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Editorial

What a year!

For those following or studying the political economy of the Western Balkans, there is sometimes the sense of a Groundhog Day: a lot is happening, but nothing much is progressing and the problems and anxieties of the region keep repeating themselves. But in 2016/17 things seemed to be taking a turn to the worst. The official “temporary freeze” of EU enlargement brought up again – at least internally in the Balkans – the anxious question about the region’s European perspective and the EU’s commitment to this. With this – whether causally or incidentally – came a number of developments which reminded everybody that things cannot stay “all quiet on the western [Balkans] front” for long. The border tensions that emerged between Montenegro and Kosovo, Macedonia and Bulgaria, and the continuing inter-ethnic issues between Serbia and Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia and others; the political turbulence domestically in Kosovo (with the fall of Isa Mustafa’s government in May 2017) and Albania (with the continuing parliamentary boycott by the opposition until May 2017); the emerging (e.g., in Montenegro, on the issue of the country’s NATO membership) and continuing (e.g., in Bosnia and Herzegovina) schisms and ethno-political cleavages within countries; the political crisis in Macedonia and the eruption of violence in April 2017; were among a number of developments that acted as a reminder that, in the absence of a political anchor and an economic ‘carrot’, the region can easily become destabilised. At the same time, the increased activism, if not influence, of Russia – as well as of Turkey and the Gulf States – reminded everybody that even issues of wider geo-

strategic value have not been fully resolved in the region.

By the time these lines were written (July 2017), however, the region seemed to have returned to an unusual normality, if not to have leaped into a phase of new modernism. In Serbia, as former PM Vučić assumed the country’s Presidency, a woman of a sexual-orientation minority took on the country’s Premiership. In Macedonia, an agreement was reached and a new government has been put in place with – at the end – limited violence or political turbulence. In Kosovo and Albania the snap elections were – broadly speaking – uneventful. In Montenegro the NATO vote went through without the much-feared violence. While even the Macedonia-Bulgaria (and perhaps also Macedonia-Greece) relations seem to be on a conciliatory path. And on a separate front, while the EU “freeze” remains, the Berlin Process seems to be working with German effectiveness and to be taking the process of EU approximation and economic development forward, despite the “freeze” – while talk of a “Berlin Plus” promises to give a new impetus (and new money?) to the region. True, the radicals have made a come-back in Kosovo and Serbia while, as *The Economist* has recently noted [1/7/2017], there is a model of “Stabilitocracy” emerging in the region, with the EU and its influential member states favouring effectiveness and stability over liberalism and democracy. But in a region which can become so ugly so quickly, these are only scattered clouds in an otherwise sombre blue sky.

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The past academic session (2016/17) has also been quite a year for us at

LSEE, too. Enhancing our institutional collaborations, we paired-up with the CEFTA Secretariat to run a 'Best Paper' competition celebrating the 10 years of CEFTA2006; and with the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (NBRM) to organise our 3rd LSEE Network conference on Social Cohesion in SEE – while we have been present in two other regional and extra-regional networks (PERFORM and FEMISE) and have worked closely with local academic and research institutions, such as the European University of Tirana, the Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses in Podgorica, the University of Belgrade, the University American College Skopje, and others. Through our Network – which now lists more than 60 researchers from the region – over the last year we participated in an RCC funded project on Active Labour Market Policies in the Western Balkans, a European Commission project on Free Economic Zones, a UN funded project on Gender Equality in Albania, an RRPP funded project on Labour

Markets, and others; we recently secured funding from LSE's International Inequalities Institute for a project on "welfare state trajectories on income inequality in four former Yugoslav republics"; while we are currently setting up two new projects on regional trade and on policy evaluation.

