

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSURANCE MARKET IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE VISEGRÁD FOUR IN 1995–2007

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The current globalized development in the world provides conditions favourable not only for the enhancement of living standards of households and economic prosperity of enterprises, industries and regions, but also for the growth of potential risks which affect all entities in the market environment. The increase in the number and mainly the extent of windstorms, torrential rains, floods and other natural disasters, but also the frequency and the results of carelessness, irresponsibility or bad intentions in people's activities affect common lives of households, the profitability and the very existence of companies, and the possibilities of the public sector to deal with their consequences to a great degree. The field of insurance industry contributes to successful solutions of the consequences of accidental insured events and the compensations for health, life, property and interest losses; moreover, the volume of its investment activities contributes to the development and stabilization of the national economy.

The monograph provides a complex view of the development of the Slovakian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish insurance markets in years 1995–2007. It reflects the transformation and convergence processes related to the entry of these states into the European Union. It responds to the changes in the legislation implementing the appropriate European Union Guidelines with the aim to become full members of the united European insurance market.

The publication is divided into five chapters. The first four chapters describe the development of the individual insurance markets of the V4 countries including the development of selected macroeconomic indicators and their influence on the growth dynamics of the insurance markets. Although there are four different insurance markets, the authors used the same indicators concerning the entire examined period for the comparison. The implemented legislation of the European Union and the unified statistics at the national and European levels allow for using the same data, differing in their absolute values but not by structure, for the analysis. The readers are provided with a complex overview of the essential indicators with the emphasis on the development of stipulated premiums, settlements, and claim rates. The information on the investment activities is based on the volume of technical reserves in both life and other insurances, which are the source of the financial placement with respect to the financial placement limits in compliance with the Insurance Act. The fifth chapter contains a temporal and a regional comparison of the macroeconomic environment which considerably affects and also determines the development of individual fields of the national economy, including the insurance industry. Finally, the authors summarize the subject of the research and present the overview of the analysed indicators both in the macroeconomic field and the field of the insurance market. The text is accompanied by a number of tables and graphs,

the source of which was the materials published in annual reports and at web pages of central banks and insurance associations of the countries in question. Other sources of the used data are provided in the List of References.

The publication can be used by a wide range of users – students of particular study fields at universities and colleges of economics, professionals in the insurance practice, and also the broad public interested in the issue who wish to acquire some more knowledge concerning the development of the insurance market within the Visegrád Four. The monograph is an output of a long-term international cooperation of universities and colleges of economics (University of Economics, Prague, The Faculty of Finance and Accounting; University of Economics in Bratislava, The Faculty of Business Economics with seat in Košice; University of Economics in Bratislava, The Faculty of National Economy; and Krakow University of Economics) who conduct their studies on the issue of insurance.

The monograph outlines the development of insurance in the conditions of the Central European insurance market in the time before the manifestation and impacts of the world financial crisis. Thus it provides a potential to compare events of the development of a relatively stabilized insurance market before the financial crisis and specific impacts of the crisis in the following period.

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