

## Call for papers for Special Issue of Emecon Journal

### Pathways to sustainability in Central and Eastern Europe: practices, policies and discourses

Sustainability - a global buzzword in policy making - has drawn as much interest as criticism (Nebbia, 2012; Turcu, 2012). First and foremost, it drew criticism for its vague and elusive meaning and lack of clear definition. Even the emerging sustainability science admits to weaknesses in building sound theoretical and methodological paradigms (Anderson, Teisl, & Noblet, 2016). The commonly acknowledged definition of general sustainability (including its three pillars – ecologic, economic and social) invokes a vision of human welfare that takes into consideration inter- as well as intra-generational equity, and which does not surpass the biophysical limits of Earth. In other words, it is a vision of a society which does not live at the expense of future generations (Passerini, 1998). In 1987 the seminal report “Our Common Future”, or else Brundtland Report, defined sustainable development<sup>1</sup> as development, which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED]1987:43). Since then, it has been adopted by most international organizations and nation states in programming their policies towards sustainability and the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 only further confirms this direction.

Despite its global resonance, the topic of sustainability and sustainable development remains under-researched in post-socialistic societies. This call for papers aims at expanding the debate about the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability in Central and Eastern European countries. In 2014 under the auspices of UNESCO, Eastern European leaders met at the Bratislava Summit on “Sustainability Science in Central and Eastern Europe” and issued a memorandum where they acknowledged that: “While strategies, institutions and instruments exist, which have the potential to make our region more sustainable, they are either not well used or not effective enough”<sup>2</sup>. Among reasons for the failing strategy, they mentioned: fragmented approaches, over-bureaucratization, inappropriate indicators and lack of personal and financial resources for participatory implementation and monitoring. Secondly, they recognized that majority of the post-communist countries still struggle to meet the requirements of market economy compatible with sustainable development, in particular because of the low influence of civil society organizations addressing sustainability. On the other hand, however, the long isolation from capitalistic markets has resulted in establishing wide ranges of low resources lifestyles, or what could be called a “quiet sustainability”<sup>3</sup>. The scene of transition towards sustainability also has its newer actors, such as a variety of social movements (food sovereignty, slow cities, degrowth, etc.), which pave the road to more sustainability and resilience building in Eastern Europe.

In the emecon Special Issue on Sustainability in Central and Eastern Europe we would like to bring attention both to the challenges and opportunities on the pathways to sustainability - in broader – social, economic and environmental sense. Therefore, we invite papers which deal with one or more of those three dimensions of sustainability and look at different practices, policies or discourses of sustainability and sustainable development in Central and Eastern Europe. We specifically invite papers, which analyse the role of formal institutions and organizations (national and international), as

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable development is not synonymous to sustainability. For criticism on sustainable development see: Gómez-Baggethun, E., & Naredo, J. M. (2015). In search of lost time: the rise and fall of limits to growth in international sustainability policy. *Sustainability Science*, 10(3), 385–395.

<sup>2</sup> Summary Statement of the Bratislava workshop “Sustainability Science in Central and Eastern Europe”, June 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, J., & Jehlička, P. (2013). Quiet sustainability: Fertile lessons from Europe’s productive gardeners. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 32, 148–157.

well as activities of different social movements and community actors mobilizing around the issues of sustainability and resilience building. Papers addressing the questions of social and economic sustainability are particularly welcome, as the challenges within these two dimensions have received even less attention than the ecological/ environmental one. Sustainability studies draw heavily from a wide variety of foundational disciplines such as ecology, economics, political science, and sociology and therefore cross-disciplinary papers are very welcome.

Among the topics which can be addressed in papers are:

- Politics and discourses around sustainability
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Social sustainability: concepts, theories and empirical research
- Social movements towards sustainability and resilience building
- Changes in life styles and social values towards sustainability, environmental consciousness
- Agriculture and food sovereignty/ security
- Co-operatives, social entrepreneurship and democratic economy
- Compatibility of free markets and sustainable development
- Ecovillages, permaculture, sustainable architecture
- Solidarity economy, sharing economy, circular economy
- Relation between economic growth, social wellbeing and happiness

Abstracts of papers (300-500 words) can be sent until **15<sup>th</sup> of November 2016** to the editors of the Special Issue. The email address is [justyna.stypinska@fu-berlin.de](mailto:justyna.stypinska@fu-berlin.de). The deadline for submission of full papers will be January/February 2017.

#### **About the journal**

Emecon is an international online journal for the study of the economic life in Central and Eastern Europe. Its perspectives are multi-disciplinary, coming from political economy, economic sociology and industrial relations. It aims at a better understanding of contemporary socio-economic life in Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on the link between society and economy, presenting current and comparative studies using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

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#### **References:**

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