This issue of the *Forum Scientiae Oeconomia* is devoted to SMEs, cooperative models and human resource management. These topics are highly important for the transition economy countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). We have received several articles from scholars working at universities in the CEE region. Entrepreneurship and management research related to transition economies is booming nowadays. Traditional entrepreneurship and management theories were elaborated in developed market economies of the United States of America and Western Europe. The countries of the CEE region and Former Soviet Union (FSU) states were under communist command for several decades. Entrepreneurship was prohibited and management of state-owned and collective enterprises was rather special, mainly under the command of the Communist Party. The progress that many countries of the CEE and FSU made during about thirty years of market economy is amazing (Sauka, Chepurenko 2017). Entrepreneurs and modern managers are responsible for a major part of positive changes and reforms (Parsyak, Zhuravlyova 2001).

Effective cooperation is important not only in transition economies but also in developed countries. Previous research has demonstrated that the level of cooperation moved from a firm level to the alliance level nowadays (e.g. Sroka, Gajdzik 2015; Sroka, Hittmár 2015). It is virtually impossible for single firms, even big ones, to compete alone. In order to win the competition game firms should cooperate with other firms and organizations, in some cases even with competitors (Solesvik, Westhead 2010) and governmental organizations. Gradually, the triple helix model is implemented in practice in different countries.

And last but not least, the actual problem in CEE countries is the management of human resources. Individuals in transition economy countries of CEE countries have a high level of human capital. Many young people leave the countries and move to the US or Western European countries. This is a real challenge of the emerging markets. Some firms in the region, especially SMEs have difficulties to compete with the Western counterparts in terms of the remuneration size.

We have selected seven articles for the issue in the *Forum Scientiae Oeconomia*. The articles in this issue provide us with valuable new insights into the issues related to SMEs performance, interfirm and interorganizational cooperation as well as human resource management issues. I think the articles will be interesting for scholars, policy-makers and practitioners in CEE countries.

The first article by Zapletalová examines competitive strategies of small and medium-sized enterprises of the Czech Republic at first entrance into foreign markets. The author uses Porter’s (1980) typology of competitive strategies as the theoretical background of the research. The paper aims to answer the following research question “which factors affect the choice of competitive strategies for the first international entry” with the help of quantitative approach. Five hypotheses linking the selection of an international strategy to
company size, industrial context, company’s resources, knowledge of international markets, and managers’ experience related to international markets were tested with the sample of 450 SMEs in Czech Republic. The results suggest that industry, resources, and the knowledge of international markets are related to the selection of a competitive strategy in international markets.

The second paper is written by Mickiene and Valioniene. The study focuses on a relation between the state seaport governance model and port performance indicators. Ports and maritime business are important industries in the economy of several European countries. Lithuania is one of them. In the paper, Mickiene and Valioniene analyse the effectiveness of a new public administration approach and the governance of state-owned enterprises (i.e., ports) implemented in Lithuania. The authors offered a model demonstrating the effective cooperation between state and private actors operating in ports leading to effective functioning of ports. The authors assess the economic impact of seaport performances and compare the performance of seaports in Lithuania and in neighbour countries.

The third article by Kozma is related to cooperation in the supply chain network. This quantitative study surveyed seventy-six companies in Hungary. In this study, Kozma made an analysis of cooperation among supply chain members. Interestingly, the respondents reported that they consider open communication and an effective information system as the most important factors of successful cooperation. At the same time, they are one of the areas where they are least satisfied in their firms. The effective conflict management is the next important factor, and the respondents are more satisfied with the situation with conflict management in their firms. In addition, respondents noticed that trust is very important for customer-supplier relations.

The next article written by Štverková and Mynarzová explores the benefits of linking SMEs to the network. SMEs are often rather small and have a liability of smallness and a liability of newness. Also, SMEs often lack necessary resources needed for successful competition with larger counterparts. In addition, they might lack a social capital that is also recognized as one of the success factors for entrepreneurial firms. Joining networks can be a good opportunity for an SME to gain a social capital, to obtain new contacts and contracts, to stay alert to new openings and new knowledge (Solesvik, Gulbrandsen 2014). The authors analyse cluster and network issues in the Czech Republic. They suggest using the Business Environment Evaluation (BEE) model to analyse the influence of networks and clusters on SMEs development.

The fifth paper by Kuchta et al. is related to the issues of human resource management. The authors applied a mixed method approach. Data was collected through interviews with 76 project managers and project participants. The analysis revealed that “clearly defined aims, resource planning (particularly the initiation phase is the most important) and monitoring of the work progress” are the factors responsible of the project’s success.

The sixth paper by Urmanaviciene and Cizikiene explores human resource management in social enterprises in Lithuania. The paper explores hybrid social organizations where some people are usual employees, and some people work voluntarily pro bono under social projects. The authors used an/ expert evaluation method and interviewed five experienced social entrepreneurs. Experts suggested that they often lack resources in order engage highly qualified professionals to
fulfil the social mission of their firms. Using volunteers allows them to get external help for free. At the same time, volunteers might loose motivation after some time of engagement into social work. It has been discovered that social enterprises achieve better results when they combine the work of paid workers and volunteers. Paid workers feel more motivated and collaborate better with volunteers when former are involved into the process of decision-making processes related to the management of volunteers.

Finally, Karaaslan’s article seeks to explore the relationship between trust and communication satisfaction. The motivational language theory constitutes the theoretical background of the study. The motivational language theory was developed in the United States and was mainly tested in the US and Western European contexts. The novel contribution of Karaaslan’s study is testing of the motivational language theory in the CEE context and linking the motivating language construct to trust and communication satisfaction. The survey was administrated in five CEE countries (i.e. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania and Hungary). The final sample consists of 174 valid responses. The elaborated model was tested with the help of the advanced structural equation modelling. The results suggest that motivational language is positively and significantly linked to trust in leaders. This relation is partially mediated by communication satisfaction.

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