Additionally, members of LSEE gave presentations and invited lectures in a range of academic conference and key policy events in the region, such as the Joint Science Conference of the Berlin Process, the Economic and Security Committee Meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Aspen Institute (Germany) Western Balkans conference, the Meeting of Ministries of Labour of the Western Balkan Economies, and others; while they also continued to publish widely on a range of political, economic and security issues in the Balkans, both in influential policy outlets and in international academic journals. Last but not least, we continued with our busy public events programme and policy engagement activities, hosting among others, the President of Croatia Mrs

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Mr Valentin Inzko, the former EU negotiator Sir Robert Cooper, and many-many others, in events both in London and in the region.

The new year starts with continuing collaborative initiatives with CEFTA, the RCC, the EBRD and others; and with a new approach to our public engagement, aiming at fewer but more targeted events on topical themes for the region, including the recently proposed "Berlin Plus", the issue of constitutional reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the future of the Belgrade -Priština dialogue, and others. As ever, we invite you to continue following our busy schedule and to consider joining us in one (or more!) of our educational, research and public engagement activities ●

Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis

Director, LSEE Research on SEE

LSEE in the media

LSEE Staff in the news

- L'Agence France-Presse (AFP)
- Al Jazeera
- BBC World Service (UK)
- Blic (Serbia)
- Capital (Bulgaria)
- Dnevni Avaz (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- The Economist (UK)
- Euronews
- The Financial Times (UK)
- The Observer (UK)
- Pravda (Slovakia)
- Radio Free Europe
- Reuters
- Telegram (Croatia)
- and more...

Others about LSEE on Twitter - selected tweets

@LSEE_LSE - LSEE-Research on SEE

Dušan Mašić @dusanmasic - BBC @LSEE_LSE:

Sa @LSEE_LSE i Ivor Roberts pricamo o Milosevicu. Blast from the past.

Adis Merdzanovic @adismerdzanovic - Political Scientist, St Antony's College, University of Oxford @LSEE_LSE:

Great time at @LSEE_LSE the other day talking about liberalism in BiH, thanks everyone!

Paul Edwards @PaulEdwards11 - Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy Skopje - Macedonia @LSEE_LSE:

Glad to take part in LSEE/Central Bank conference on Social Cohesion. Important topic at a time of political unrest.





NATIONAL BANK OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

3rd Conference of the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE: "Social Cohesion & Economic Governance" 6-7 April 2017



Group photo of members of the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE and National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia affiliates



Keynote Lecture given by Dr Jelena Žarković Rakić, University of Belgrade and Director, FREN; Chaired by Aneta Krstevska, Chief Economist, NBRM



Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis, LSEE Director, presents his paper 'Gender-based biases in the Greek labour market during the crisis'

The 3rd LSEE Research Network Conference was held in Skopje on Thursday and Friday, 6-7 April 2017, the first sessions running in parallel to the 6th Annual Research Conference of

the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (NBRM). It was organised in cooperation with the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (NBRM), University American College Skopje (UACS), with the support of the European University of Tirana (UET).

The aim of the conference was to provide a forum for the presentation, dissemination and discussion of the latest research findings on topics related to questions of social and economic cohesion and economic governance in South Eastern Europe, and in countries in the wider 'transition' region. Researchers from all social science disciplines, including social policy, political economy, economics, political science, public administration, sociology, and socio-legal studies, were invited to participate. More than 45 papers were presented at the conference, with academics coming from seven countries. The audience included affiliates of the NBRM, as well as the

wider policy community, resulting in a vibrant exchange of research findings from across the region.

The co-organisation of the conference with the NBRM also allowed for an interchange of ideas and public policy views between specialists on macro-economic and monetary policy, and social scientists studying the Balkan labour markets, education systems, policies of fiscal decentralisation and others. Cultivating such exchanges is important and indeed proved popular with all conference participants, as too often the two policy spheres and two spheres of academic enquiry remain too weakly connected, their synergies and interconnections too thinly explored.

