

**MINUTES OF THE VII SCIENTIFIC FINANCIAL CONFERENCE
“THE BASIC PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC FINANCE REFORMS IN THE
21ST CENTURY IN EUROPE”, PARIS, 16-17 SEPTEMBER, 2008**

The VII international science conference “Fundamental Problems in Public Finance Reform in 21st century Europe” was held on September 16-17, 2008. It was organized by the Faculty of Law at the University of Białystok, the branch of The Polish Academy of Sciences in Paris and The Centre for Information and Research on Public Finance and Tax Law of Central and Eastern Europe. The session took place in historical rooms of the Station of Polish Academy of Science in Paris, at 74 rue Lauriston.

The conference was opened by Professor Eugeniusz Ruśkowski, President of the Board at the Centre for Information and Research on Public Finance and Tax Law of Central and Eastern Europe, who welcomed participants from five European countries representing several dozen academic centres. He also expressed many thanks to the Director of the branch of The Polish Academy of Sciences, Professor Jerzy Pielaszek, as well as to the staff of the branch for their remarkable efforts in the organising the conference. Professor Ruśkowski also stressed that the fundamental aim of the conference was to highlight the most important public finance reforms introduced in 21st century Europe. Amongst others, these reforms apply to the programme budget in many countries, and to the transition from progressive to proportional tax in some Central and Eastern European countries. The presented papers and the discussion during the three sessions were dedicated precisely to these issues.

The first session was chaired by Professors Cezary Kosikowski (University of Białystok) and Jan Głuchowski (The Catholic University of Lublin). In an inaugural paper entitled “*La nouvelle gouvernance financière de l’État en France*”, Professor Michel Bouvier from the University of Paris presented the rationale as well as the basic assumptions behind public finance management reform in France. He emphasised that LOLF of 1 August 2001 completely changed the picture of public finance management in France, increasing the responsibility on civil servants for the effectiveness use of public resources. However, during the discussion of the paper, it was stressed that it is insufficient to deal with the public financial crisis in France alone.

Professor Teresa Lubińska from the University of Szczecin in her paper entitled “Performance Budgeting in Poland: achievements and future perspectives”

presented previous experience in Poland in works over task budget, emphasising the importance of their continuation in spite of the change in government. The paper proves that Poland is just at the conceptual stage of introducing the task budgeting and that the comparisons to other countries that already went through this stage (e.g. France), are of the utmost importance.

The second session was chaired by Professors Valentina Sentzowa (Karasieva) from the National University in Voronege and Vladimir Týč from the Masaryk University in Brno. During this session, Professor Marie – Christine Esclassan from the University of Paris presented the paper entitled “*L’adoption des contrôles financiers publiques à la nouvelle gestion publique*” emphasising the important achievements in public financial management in France, as well as the fundamental weaknesses of the introduced reforms. It was emphasised in the paper and also in the discussion that the reforms under consideration cannot be considered complete while the philosophy of the system of legal responsibility is not adapted to the new managerial requirements of “new public management.”

A paper presented by Dr. Radim Boháč from the Charles University in Prague entitled “Reform of public finance in the Czech Republic” (by Professor M. Karfikova, associate Professor H. Markova and Dr. R. Boháč) related to the assumptions of public financial reforms in the Czech Republic and to their critical analysis. It emphasised that previous initiatives aimed at the stabilization of public finances in the country, and it is hard to justify calling them a reform, though further efforts in this direction are most advisable.

The second day sessions were chaired by Professors Jan Gluchowski (Catholic University of Lublin) and Eugeniusz Ruśkowski (University of Białystok). In her paper entitled “Progressive taxation in Russia (legal aspects)”, Professor Marina Sentzowa (National University in Voronege) advanced a thesis concerning a change in approach to the concept of “progressive tax”; she stated that with this form of taxation, an increase in the basic rate of tax results in a higher amount tax being paid despite a flat tax rate (proportional tax). The paper evoked a long and lively discussion especially within the large Russian delegation.

In a collaborative paper from the Masaryk University in Brno (Vladimir Týč, Petr Mrkývka, Ivana Pařízková, Michal Radvan, Dana Šramková, Libor Kyncl, Jan Neckář, Petra Schillerova) entitled “*La réforme de l’administration fiscale dans la République Tchèque et dans certains pays de l’Union Européenne*” Professor Vladimir Týč comprehensively set out the problems of fiscal reforms in the Czech Republic and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, emphasising the bi-directional influence of these solutions. The discussion over the paper focused on the special character of fiscal administration within the public administration system.

Concluding the conference, Professor Ruśkowski announced the publication of the proceedings in a book and invited the participants to take part in the VIII international conference “Centrum” which will be held in September 2009 in Ukraine.

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