

Chapter 65

Local Public Service Delivery Arrangements in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the issue of efficiency of the different modes of the provision of local public services in two selected new EU member states – the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have a long common history and it is feasible to include both of them in the analysis. The first main part of the chapter analyses the history, transformation and the current local public delivery arrangements in the Czech Republic and Slovakia with the focus on the efficiency of the different modes of production. The final part tries to explain the main purposes behind the fact that externalisation does not deliver visible improvements.

INTRODUCTION

Public administration reforms in Czech Republic and Slovakia started almost immediately after the ‘Velvet Revolution’ in 1989. From the beginning, decentralization was used as an important reform tool to achieve better performance from the system, bringing positive but also negative results at the same time. The municipal and regional governments are currently responsible for a comprehensive set of public services: local public services, part of the sport, leisure and tourist provisions, children’s homes, some health services, basic social services, primary and secondary education or cultural establishments. Probably the most important remaining problem, limiting the success of decentralization processes in

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9860-2.ch065

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the Czech Republic and Slovakia is significant territorial fragmentation and lacking the financial and managerial capacity to successfully adopt the NPM instruments in public service delivery.

During the socialist period, the local communal public services were part of the so called ‘local economy’. The structure and size of the ‘local economy’ are characterized by Figure 1 and Table 1. Local services were delivered by national committees in accordance with uniform rules as defined by the law and financed partly from the state budget and partly from consumer fees (local enterprises, recycling bodies and housing bodies were self-financing institutions).

Figure 1.

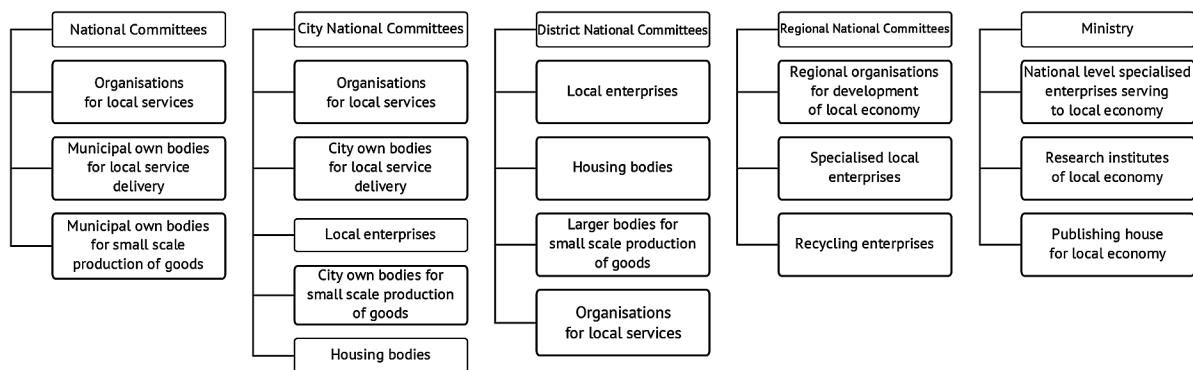


Table 1. The scale of the local economy in Czechoslovakia

Indicator and Location (Czech=CSR, Slovakia=SSR)		Years			
		1975	1980	1985	1987
Local enterprises (legal bodies)	CSR	382	229	224	219
	SSR	152	106	101	99
In it: Local enterprises (service delivery bodies)	CSR	19,435	17,482	17,233	17,484
	SSR	7,181	7,328	8,146	8,050
Recycling enterprises (purchasing paper, metals, etc.)	CSR	1,650	1,692	1,887	1,866
	SSR	324	315	463	440
Housing bodies	CSR	443	160	156	160
	SSR	115	59	56	61
Organisations for local services	CSR	234	213	222	245
	SSR	114	136	118	117
Municipal own bodies for local service delivery	CSR	2,013	1,725	1,618	-
	SSR	253	288	307	-
Municipal own bodies for small scale production of goods	CSR	1,689	1,407	1,665	1,769
	SSR	1,047	886	1,050	1,139
Self-employed citizens delivering services	CSR	21,265	13,159	27,423	31,487
	SSR	5,022	3,303	5,641	5,902

(Kontra et al., 1989)

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