We plan to explore future avenues of cooperation between LSEE and the NBRM, and indeed with other national and regional institutions of macroeconomic policy in the Balkans ●

News from the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE



Prof Nikica Mojsoska Blazevski, Head of Education Systems Working Group

In 2017, a large project which was implemented by the WG on Education has been completed, following an official publication of six individual studies of Western Balkan countries, titled "From University to Employment: Higher Education Provision and Labour Market Needs", including a joint report. The project has been funded by the European Commission and spanned over three years time. It brought new knowledge and information about the pathways and labour market experience of young people completing tertiary education. At the same time, it provided novel data on the employers' views and experience of recruiting young graduates.

Members of the education WG were also individually involved in projects

conducted by the **Labour Markets WG**, headed by **Prof Mihail Arandarenko**, University of Belgrade.



Prof Merita Xhumari, Head of the Social Protection Working Group

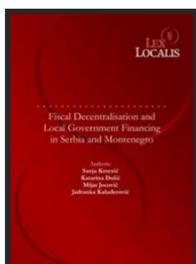
An integrated approach guided the activities of the Social Protection LSEE Research Network WG which developed its activities in collaboration with two other working groups. Firstly, in collaboration with the Labour Market WG was realized a study on Higher Education and the Labour Market in Western Balkans, with a focus on analysing the tendencies of increasing unemployment rates of young graduates. Introducing instruments of social protection to young graduates was considered a pressing need by the government and other stakeholders. Its results were

presented at the University of Tennessee, US in February 2017 .

Secondly, the members of the Social Protection WG joined the project activities of the **Working Group on Decentralisation**, headed by **Dr Sanja Kmezić** (University of Graz), in analysing the patterns of change of the decentralisation policy. Decentralisation is the main trend in the administration of social protection after 1990 in the Western Balkans. As a conclusion, the increase of the local governments' responsibilities in providing social protection should be associated with increasing their capacities, especially financial resources. As a proposal for the next year, activities could result in a seminar/workshop on research-led teaching, as a way for using the common research results in higher education and discussing new approaches in welfare states in the Western Balkans ●

LSE Consulting Book Launch

'Fiscal Decentralisation and Local Government Financing in Serbia and Montenegro', Maribor: Lex Localis



On 17 November 2016, **Will Bartlett** chaired a seminar at LSEE at which **Sanja Kmezić**, **Katarina Đulić** and **Jadranka Kaluđerović** presented their recently published book arising from an RRPP-funded project that was carried out from 2014 to 2016 investigating the impact of fiscal decentralisation on

local economic development in Montenegro and Serbia. Two Working Papers from the project are being revised for publication in the LSEE "Papers on Decentralisation and Regional Policy" series. Follow-on funding from the RRPP has enabled the establishment of a Working Group on Decentralisation, which has become part of the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE ●



Left to right: Dr Jadranka Kaluđerović, Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses; Dr Will Bartlett, LSEE; Dr Katarina Đulić, Metropolitan University; Dr Sanja Kmezić, University of Graz

10 Years of CEFTA2006

Our 'Best Paper' competition



December 2016 marked 10 years since the signing of the CEFTA agreement in the Balkans. The agreement, establishing a free trade area in a region that saw so much disintegration and fragmentation in the 15 years preceding it, formed the basis for genuine economic cooperation in the region and opened an ambitious agenda for integration. Soon CEFTA2006 – as it became known – expanded beyond the ‘traditional’ areas to include trade in services and investment issues.

To celebrate the 10 years of CEFTA2006, the CEFTA

Secretariat and the Montenegrin Chairmanship in Office invited LSEE to organise a “Best Paper” competition on the theme of trade cooperation in the region. Our competition attracted a

the beneficial effects that CEFTA has had on the region, both from an economic and from a regional cooperation perspective. A panel of experts assessed all papers and awarded three prizes worth a total of €5,000.

practitioners working on trade-related issues in the region.

We plan to launch this new Working Group at the CEFTA Week in Belgrade in November of 2017. With the support of CEFTA, we hope that the Working

Group will become a central resource for CEFTA, collating and analysing trade-related data for the region and drawing relevant policy implications that can be communicated to the policy community within and beyond CEFTA.

