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Introduction to the Issue 2019/4

The National University of Public Service has been granted multi-annual research funds from the European Union through the government of Hungary for the purposes of developing good governance practices, adopting best practices in this field, and improving the training, education and work of those employed in the public sector. Within the project funding framework PADOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 “Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance” the Center for Strategic and Defense Studies realised an overarching research project “Strategic Analyses for Supporting Governmental Decision-making in the Field of Foreign and Security Policy”. The project was made up of eight pillars, each focusing on a key area of interest for Hungary. Three methodological pillars aimed at gaining access to best practices and lessons learnt in the fields of: 1. Strategic foresight; 2. Strategic guidance and planning; and 3. Analytical methodology, while five pillars were focusing on geographical regions, in order to improve our understanding of drivers, trends and processes that govern foreign and security policies in: 4. Central Europe; 5. the Balkans; 6. the Post-Soviet region; 7. Africa; and 8. the Far East. Scholarly work within the pillars were directed and coordinated by policy field coordinators affiliated with the Center for Strategic and Defense Studies. Research carried out within each pillar included analytical, methodological and comparative study volumes, policy papers, journal articles both in Hungarian and in English, as well as a series of expert workshops, seminars and conferences.

This issue contains ten scholarly and analytical papers that have been drafted either as preliminary studies to the project focus areas or within the project. Among them, two areas are highlighted here: part of the papers deal with security-related issues in the MENA region, while others offer analyses on current Central European defence policy developments. Cyprian Aleksander Kozera and Błażej Popławski compare the working of three extremist violent groups: Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and al-Shabaab. Viktor Marsai analyses the rivalry of al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in the Horn of Africa. Nikolett Pénczváltó examines how securitisation and populist tactics by the Turkish Government might have affected the EU–Turkey visa liberalisation agreement, preventing the successful conclusion of negotiations. Antonio Morone summarises some lessons learnt from Libya regarding the containment policies of the European Union and Italy to tackle irregular migration from Sub-Saharan Africa. Luca Puddu argues that China’s development assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa is aimed at reproducing centre-periphery relations with China at the centre. Tamás Csiki Varga, Lukáš Dyčka and László Szerencsés offer respective analysis of Hungarian, Czech and Croatian defence policy developments, while Alex Etl measures the balance between reassurance and deterrence regarding the Operation Atlantic Resolve of the U.S.