

(DE)CENTRALIZATION UNDER EXAMINATION

To centralize, or to decentralize, that is the question. But is it really? Do we not already know the answer? The less central government in everyday matters, the better, right? The more power is given to local authorities, the faster things get done, correct? The only problem is that not everyone feels the same way. What is the perfect balance between the two, if the latter cannot be fully achieved?

Through the ages, European states have had various ideas about to what extent their domains shall be governed via a central authority. The more recent push for decentralization in all aspects of governance – from fiscal policy, to administration – appears to be a perfect manifestation of the highly attractive and appealing concept of subsidiarity.

The same rule applies not only to individual states, but also to the make-up of the European Union itself. After all, as an institution it is governed chiefly from the center, yet aspiring to be perceived as a federation, encouraging member states to take responsibility for their own actions, while at the same time setting the agenda for further development from Brussels (or Strasbourg). These and other paradoxes are embedded in the constant struggle between the two ideas, thus making the search for the ever so elusive golden means a means of tug-of-war negotiations between the proponents of centralization and advocates of decentralization.

In the ninth issue of *4liberty.eu Review*, by investigating a number of national perspectives from Central and Eastern Europe, we attempt to find this elusive middle ground – which, bear in mind, does not necessarily have to be in the middle, at least this is our belief. Hopefully, it will be one that leans more towards decentralization. After all, *sic parvis magna*¹. We trust that by exploring the presented ideas and examining them from various perspectives you will find the answers to how, to what extent, and at what levels decentralization is (or should be) a must. These are the questions that are truly central to the discussion on (de)centralization.

Enjoy your reading.

Olga Łabendowicz
Editor-in-Chief of *4liberty.eu Review*
Coordinator of 4liberty.eu network

¹ Latin for “Thus great things from small things (come)”.