We hope to be reporting on our progress with this in early 2018,

so stay tuned! For now, we simply register here our congratulations to



Best paper Award: “Regional Integration, Trade and Development in the CEFTA Region” - Venera Demukaj (RIT Kosovo) & Luca Jacopo Uberti (University of Otago)

The winning papers – by **Venera Demukaj** (Rochester Institute of Technology Kosovo – first prize), **Marjan Petreski** (University American College Skopje – runner up) and **Jelena Trivić** (University of Banja Luka – runner up) – received their awards in a special ceremony that took place during the CEFTA Week meeting in Podgorica in December 2016.

Building on this successful initiative, we are currently making plans to continue and deepen our collaboration with the CEFTA institutions.

To this effect, we are setting up a new Working Group within our Research Network on SEE, which will bring together a pool of academics and policy



Runner-up Award: “Has CEFTA increased members trade? Evidence with an enlarged set of plausibly exogenous instruments” - Marjan Petreski (University American College Skopje)

good number of submissions by academics from across the region – each highlighting from a different angle



Runner-up Award: “Institutions and Intra-regional trade in CEFTA 2006: A gravity approach” - Jelena Trivić (University of Banja Luka) & Łukasz Klimczak (University of Economics, Cracow, Poland)

CEFTA for its 10th anniversary and to the prize-winners of our competition for their excellent work ●



Research by LSEE staff

Will Bartlett



Over the last year, I have led two large research projects, both funded by the European Commission. One of these, completed in December 2016, was a study on "Higher Education Provision and Labour Market Needs in the Western Balkans". The other research project investigated the role of Special Economic Zones in attracting foreign direct investment and promoting economic development in the Western Balkans. The project has recently successfully ended with the delivery of a final report to the Commission.

Fatmir Besimi



Over the past academic year my research interest has been on the political economy of EU integration in the Western Balkans. The main focus was on the role of EU integration in accelerating credible structural reforms in the Western Balkans and convergence with the EU. The empirical analysis showed a positive relationship between EU-related structural reforms (towards the Copenhagen Criteria) and economic convergence. Together with Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis we developed a theoretical model demonstrating the mechanisms of policy decisions on reforms under the political constraints of national policymakers and the role that EU can play in accelerating reforms.

Vesna Bojčić-Dželilović



My research on the Western Balkans in the last year focused on completing a study on the role of the private sector in post-war reconstruction in

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The article titled 'It's not just the economy stupid: The Multidirectional security effects of the private sector in post-conflict reconstruction' was published in the journal *Conflict, Security and Development*. A new area of research looks at the role of international financial institutions in post-communist and post-war transition in the Western Balkans.

Spyros Economides



In the last year Spyros Economides has been working on 'The EU, Grand Strategy and the Challenge of Rising and Revisionist Powers', a chapter in a book he edited (with James Sperling), 'The EU Security Strategies for Regional and Global Governance' (Routledge, forthcoming 2017). He was also working (with Dr James Ker-Lindsay) on a research article titled, 'Outsourced Conditionality: The Problems and Pitfalls of Incorporating External Bodies into the EU Accession Process'. His other on going research concentrates on EU policies in the Western Balkans and the broader theme of Europeanisation and National Foreign Policies.

Max Fras



My research this year focused on youth policy and the role of international institutions and frameworks in policy-making in Southeast Europe and post-Soviet states. I continued researching into emerging trends in youth policy-making in both regions including cross-sectoral youth policy, evidence-based policy-making and monitoring and evaluation. I have recently been commissioned to write a chapter on youth policy governance in Georgia for the European Union's EU Youth Wiki, as well as a policy paper on identity and belonging in youth policy for the Council of Europe.

