



LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE – Launch Conference

The Social Consequences of the Economic Crisis in South Eastern Europe

14-15 December 2011

VENUE - Graham Wallace Room, 5th Floor, Old Building

Over the last two decades the countries of South East Europe have been undergoing lengthy structural reforms as a consequence of the combined processes economic transition, accession to the EU, post-conflict reconstruction and development. These countries are located within a region which has over the last twenty years suffered from political instability, multiple economic crises, growing social polarization, ethnic fragmentation and increasing spatial inequalities. Although not at the centre of the recent global economic crisis, they have been badly affected and many have been kept afloat only by determined intervention and support from the international financial institutions. They also face worsening of their social climate as a result of drastic austerity measures with increasing levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Most observers doubt that the period of rapid growth which took place before the onset of the crisis will return and that consequently these countries face a protracted period of slow growth leading to widening social problems and deepening social exclusion of significant proportions of their populations. In a context of insecure statehood of several countries, widespread informal economies and organised crime and with often weak state administrations at both central and local level, the prospect of deepening social problems raises concerns for the future stability of the region. Despite the importance of the issues, the study of social cohesion is underdeveloped in SEE, in comparison with West Europe or the Central European transition countries. This conference will present research by members of the recently formed LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in South East Europe on the social consequences of the economic crisis and will open a debate with representatives of international organisations active in the region on the contribution that research can make to regional policy and strategy development for social cohesion in the face of continuing and potentially deepening economic crisis.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 14th December

10.00 – 10.30 Registration and coffee

10.30-10.45 Introduction and Welcome

Professor Kevin Featherstone, Director, European Institute, LSE

Vassilis Monastiriotis, LSEE Coordinator, European Institute, LSE

(I) 10.45-12.45: LSEE Research Network – Contribution to Regional Policy and Strategy Development

Chair: Mary O'Mahony, IFI Coordination Office, Brussels

The LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion

Will Bartlett, European Institute, LSE

Labour Market Policy in the Western Balkans

Jelena Jakulj and Frederique Rychner, DG Employment

Western Balkan Investment Framework and the social sector

Thomas de Bethune, DG Enlargement, European Commission

Regional socio-economic programmes and structures in the Western Balkans

Emina Kadric, Socio-Economic Adviser, IFI Coordination Office

Discussion on Possible Next Steps for the LSEE Research Network

12.45-14.00 Lunch

(Senior Common Room, 5th Floor, Old Building)

(II) 14.00-15.30: Overview of issues

Chair: Professor Kevin Featherstone, European Institute, LSE

The social consequences of the global economic crisis in the Western Balkans

Professor Milica Uvalic, University of Perugia

Political economy of the post-crisis economic growth and development model

Professor Mihail Arandarenko, Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

(III) 16.00-18.00: Labour Markets

Chair: Vassilis Monastiriotes, European Institute, LSE

The impact of global crisis on unemployment in BiH

Vjeko Domljan, Centre for Regional Development Studies (CRES), Mostar

The impact of the global economic crisis on the labour market and basic social services in Macedonia

Maja Gerovska, Faculty of Philosophy, University St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje

Over education and mismatch in the labour market in Montenegro

Bozidar Sisevic, Research Department, Employment Service of Montenegro, Podgorica

Thursday 15th December

(IV) 9.30-11.00 Social security and pensions

Chair: Will Bartlett, European Institute, LSE

Pension Trajectories in the Western Balkans

Professor Merita Xhumari, Faculty of Social Science, University of Tirana

Past imperfect, present tense: institutional challenges in a time of uncertainty

Enkeleida Tahiraj, Social Policy Advisor to the Delegation of the European Union, Tirana

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

(V) 11.30-12.45: Health reforms

Chair: Chris Gerry, SSEES, University College London

Health reforms in South East Europe

Will Bartlett, LSE and Bernd Rechel, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

The recent health reform in Croatia: a true reform or just a fundraising exercise?

Sandra Svaljek, Institute of Economics, Zagreb

12.45 - 14.00 Lunch

(Senior Dining Room, 5th Floor, Old Building)

(VI) 14.00-15.30: Informal sector and skill mismatch

Chair: Claire Gordon, European Institute, LSE

The impact of the economic crisis on the informal sector in South Eastern Europe

Professor Jovan Pejkovski, Faculty of Philosophy, University St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje

The influence of the global crisis in Kosovo: channels of impact and social effects

Ardiana Gashi, Research Department, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, Pristina

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

(VII) 16.00-17.00: Round Table: developing a research programme on social cohesion in SEE

Chair: Will Bartlett, European Institute, LSE

Discussion led by Mary O'Mahony, IFI Coordination Office and Vassilis Monastiriotis, LSEE

END OF CONFERENCE