

As every business person knows, the devil is in the details. This is especially true about the topic of privatization. In the process of putting together this issue of *Economic Reform Today*, we have discovered that policymakers have chosen many different methods of privatizing state-owned enterprises, some of them successful and others less so. However, while method of privatization is important, it is less important than constructing the right institutional framework for doing business. Many of the articles in this issue point to this need, including our case studies on Russia, Poland, and Hungary and our interview with Cao Siyuan about improving bankruptcy law in China.



There are circumstances in which the choice to embark on a mass privatization program may override the need for an institutional framework. Policymakers in transitional economies are faced with stark circumstances where the urgency for reform may override purely economic reasons for privatizing. Our two-part look at Russian reform efforts illustrates this difficult policy environment. In this issue, John Earle shows how there are no easy answers. Our interview with Dmitry Vasilyev, Chairman of the Federal Commission for the Securities Market of Russia appeared in last issue of *Economic Reform Today* (No. 1, 1999 "Corporations in Society," available on our Web site at www.cipe.org). Mr. Vasilyev identified much that can be done in Russia to chart a course toward better management of the economy.

Several articles in this issue take a look at privatization in a much broader context. One article by Richard Rahn, author of "The End of Money," and another by Michael Maibach of Intel Corporation explain how the Internet and the communications revolution are changing how international commerce is conducted. These articles provide a launching pad for a vibrant discussion of where the combined power of information technology and an increasingly privatized global economy will take us in the years to come.

In the spirit of that revolution, we invite readers to share their views on privatization in the digital age. The most thoughtful and provocative viewpoints will be posted on our Web site to be shared with our online audience. On our Web site you will also find two previous *Economic Reform Today* issues on the topic of privatization that you will find valuable in this discussion (No. 1, 1998 and No. 4, 1995). We look forward to hearing from you.



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