Eli Gateva



Over the past year I continued my research into the impact of post-accession conditionality on Bulgaria and Romania. I have completed an article on European Union Enlargement Policy for Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics. I have contributed to the LSE EUROPP Blog and European Futures Blog. I attended as a keynote speaker the fourth edition of the "Security in the Black Sea Region. Shared Challenges, Sustainable Future" Conference, organised by Romanian intelligence services in partnership with Harvard University and the National Intelligence University.

Simona Guerra



Simona is Senior Research Fellow at LSEE and Associate Professor in Politics at the University of Leicester. Her research focuses on Euroscepticism; democratization and Euroscepticism in the post-communist region; religion and Euroscepticism. In March 2017 she published a co-edited book 'Euroscepticism, democracy and the Media. Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe' (Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology), and is currently working on implications of the impact on citizens' engagement with politics in the Western Balkans in light of the countries' integration into the EU (and holding a workshop in Sarajevo in July 7, 2017). She is finalizing her monograph on religion and Euroscepticism for Routledge.

James Ker-Lindsay



My main research project has been on how various EU members engage with Kosovo, which should lead to an

... more research by LSEE staff

edited volume. I am also working on two journal special issues. The first is on how EU members approach EU enlargement in the Western Balkans. The second examines the concept of 'engagement without recognition' in international politics. I have also completed several articles. One explores how Turkey's EU accession was a factor in the Brexit referendum. Another looks at the way in which Britain led international opposition to the 1983 unilateral declaration on independence by Northern Cyprus. I also wrote a piece on Secession and Recognition in Foreign Policy for the Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics.

Denisa Kostovicova



Dr Kostovicova & collaborators from KCL and University of the Arts London, launched a two-year project 'Art and Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community.' This inter-disciplinary project investigates post-conflict reconciliation by combining history, political science, art and creative practice. Denisa became a co-ordinator of the Bosnia and Herzegovina work-package of the ESRC Strategic Network on Gender Violence Across War and Peace, based at the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security, 2017-2018. Denisa presented the findings of the recently-completed Leverhulme-funded research at the 22nd Annual Association for the Study of Nationalities ASN World Convention, in New York.

Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski



A member of the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in South Eastern Europe, Prof. Nikica Mojsoska Blazevski was awarded a two-months research

fellowship at the LSEE. While at LSEE, Nikica conducted a research on the main determinants of the school performance of children from low-income families. Findings of the study with a relevance to South Eastern Europe will provide rich evidence for the policymakers on how to improve schooling outcomes of poor children in the region.

Vassilis Monastiriotis



Over the past year my research relating to Southeast Europe and the wider EU neighbourhood concentrated mainly on two externally funded projects: a project on "External and internal imbalances in South Mediterranean countries: challenges and costs", funded by the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Institutes of Economics Sciences (FEMISE) and co-authored with Prof Doaa Salman (Egypt), examining the issue of fiscal and current account sustainability in the MENA region and the fiscal consolidation policies implemented there since the crisis; and one concerning the 'Regional Analysis of Employment and Social Measures in the Western Balkans', funded by the Regional Cooperation Council, undertaken in collaboration with the Belgrade-based Foundation for the Advancement of Economics (FREN) and colleagues from the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE. The project studied the range of active labour market policy measures pursued in the region in recent years and developed a classification of 'varieties' of labour market intervention in the region. Additionally, I continued my work with former LSEE Visiting Fellow Dr Iva Tomić on our paper on 'Youth unemployment and education choices in Croatia', which is now near completion; and I collaborated with LSEE Senior Visiting Fellow Dr Fatmir Besimi on research looking at 'The Political Economy of EU Conditionality and Structural Reforms'.

Enkeleida Tahiraj



Dr Enkeleida Tahiraj is researching rights based approach to social policy reform and 'innovation' by way of examining policies, impact, actors and discourses as they are implemented recently in the WB region. Social protection as an issue of uttermost importance, crosscuts through the social fabric, factoring income, employment, education, health, environment among its concerns. As such reforms of social protection become de facto indicators of Government efforts to influence citizen's welfare in a broad sense. Underpinned by principles of universal rights, her research examines the operationalization of social policy and the emergence of a new paradigm.

