

# Dear Reader!

Unfortunately, in 2025 as well, reports have appeared repeatedly in both the domestic and international press about abuses involving public funds, embezzlement, corruption, bribery, public procurement fraud, conflicts of interest, and, *nota bene*, the concealment of public debt. Public assets can only be misused for private gain in an irregular manner where and when the use of public funds is non-transparent and chaotic, where internal controls are absent or malfunctioning, where the protection of public assets is inadequate, and where accountability mechanisms are insufficient. The continuous fight against violations of the law can only be successful if authorities act with sufficient rigor both domestically (see our first study) and internationally (see our second and third studies), that is, if they take a global approach against those who violate competition rules.

The author of our first study, the President of the Hungarian Integrity Authority, reflecting on the interview with Gusztáv Báger published in issue 2025/2 of the *Financial Review* and on the book review he authored, examines how corruption could be prevented and curbed—an effort that would greatly contribute to the advancement of Hungarian society as a whole—and how public trust could be strengthened through the preparation of credible and reliable reports on the use of public funds.

Our second study provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges related to the use of public finances in Azerbaijan, a country rich in oil and gas but lacking transparency, institutional oversight, and financial and macroeconomic stability. This analysis is based on textual analysis of interviews conducted with thirty experts. The author concludes that without the establishment and effective operation of control mechanisms, as well as without scientific examination and research of the subject, Azerbaijan's public finances will remain unmanageable in a realistic, transparent, and accountable manner, and the fight against corruption will not succeed.

Our third study addresses the transforming and insufficiently harmonized international financial systems, including the fragmentation of the global monetary system, the increasingly alarming spread of cryptocurrencies and digital national currencies, and the risks associated with these developments. The CLARITY Act and the growing prevalence of dollar-pegged stablecoins in an increasing number of countries may facilitate insider trading, the circumvention of capital requirements and liquidity rules, and tax evasion. According to the author, this could lead to an increase in fraud, turn into an economic weapon, and endanger the financial stability and sovereignty of the euro area.

The authors of our fourth study seek to identify the main reasons behind Slovakia's slowing real convergence. These include, among others, a low savings rate, declining capital inflows, deteriorating dynamics and structure of capital accumulation, an exhausted labor market, and lagging investments in intellectual capital, high technology, and research and development. From a regional perspective, the slowdown in macro-level convergence has been primarily reflected in the weakening

position of the strongest regions, as a result of which the performance of Slovakia's regions has paradoxically converged closer to one another.

In our fifth study, the authors examine how EU regulations prescribing sustainability-related disclosure and KPI requirements influence companies' procurement and strategic decisions amid differing national accounting rules across Member States. Due to gaps in legal harmonization, significant differences still exist between local and international leasing accounting rules, which may have a substantial impact on reported results. This is particularly relevant given that outcomes differ depending on the magnitude of OPEX and CAPEX KPIs. The divergent treatment of leasing costs currently makes it extremely difficult to compare the KPI results of companies operating in different Member States.

In the interview section of the current issue of our journal, readers can learn about the professional work and fascinating life path of economist Imre Boros, who held senior positions at the National Bank of Hungary, the Hungarian Credit Bank, and the State Privatization and Asset Management Company, and who also served as Minister without Portfolio responsible for coordinating the European Union's PHARE programme.

In our conference section, we first report on the 77th Congress of the International Fiscal Association, held in Lisbon between 5 and 9 October 2025, where participants discussed current issues in international taxation, such as the global minimum tax introduced in the European Union a year earlier, the redefinition of corporate residence in the digital age, and measures against the abusive use of double taxation treaties.

Thanks to Elemér Terták, we also receive a detailed report on the webinar organized on 5 November 2025 by the Monetary Policy Section of the Hungarian Economic Association. The central topic of the event was the digital euro and stablecoins. During the panel discussions, participants reviewed the results of a survey covering 93 central banks on the potential use of crypto-assets, discussed business experiences related to stablecoins, examined the objectives of central banks in introducing retail CBDCs, and debated whether interest should be paid on CBDC balances.

Finally, in our book review section, academician József Popp recommends to our esteemed readers the book entitled "Sustainable Economics: A Detailed Scenario and Teaching Aid" by Norbert Holczinger and Balázs Sárvári. The book prepares, shapes, and provides guidance on environmental challenges threatening the future of our planet, as well as on the economic, social, technological, and financial aspects of sustainability, ethical issues, green finance and demographic questions, long-term responsibility, and systems-level thinking. ■

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