



**L'Institut français des relations
internationales (Ifri)**

Programme Europe du Sud - Est



**London School of Economics
and Political Science (LSE)**

**LSEE: Research on South East
Europe**

CALL FOR RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSALS

THEME

Addressing Energy Poverty in South East Europe: Status Quo and Policy Options

The Ifri's South East Europe Program and the LSEE invite researchers with a recognized interest in contemporary South East Europe to submit an application for funding in order to carry out a project on the theme highlighted above. This call has been made possible by the funding generously provided by the Latsis Foundation, to which we wish to record our gratitude. This new initiative is consistent with the Ifri's South East Europe Program's mission to promote public policy research and to foster academic collaboration and networks, in cooperation with its partner the London School of Economics (LSE).

The Call is opened to all researchers with a university affiliation, Master minimum or comparative research experience. They have to be fluent in English.

Applications from groups of researchers are welcome, but in this case all member of the research team should meet the eligibility criteria.

Research grants of up to 12000€ in total will be awarded to the successful applicants for research on energy poverty in South East Europe, to be undertaken normally within a period of one year. The participants will be invited to present the results in a conference in Brussels, in early summer 2010. They shall also send an interim report to Ifri and LSEE, demonstrating the state of progress.

Payments will be made in two equal installments, the first on commencement of the project and the second on completion of the defined outputs. The successful applicant(s) must provide a relevant research account in their host institution for the transfer of the grant.

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Call for Research Tender 1/2009

Project Title: *Addressing Energy Poverty in South East Europe: Status Quo and Policy Options*

Energy policies are decisive for the development of a country. Limited or unequal access to resources is one important obstacle to development and has to be overcome via appropriate policy measures. As the UNDP and IEA state, "access to energy services is an indispensable element of sustainable human development. Without access to modern and commercial energy, poor countries can be trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, social instability and underdevelopment".¹

South East Europe is particularly exposed to the problem of energy poverty: an important setback took place during the Nineties, when wars destroyed also energy infrastructure, insufficiently reconstructed since, and economic activity was hampered at large. This setback which enhances fragmentation and the collapse of governance is the main factor explaining energy poverty today. Instead of improving since 1992, the situation is worsening. Regional differences and the rift between cities and the country-side represent an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration while assessing energy poverty. The citizens of the South Eastern countries do not experience solidarity with their states or governments and find it legitimate to commit energy related crime, like energy theft or vandalism on infrastructures. Consequently, no investors are willing to take the risk to develop new infrastructures, despite the fact that entire populations are not connected to any grid. Energy poverty is a vicious circle.

Estimates from the IEA quote some 16% of the population in South East Europe as concerned by the phenomenon, but available statistics are insufficient today, due to a poor state of statistical authorities.² In some parts of the region more than 40% of the households face insufficient heating supply and important indoor pollution as one consequence, according to IEA's Report on Energy in the Western Balkans (2008).

The specific character of energy poverty in South East Europe is inadequate access to energy services, lack of reliable electricity supply, and the inefficient use of energy. Energy Poverty in South East Europe, while being a major preoccupation of organizations like the Energy Community South East Europe, based in Vienna, remains underresearched today. And insufficient attention is paid to it

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- A mapping of the energy poverty in the country, taking regional and local differences into account
- An analysis of today's political responses, both from the region, as those applied in other comparable regions. What is the potential role of prices, taxes, subsidies, increased energy efficiency but also renewables, in order to eradicate energy poverty in the region and to open the path for sustainable development?
- Studying the regional context, the added value of interconnection, exchange, and the realistic definition of a common strategy. Here, the action of the Energy Community South East Europe which has identified energy poverty as a key priority is important with respect to standards and policy design and should be taken into account.

Researchers are invited to present projects

- addressing energy poverty specifically on one or two countries of the region (eventually a city or a county). The IEA report on Energy in the Western Balkans (2008) is recommended as a basis for the enquiry, which should be completed with regional data. How does the country deal with energy poverty? Which are the measures developed, if so, in terms of fiscal policy, targeted poverty relief, energy efficiency, renewables? The researchers should develop policy recommendations.
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