Jarosław Wiśniewski



My research covers two areas—(1) energy security in the Balkans, or more specifically how countries in SEE use energy-based initiatives, such as pipelines, as tools in their own foreign policies. My focus is primarily on two pipelines: Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and its extension, the Ionian-Adriatic Pipeline (IAP) and on what seems to be the increasingly defunct Turkish Pipeline. It looks at their famous predecessors - Nabucco and South Stream. I delivered my public lecture on the topic of energy security in the Balkans in November 15, 2017; (2) Russian involvement in SEE, in particular in terms of strategic communication and the narratives it promotes primarily in Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia. I was also involved in a long-term project on Kosovo, titled 'The Politics of (Non) Recognition—Lessons Learned and Knowledge Transfer' ●

Visiting Speaker Programme

A series of research and policy seminars



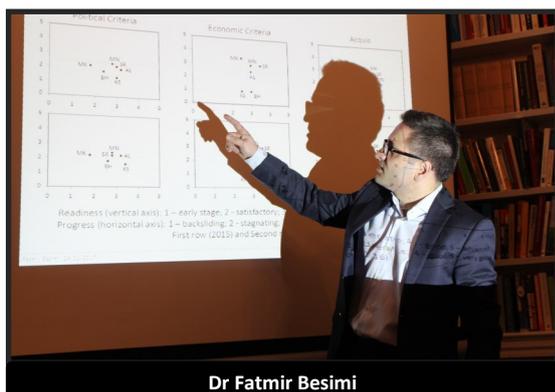
Dr Iva Tomić

Seven years onwards, the LSEE Visiting Speaker Programme has continued its excellent range of contributions throughout the Michaelmas and Lent Terms.

Held on occasional Tuesday evenings, the programme has continued to be an important forum for new and established scholars, working on aspects of contemporary economics, politics and international relations in South East Europe.

This year, the programme started with **Dr Iva Tomić** from the **Institute of Economics, Zagreb**, who presented her research on youth unemployment, education and training in Croatia since the crisis. The seminar focused on individual, household and area determinants (e.g., gender, household size, and local unemployment, respectively) of youth exclusion from the labour market, and more specifically on the 'paths' via which young people enter a status of labour market exclusion.

This was followed by a talk on the politicisation of energy security in South Eastern Europe, in particular Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, presented by **Dr Jarosław Wiśniewski, LSEE Visiting Fellow**. Dr Wisniewski examined how pipeline projects are gradually becoming not only tools of energy policy, but also a tool of foreign policies of SEE countries seeking European enlargement. This was followed by an engaging exposition on



Dr Fatmir Besimi

the social welfare effects of progressive income taxation in the Balkans, more specifically in Serbia, by **Dr Saša Ranđelović, Assistant Professor of Public Finance, Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade**.

In the Lent Term, the programme continued with **Dr Fatmir Besimi, LSEE Senior Visiting Fellow**, who spoke about the role of EU integration in enhancing credible structural reforms in the Western Balkans. The study's aim was to suggest possible policies for accelerating the reform process in the region. In addition, **Dr Adis Merdzanovic, postdoctoral Junior Research Fellow at South East European Studies at the University of Oxford**, analysed the prospect of liberalism taking hold in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in light of existing or proposed ideological alternatives. He concluded that in order for this to happen, liberalism must be understood not only in its political and economic aspects, but as part of social justice practice and direct democratic engagement.

Finally, **LSEE Research Network member and Professor of Social Policy at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, Maja Gerovska Mitev**, presented her research on the effectiveness of the ongoing active labour market programs in Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presentation tried to assess whether existing activation policies in the Western Balkans are only populist, short-term solutions that bring greater costs to the public budgets than consequent benefits.



