Prologue 1

It gives us great pleasure to be able to issue this latest Global Urban Competitiveness Report (GUCR) for 2011. The GUCR 2010 was based on research and data up to 2007-2008. We are delighted to note that this Report was released by Edward Elgar Publishing as *The Global Urban Competitiveness Report – 2010*, edited by Pengfei Ni and Peter Karl Kresl. Making the GUCR available to a worldwide audience in an English language text has given our Report greatly expanded circulation, and it has been well received by the international community of urban competitiveness researchers and practitioners.

Both reports have a similar explication of the methodology and data sources used for the research. Both contain analyses of the research results for 500 cities throughout the world economy. The methodological approach used to gain these results is an elaborate benchmarking study that I will not elaborate here since this was discussed at great length in the 2010 volume. It is sufficient to say that the methodology is more sophisticated than is the case with other benchmarking studies, all of which focus on one aspect of the global economy, such as finance, or on a set of countries from a national or a continental geographic space. The GUCR is unique in the extent of its coverage, as well as in its sophistication.

However, the two GUCRs do differ in their contents in addition to the discussion of methodology and data. GUCR 2010 contained the case study analysis of ten major cities that have taken different paths to their competitiveness, as well as specification of the factors that are most important for urban competitiveness for the 500 cities studied. This volume, on the contrary, presents conclusions with regard to the characteristics of urban competitiveness and the factors that determine a city's competitiveness. Each report, therefore, presents the reader with an analysis based on the most recent data for the 500 cities as well as a different set of insights that one can gain from this analysis.

This model is continued in the present GUCR. Here, in addition to the explication of the methodology and data used, analysis is given for sub-regions of the global economy and for key countries. Then an analysis is given of several groups of cities; cities that share some important characteristic or characteristics. Finally, this GUCR offers the reader a selection of the best examples of cities that can be described as being 'competitive' and that should serve as models and as inspiration to leaders and planners in other cities that have yet to achieve this level of competitiveness.

Edward Elgar Publishing has expressed their interest in publishing GUCRs in addition to the volume for 2010. Hence, the reader will be able to read this volume, or perhaps the next one, in full English text. We sincerely hope that you find the GUCR volumes to be of benefit in your study of, or policy design for, the enhancement of urban competitiveness.

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