábrián Adrián: Közigazgatás-elmélet [Theory of public administration] Dialóg Campus, Pécs-Budapest, 2011. 21.