

*Consolidation  
or Fragmentation?*

The Size of Local Governments  
in Central and Eastern Europe

*Edited by*

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# Foreword

This book was prepared under the “Local Government Policy Partnership” Program, which is a joint project of two donor organizations. The British Government’s Department for International Development (DFID) and the Local Government and Public Service Initiative (LGI) of the Open Society Institute, Budapest launched this regional program jointly. The “Local Government Policy Partnership” (LGPP) projects intend to contribute to policy development and innovation in these countries (<http://lgi.osi.hu/lgpp/>).

LGPP hopes to develop expertise and to support professional cooperation among local government specialists throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Parallel to this, experiences from this region should be made available in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Central Asia. The core partner countries are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. However, other countries have been invited to participate in these regional projects, which would help direct information exchange and comparison of policy efforts.

LGPP publications include policy studies and proposals discussed with government officials and experts in the countries involved. Targeted beneficiaries of LGPP projects are national government ministries, local government associations, research and training institutions, and individual local authorities throughout the CEE region. LGPP intends to publish three studies each year.

In the first year of LGPP operations, the following three policy areas were selected for analysis: (i) education financing and management; (ii) regulation and competition of local utility services, and (iii) public perception of local governments. The policy studies were widely disseminated throughout our region. They supported the policy dialogue (e.g. on education in Macedonia) and served as training materials (e.g. for regulatory experts).

Topics for the second year of LGPP (2001/2002) were rather different by nature:

- a) decentralization and regional development;
- b) relationship between local government size, local democracy and local services delivery;
- c) local government and housing.

This volume touches the most critical issues of decentralization reforms: how democratic institutions and procedures, public service efficiency and size of local governments are interrelated. Evidence and lessons from countries with fragmented local government structures (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia) are compared

with countries having traditionally large local authorities (Bulgaria, Poland). Beyond these country reports, the comparative chapters in this book specify the conditions and components of each basic policy option.

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September, 2002

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