

# LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE

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# Background

- Growing social impact of the economic crisis
  - Rising unemployment
  - Increasing poverty after several years of progress
  - Vulnerable groups increasingly marginalised
  - Low employment rate of women
- Implies failure of old growth model based on
  - External financing on consumption
  - Low domestic investment
  - Ideological privatisation leading to deindustrialisation

# Aims of the research network

- Develop focused policy-relevant research on social issues in South East Europe
  - Research that is relevant and usable by national and international policy makers
  - Underfunding of research compared to pre-accession situation – ACE research programme
- Developing sustained research collaboration between LSEE and research partners in SEE
- Strong participation by researchers in SEE in building and managing network

# Research areas: thematic

- Social impact of the economic crisis
- Regional cooperation to combat social exclusion
- Decentralisation reforms effect on social policy
- EU 2020 and inclusive growth in region
- EU cohesion policy and structural funds in region

# Research areas: policy fields

- Employment and labour market policies
- Job creation through self-employment and SMEs
- Education and skills
- Health system reforms
- Pension reforms
- Social assistance and poverty reduction
- Social entrepreneurship and social innovation systems
- Ethnic discrimination and social exclusion e.g. Roma
- Social housing and other social infrastructure

# History of Research Network

- Research Network was established at meeting of LSEE Board Meeting in June 2011
- LSEE RN Committee established (WB, VM, CG)
- Individual researchers and research institutions invited to collaborate
  - So far 26 leading social science researchers from throughout region have agreed to take part
  - Core team to be established as lead member in each country?
- Actively seeking new members, but not open membership
- First event at RCC conference on “New Skills for New jobs in the Western Balkans” in Sarajevo October 2011
  - Researchers session

# Methods: collaboration

- LSEE Research Network has signed MoU with Regional Cooperation Council in Sarajevo
- Collaboration on RCC “Social Agenda for Western Balkans” involving series of conferences followed by research workshops
  - Supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Support from DG Enlargement for launch conference
- Collaboration with local research institutions and think tanks
  - First workshop on employment policies to be co-organised with FREN, Belgrade in March 2012

# Methods: research agenda

- Wide ranging research agenda not confined to particular theoretic model or approach
  - But research should aim at a critical perspective and based on well-developed theoretical frameworks
- Inter-disciplinary perspective with core areas of economics, political economy, sociology, social policy, policy studies
  - Both quantitative and qualitative methods used
- Future aim to develop joint research projects and/or research programmes in specified thematic and policy areas