

## EDITORIAL

### **Czechia and Slovakia: The last 30 years from a geographical point of view**

In 2023, we celebrated the important 30th anniversary of the establishment of the independent states of the Czech and Slovak Republics on the political map of the world. From the long-term perspective of the country's development, three decades can be considered a relatively short and homogeneous period. From a short-term perspective, however, it can be seen as three decades of dynamic changes in the landscape and society, the transition to new trends and the emergence or deepening of regional differences. The processes of transforming the common politics and economy of one country into the sometimes similar, but often different development trajectories of two independent states began only three decades ago with the independence of Czechia and Slovakia. Many processes of transformation of the landscape, the economy or the whole society in both countries have converged with the trends in other developed countries. The differences in dynamics are mostly diminishing, but the differences in their expression or in the spatial context are still significant.

The aim of this special issue of the Geographical Journal (*Geografický časopis*) is the presentation of selected research by geographers and scientists from related fields on changes and trends in the Czech and Slovak Republics during their 30 years of independence. The aim of this thematic issue is to contribute to the geographical discussion of the original common state in different temporal and spatial contexts. The special issue thus aims to build a bridge between a number of previously published studies on the transformation and independent development of the two states and other current knowledge related to the observed phenomena. The contributions can thus provide a conceptual framework for the specific and different development of the independent Czechia and Slovakia over the last thirty years, including the search for similarities and differences in the development of partial and complex geographical structures. The studies in this special issue represent an interesting mix of contributions (demographic and demogeographic changes, cross-border cooperation, land cover changes, geopolitical orientation and regional development). The important element is the geographical approach to selected topics and problems, which adequately represents the variety of thematic areas of geographical research. It should be noted, however, that this special issue covers only a small part of all the unique phenomena and processes that occurred during the period under review. We are convinced that these and other studies are a promise for future cooperation between Czech and Slovak geographers. Several researchers from both countries responded to the call for contributions to the special issue. After internal and external review, we selected 5 articles for this issue. A few more will be published in the next issue(s) of the Journal, depending on the editorial capacity.

We thank the reviewers for their cooperation in the review process and their quick and correct attitude, which enabled the realisation of the special issue of the Journal. We would also like to thank the Editorial Board and the team of responsible persons at the Institute of Geography, SAS for their support and collaboration.

František Križan, Stanislav Kraft and Vladimír Ira, editors

