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CHALLENGES TO CHANGE -  
MIDDLE AND EASTERN  
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN  
TRANSITION

FIFTH EUROPEAN DOCTORAL  
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## PREFACE

After drastic changes (wars, revolutions, etc.) a social system is considered by sociologists as politically stable, if the first government in the new era had been re-elected after having spent some years in opposition. Somewhat like this, the return to the starting point, is true for EDS too: in 2005 the fifth meeting of the European Doctoral Seminar had been held, and this was the second EDS conference organized in Budapest. Therefore using the sociological approach the European Doctoral Seminar has been proved as stable event for Ph D students from different countries, from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Hungary, and in 2005 also from Italy.

The background of EDS was and is the unification process in Europe, the basic idea was and is to bring young people together to discuss parts of their Ph D theses. Often it could be experienced that the problems investigated by participants were more or less the same, but the concrete approaches for the analysis of inflation, unemployment, economic development, capital markets, etc. were of course influenced by history, traditions, the cultural circumstances of these economies, and by the economic actors' behavior in these countries. From this point of view it was easy to understand what about the presentation had been prepared, but at the same time it was also surprising to experience the differences between economies located in Middle and Middle East Europe.

It was a pleasure to observe the development of Ph D theses, to see how participants having entered the program some years ago took into account critical remarks and comments of colleagues in their research done during the months between two meetings. Of course, we are proud in the fact that some of our former participants had successfully finished their doctoral programs and having started their activities in different fields, most of them – and this is also a feather in our cap – as lecturers at universities.

Comparing the papers contained in this issue of Public Economics Series with those of earlier conferences it can be seen that the Ph D students' research interest has been moved away from more general themes, let's say about the future of the market economies in their countries, to the analysis of actual and concrete problems arising in the newly established market economies. Stimulation of innovation processes, demographics problems in higher and in lower developed economies, problems of economic policy have been discussed as well as the real possibilities to enter the European Union or the Euro area.

## PREFACE

In the final session participant expressed their opinions that the meeting was again successful. This evaluation would be of course impossible without the highly engaged activities of the professors, the seriously done research work of the Ph D students, and the preparation of the conference by the local organizers, namely *Éva Horváth* and *András Margitay-Becht*. This is also the place to express our thanks to the *Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst* and to the *Stabilitätspakt* for financial support of the fifth European Doctoral Seminar. Last, but not least, we would like to thank *Monika Ács* for her contribution to prepare this issue.

*Budapest, February 2006*

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