



## **LSEE Research Conference**

Zagreb, Croatia, 10-11 May 2010

in collaboration with IMO, Zagreb, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung  
with support from the National Bank of Greece

## **Regional Policy and Decentralisation in South East Europe**

### **Background**

Regional development is a key dimension of EU policy, designed to ensure convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and territorial cooperation. In line with this approach, new regions have been defined within several countries in South East Europe, and programmes to promote regional economic development, as well as cross-border programmes, have burgeoned. Efforts have been made to promote entrepreneurial activity, develop regional innovation systems, and attract FDI to less developed areas. Despite this, in many countries the gaps between the more developed and the less developed regions have continued to widen. Alongside the introduction of new regional policies, a decentralization of administrative power and responsibility to lower municipal levels of government has been carried out in several South East European countries in recent years in order to consolidate democratic systems, strengthen local governance, promote local economic development, and provide public services more responsive to local needs. However, decentralisation may fail to achieve the desired effects if not adequately supplemented by fiscal decentralisation. If not managed carefully, it may increase ethnic tensions and strengthen local elites rather than distributing power and influence widely among the local population.

This conference is designed to explore the implementation of regional development policies and decentralisation policies in South East Europe, the interaction between them, and their effectiveness in different political and institutional environments. Will these policies contribute to strengthening the ongoing process of Europeanisation, or might they rather deepen localisation and fragmentation of the political and economic systems? The conference seeks to address these issues with a focus on South East Europe, although contributions covering other European regions are also welcome. Contributions are invited from scholars in all fields of the social sciences.

### Conference themes

- The evolution of spatial inequalities in South East Europe
- The politics and political economy of decentralisation and regional policy
- The role of the FDI, entrepreneurship, and innovation in regional and local development
- The impact of EU programmes on local and regional policy and practice
- The impact of decentralisation on local public services and local economic development
- The integration of administrative and fiscal decentralisation
- Decentralisation, social inclusion, and ethnic relations
- The lessons from cross-border cooperation programmes
- Case studies relevant to one or more of the above topics

### Conference format

The conference will take place in plenary format from 10 to 11 May. Twelve papers will be chosen on the basis of abstracts submitted and 4 invited papers. There will be altogether 8 sessions of 90 minutes each, with 2 papers per session. Each session will have a discussant. A practitioner panel will also be organised. The organisers will approach a publisher after the notification of paper acceptance, and intend to publish an edited book of selected papers within 12 months of the date of the conference.

### Important dates

- 26 February 2010: Deadline for submission of abstracts
- 5 March 2010: Notification of acceptance
- 3 May 2010: Delivery of full conference paper; circulation to discussants
- 10-11 May 2010: Conference Zagreb

### Abstracts

Abstracts, which should be no more than 500 words in length, should be sent by 26 February to the following address:

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### Scientific Committee

Professor Kevin Featherstone, European Institute, LSE  
Professor Sevet Pamuk, European Institute, LSE  
Dr. Vassilis Monastiriotis, European Institute LSE  
Dr Spyros Economides, European Institute, LSE  
Dr William Bartlett, LSEE  
Dr. James Ker-Lindsay, LSEE  
Dr. Sanja Malekovic, IMO, Zagreb



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### **Key note speakers**

1. Paul Mylonas, National Bank of Greece
2. Mirko Hempel, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

### **Travel, accommodation and catering**

Travel and accommodation for up to three nights will be paid by the organisers for one presenter of each accepted paper. A buffet lunch will be provided on each day of the conference. A conference dinner for all participants, provided by the organisers, will take place on the evening of 10 May.

### **Organisers**

The conference is organised by the newly established LSE Research Unit on South East Europe (LSEE) in collaboration with the Institute of International Relations, IMO, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Zagreb. The conference also benefits from financial assistance from the National Bank of Greece, for whose support we are extremely grateful.

### **About LSEE**

LSEE (LSE Research on South East Europe) is a research unit established within LSE's European Institute. It was officially launched at the start of the 2009-10 academic year. Drawing on the strength of existing and new academic expertise at the LSE, and complementing the work of the Hellenic Observatory and the Contemporary Turkish Studies Programme, LSEE aims to provide a significant platform on which to build high quality, independent research and facilitate public dialogue and dissemination of information on the region. LSEE will provide a forum for research collaboration not only within the LSE and the UK, but also with external partners in South East Europe and beyond. Under this aegis, LSEE will organise a series of public events related to its research - lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences – both at the LSE and in the region.



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