Long-term Care in Central and South Eastern Europe
Ageing societies together with broader socio-economic developments are challenging societies in manifold ways, not least in the ways in which they are dealing with social risks. The need for long-term care, help and support and the ways in which societies respond to these needs is one of the issues that will be most seriously affected by these changes. Historically, long-term care for older people has long been widely neglected as a distinctive social risk. The bulk of care has been and still is largely organised, provided and funded within family or other informal networks. Only in the past two decades, many European countries have started to substantially extend existing programmes and to implement more comprehensive social protection schemes in long-term care. In other countries, including those in the Central Eastern and South Eastern European region, debates on the future of long-term care have intensified only in the very recent past. This is a consequence of various factors. There are strong perceptions in society placing responsibilities for long-term care in the family context. There is little lobbying that could help make long-term care a major policy concern. There is a lack of financial resources and comparatively low policy priority for long-term care. And, a broader and more focused debate on the future of long-term care is also hindered by large variations in the general understanding and conceptualisation of care.

The project “Long-Term Care in Central and South Eastern Europe” has taken up the challenge (a) to systematically collect information on the way citizens, private actors and the state deal with the issue of long-term care, (b) to study this information in a comparative perspective, and (c) to discuss major challenges and perspectives for the future of long-term care in this region. The project covers eight countries in the Central and South Eastern European
region, namely Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. This book brings the results of the project together. It provides an overview of common and of diverse demographic and socio-economic challenges, it presents and discusses the current situation in the organisation, provision and finance of long-term care in the eight Central and South Eastern European countries and it discusses these results in a broader comparative European perspective.

Work for this project is based on close cooperation with many experts in the Central and South Eastern European region. They have contributed their expertise as national project partners, in interviews during study visits and in the context of two international expert workshops. We are grateful to Marina Ajduković, Gojko Bezovan, Visnja Fortuna, Zorana Franjić Staničić, Romana Galic, Ljiljana Muslić, Silvia Rusac, Filipa Linda Šimunović, Vesna Širanović, Ana Štambuk, Irena Vadija, and Nino Žganec from Croatia; Jana Barvíková, Kristyna Cermaková, Renata Dohnalová, Iva Holmerová, Barbora Kolářová, Dana Korinková, Matěj Lejsal, Olga Nešporová, and Petr Wija from the Czech Republic; Gabriella Csillik, Csaba Dózsa, Katalin Érsek, László Gulácsi, Krisztian Karpati, and Kinga Mészáros from Hungary; Nicoleta Molnar, Liviu Popa, Livia Popescu, and Narcisa Teglaș from Romania; Dragana Dinic, Sanja Jankelic, Drago Jelaca, Marija Kolin, Ljubica Kozarcanin, Sanja Miloradovic, Ljubomir Pejakovic, Nadezna Sataric, Ljudija Topic, and Jasmina Veselinovic from Serbia; Božena Bušová, Helena Kuvíková, Jana Štrangfeldová, Peter Tatár, Lenka Topinková, Katarína Vidličková, and Helena Woleková from Slovakia; Lidija Apohal Vučković, Davor Dominkuš, Vito Flaker, Marino Kačič, Boris Kramberger, Barbara Kresal, Uršula Jerše Jan, Mateja Nagode, Laura Perko, Kristina Podbevšec, and Cveto Uršič from Slovenia. Furthermore, we would like to thank the authors of the chapters for their contributions and for their patience during the editing process. Many thanks also to Christoph Giesinger, Kai Leichsenring and Michael Meyer as Members of the Advisory Board. Katharina Meichenitsch, and, in the final phase, Lisa Mittendrein have not only been involved in research but have also provided administrative support. Many thanks also to Gudrun Bauer, Daniela Friedl, Sandra Hinterleitner, Gertraud Steyrer and Katalin Windisch who have been involved in more specific supportive tasks at different stages of the project. We are also grateful to
the publishers and to Maureen Lenhart who has done the layout of the final manuscript. The country chapters in this book have been completed in 2009. The introductory chapter and the final chapter have been finalised till 2010, in particular while staying as a research fellow at the Hanse Institute for Advanced Studies (HWK) in 2009/10. The support of the HWK during the research stay is gratefully acknowledged. Finally, many thanks go to Franz Karl Prüller from ERSTE Foundation for his continuous invaluable support for the project. The project has been made possible by the generous support of ERSTE Foundation, active in the Central and South Eastern European region since 2003 in the programme areas “Social Development”, “Culture” and “Europe”.

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