Dr Saša Ranđelović



Dr Adis Merdzanovic



Dr Jarosław Wiśniewski and Dr Vassilis Monastiriots

Podcasts for all of the events are available on the LSEE website ●

LSEE Public Events 2016-17

LSEE Public Lecture

'A defining moment in European and transatlantic resilience: Croatian perspectives'

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia



Left to right: Dr Fatmir Besimi, LSEE Senior Visiting Fellow; Dr Jarek Wisniewski, LSEE Visiting Fellow; Dr Spyros Economides, Hellenic Observatory Director; Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of Croatia; Professor Kevin Featherstone, Head of the European Institute; Dr Iva Tomić, LSEE Visiting Fellow; H.E. Dr Ivan Grdešić, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to the UK (front); Mr Andrew Dalgleish, UK Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia (back); Ms Tena Prelec, LSEE Associate

The Croatian president **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović** addressed the LSE audience in front of a fully packed Hong Kong Theatre, at a talk chaired by Professor Kevin Featherstone. A former Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Head Negotiator for Croatia's accession to the EU and

issues was apparent as she outlined her case for European and



Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, addresses the LSE audience

you fully from all threats in these digital times. Embracing and managing change is the right approach". These statements arguably sit at odds with her unconcealed fondness of



The Croatian President is greeted at LSE by Professor Kevin Featherstone, Head of the European Institute

transatlantic resilience, addressing European-wide issues such as the terror threat, the economic crisis, and the migration emergency. Grabar-Kitarović stated that one of the main decisions

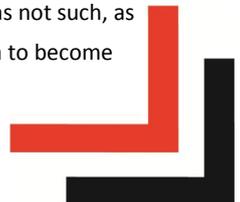
Donald Trump during his recent visit to Europe.

During the question time, she raised some eyebrows when comparing the EU and Yugoslavia, claiming that the European Union was a democratic construct for letting the UK leave, whereas Yugoslavia was not such, as

Croatian Ambassador to the US, Grabar-Kitarović has also served as the first female Assistant Secretary-General in the history of NATO (2011-2014). The importance she still places on security

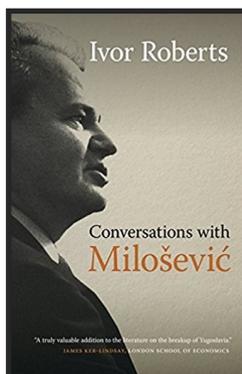
Europeans currently face is whether they opt for an open or a closed society, claiming that in today's interconnected world closing off would be futile: "Erecting walls cannot protect

it did not allow Croatia to become independent ●



Book Launch

'Conversations with Milošević' — Sir Ivor Roberts



Sir Ivor Roberts, president of Trinity College, University of Oxford, has worked in the British Diplomatic Service for nearly forty years, including as the British Ambassador to Yugoslavia in the 1990s. He presented his latest work – 'Conversations with Milošević'. The

book is a first-hand portrayal of the 'Butcher of the Balkans', the Serbian president whose ambitions sparked the Bosnian conflict. Sir Ivor defined him as both a pyromaniac and a firefighter, who would however never admit to being the former.

During the fascinating talk (chaired by **Tena Prelec**) and the lively discussion that followed, the author gave a rare insight into Slobodan Milošević's relationship with the Bosnian Serb wartime leaders – Ratko Mladić, Radovan Karadžić and Momčilo Krajišnik, with the Western powers, and with the one whom he defined as the most important person in Milošević's political ascent – his wife Mira. Through these personalities, Sir Ivor analysed the unfolding of the Kosovo conflict, reflecting on how international recognition of Kosovo set a disastrous precedent for the Russian annexation of Crimea ●



Sir Ivor Roberts, Former British Ambassador to Yugoslavia (left) and Tena Prelec, Chair (right)

'The Belgrade-Priština dialogue: The normalisation of relations and regional stability' — Marko Đurić

Following difficulties in the negotiating process, **Mr Marko Đurić**, the Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, gave a timely public lecture at the LSE, discussing the current state of the Belgrade-Priština dialogue. Mr Đurić said that although EU accession is widely believed to be the main reason for leaving the channel of communications open, the larger goal is strategic stability in the region and normalised interactions between

