

EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues and friends,

We are pleased to present the first issue of our journal, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Studia Territoria*, for 2020. Among other things, this issue features three original articles about contemporary history and socio-economic developments in the nations of Europe and the wider European cultural area.

Opening this issue is a contribution by Rachel Gould and Aron Tal on the population policies of the State of Israel. Their contribution is a result of our call for papers, made in 2019, entitled “Towards Sustainable Development: Environmental Agenda from Political, Economic, and Social Perspectives.” In their article, Gould and Tal provide a thorough review of the current debate on the nexus between population and the environment, seen from the angle of broader efforts to promote sustainable development. They argue that it is impossible to achieve sustainable development without appropriate population management. Using Israel as a test case, the authors discuss the public policy options available to high-fertility countries for addressing the environmental challenges they face due to continued population growth.

The second article contributes to knowledge about the socio-economic history of Germany. The focus here is on the German consumer cooperatives and their reconstruction in the post-WWII period. Consumer cooperatives, or coops, were self-help organizations that emerged as the nations of Europe industrialized. They were owned by the people who used their services and run for their benefit. Drawing on documents from local archives in Germany, Jana Stoklasa tells the story of the denazification of the coops and the restitution of the property that was expropriated from them by the Nazis, in the context of a divided Germany during the Cold War. She argues that these processes largely failed because they were not accompanied by critical self-reflection on the Nazi past on the part of the coops, their members, and German society as

a whole. She illuminates this missed chance for a “new beginning” with the help of a micro-historical study of the consumer cooperative society in Hannover, Lower Saxony.

The third article describes the perilous quest of Czech Roma for equal educational opportunities following the 2007 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*. This ruling by the ECtHR was a milestone in the jurisprudence of educational rights. It found that the common practice of placing Roma children in “special schools” was indirectly discriminatory under the European Convention on Human Rights. Filip Sys analyzes the impact that this precedent-setting decision by the ECtHR had on Czech Roma with regard to their efforts to desegregate the schools of the Czech Republic. His analysis points out the limits of strategic litigation as a tool to effect societal change, which – if it is to succeed – must be complemented by activism outside the courtroom.

Apart from these three full-length articles, the 1/2020 issue features our regular Reviews and Reports columns, which familiarize readers with the latest books, news and developments in the field of Area Studies and related disciplines.

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Professor Jan Křen, a leading authority in the field of Czech-German relations and the modern history of Central Europe. Professor Křen was the founding father and first head of the publisher of this journal, Charles University’s Institute of International Studies. He was a long-time member of the editorial board of *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Studia Territorialia* and was instrumental in the establishment of Area Studies as a full-fledged field of research in the social sciences in post-communist Czechia. We cannot stress enough how much we owe him.

On behalf of the editorial board,

Lucie Filipová and Jan Šír
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