

From the Editor

In 1994 the first, zero numbered publication of Eastern European Countryside, was issued without charge. It was sent to all intending subscribers, it was also sent to libraries, and about 300 individual parties from Europe and America to which the theme was of interest.

As we have written earlier, in the zero numbered publication, the idea of creating a publication dedicated to different societal phenomena and processes taken place in the rural areas of Eastern Europe was born some years before. From time to time a group of sociologists from different areas of Europe, and of course the countries directly interested, met at congresses and seminars organized by the European Association of Sociologists. They decided to ask for the inception of a systematic investigative publication dedicated to these processes.

In accordance with earlier announcements this, one numbered, publication is dedicated to different aspects of agricultural property ownership transformation. The first part 'articles and studies' shows the processes that are occurring in the three Baltic countries: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the second part contains the articles on: Poland, Hungary, Czech, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Russia. (Marzena Sobczak review, on two Russian works, concerns also the problems in Russia).

A different subject is raised in Olga Sevan's, Russian, article; it refers to important cultural phenomena, that of, ancient rural architecture. We insert it in the section of 'researches' which are supposed to present immediate reports from social research dedicated to the village. Jolanta Maciag's article is dedicated to Poland scientific posts involved, at present, in researches of these kinds.

We think that our readers will be interested in all articles printed here, that show the complicated, and often, unintended and unexpected results of political decisions taken by the governments of Central Eastern European Countries, in actual concrete cases, concerning the return of private ownership of the land. We try to show the phenomena which appear in the spheres of law, organization, production and society in connection with the programmes of privatization and reprivatization of the land.

The articles, included in this, one numbered, publication also show clearly how different are the contemporary and past situations concerning land ownership, in particular countries, in this part of Europe. For instance, when in 1989, in each of these countries, almost 100 per cent of land was collectivized or nationalized, 70 per cent of Poland's land belonged to peasants. We can now understand how various the tasks and activities of the authorities, creating the land reforms, are and how various — and sometimes dramatically difficult, the historic idiosyncrasies of the people, are; they take part in these reforms: sometimes actively, sometimes passively.