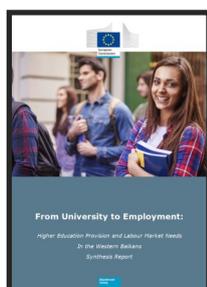
residents and institutions. He argued that for Serbia resolving the status issue was not a necessary prerequisite for a normal dialogue and that in his view it was possible to progress jointly to economic prosperity, while at the same time isolating as much as possible disagreements over recognition. The talk was chaired by **Dr James Ker-Lindsay**, LSEE Senior Visiting Fellow, and was followed by an engaging discussion ●



Marko Đurić (left) and Dr James Ker-Lindsay, Chair (right)

Impact & policy engagement

‘From University to Employment: Higher Education Provision and Labour Market Needs in the Western Balkans’



The research project on higher education provision and labour market needs, carried out from 2015-2016 by a team of researchers from LSEE and

the Western Balkans resulted in a synthesis report and six individual country reports published by the European Commission, Dec. 2016.

The report contained a set of evidence-based recommendations to improve the effectiveness of higher education systems in the Western Balkans especially in supporting the transition to work of university graduates. The conclusions broadly called for an improvement in the quality of the education provided, including through a modernisation of curricula and teaching methods, to better align graduate skills with the needs of the labour market. More support for university-business cooperation is an essential component of the policy recommendations, together with improved support for graduate job search. The Report has been widely disseminated and the main findings were presented at consultation seminars held in Tirana and Belgrade in April 2017. In June, LSEE’s **Will Bartlett** presented a summary of the research findings and policy recommendations at the Joint Science Conference (JSC) in Paris, part of the Berlin Process and organised on an annual basis by the Academies of Science of France and Germany. The JSC issued a concluding Statement, which adopted several of the key recommendations of the research project. This Statement will be discussed at the forthcoming Western Balkans Summit in Trieste.

A high-level Expert Group is to be established to take forward the recommendations and develop an Action Plan over the coming year ●

Staff Activities in the SEE region: a selection

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Albania | Dr Enkeleida Tahiraj took part in a conference panel to launch the findings of a UN-funded study on attitudes to violence and gender equality in Albania, Tirana on April 28th, 2017. |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Tena Prelec presented a paper on the political attitudes of the Serbian diaspora at the 2nd Annual Conference of the Western Balkans Migration Network - “Migration in the Western Balkans: What do we know?”, Sarajevo, 19-20 May 2017. |
| Croatia | Dr Will Bartlett attended the conference “Challenges of Europe”, on 17-19 May, organised by the University of Split, at Bol on the Island of Brač, Croatia, where he was speaker on a panel titled “Decentralisation in Croatia”. |
| Greece | Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis gave a webinar for the synpraksis (syn*πραξις) network titled “Depressing wages – wage reforms and adjustments in Greece and their logic”, 30 November 2016. |
| Macedonia | Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis spoke in a policy panel at the Annual Conference of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, together with Poul Thomsen (IMF), Peter Sanfey (EBRD) and Dimitar Bogov (Governor, NBRM), 5 April 2017. |
| Montenegro | Dr Will Bartlett presented a paper on employment policies in the Western Balkans at a conference titled “Employment and Social Affairs Platform”, Meeting of Ministries of Labour of the Western Balkan Economies, Podgorica, Montenegro, 13 - 14 December 2016. |
| Romania | Dr Eli Gateva was a key note speaker at the fourth edition of the “Security in the Black Sea Region. Shared Challenges, Sustainable Future” Programme, which took place in Romania between May 28-June 2, 2017. |
| Serbia | Dr James Ker-Lindsay presented a paper titled ‘Managing Peace and Stability in South East Europe at a time of EU Uncertainty’, Belgrade Security Forum, Serbia, 12-14 October 2016. |



Who's Who

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