

## All About the Network

### Thematic Topics

- The social impact of the economic crisis
- Regional cooperation to combat social exclusion
- Decentralization reforms and their effects on social policy
- Europe 2020 & inclusive growth related to the region
- EU cohesion policy & structural funds in SEE

The LSEE research network on social cohesion in South East Europe aims to promote fundamental independent research into issues of social cohesion and social inclusion, covering a broad range of policy themes such as employment and job creation, skills mismatches, education and vocational training, health reforms, pension reforms, poverty and social protection, urban conditions and social housing, social entrepreneurship, ethnic minorities and Roma issues, decentralization and special inequalities, all with a focus on providing original research evidence for policy makers to develop effective policy responses to the worsening social situation in the region.



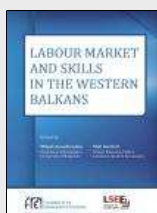
The Research Network has been supported by DG Enlargement through the IFI Coordination Office for the Western Balkans and Turkey and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. It builds on collaborative activities carried out with the Regional Cooperation Council in Sarajevo through engagement with the council's Social Agenda for the Western Balkans.

The Research Network will continue to strengthen cooperation between LSEE and the WHO European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Furthermore, it seeks to develop and extend collaborations with scholars in the field of social policy and social cohesion in all the countries of South East Europe.

## Recent Activities

In December 2011, members of the research network presented their work in a conference entitled *The Consequences of the Economic Crisis in South Eastern Europe*. Some of the main issues discussed were the effects of the crisis on labour markets, pensions, social security and health reforms in the region. A discussion was also held on skills mismatch and the informal sector, and a roundtable discussion worked to develop a research program on social cohesion in South Eastern Europe. A book entitled 'The Social Consequences of the Global Economic Crisis in South Eastern Europe' will be published in the coming months as a result of this conference.

Additionally, a research workshop entitled 'Skills & the Labour Market in the Western Balkans' was held together with FREN (Foundation for the Advancement of Economics) in May 2012 in Belgrade. An edited volume with the same title as the workshop was published in December 2012. It is available for download on the LSEE and FREN websites.



### Policy Sectors:

- Employment, unemployment & labour market policies
- Skills development, education reforms, & vocational education systems
- Health systems reforms
- Social protection & social assistance
- Social entrepreneurship & social innovation systems
- Ethnic discrimination & the social inclusion of the Roma & other minorities
- Social housing & other social infrastructure

## Members' Activities

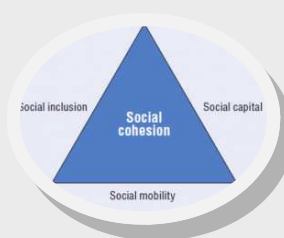
Our members participate in a wide variety of activities that take place both in the region and in other countries throughout Europe. For example, network member **Dr Simona Milio** from the London School of Economics, took part in a training for senior civil servants in Montenegro entitled 'The economic and social parameters of national public administrations in the context of EU integration (2012). Similarly, Dr Milio participated in another training in Croatia entitled "Training for Senior Civil Servants: Building Evaluation Capacity in Croatia".

Another research network member, **Dr Sandra Svaljek**, from the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, is involved in the project "Healthcare Analysis", which is jointly organized and conducted by the monthly magazine Banka and the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, through a series of public presentations dealing with topics concerning healthcare. Six roundtables were held throughout 2012.

Additionally, two new programmes conducted by members of the research network began in September 2012. One of these is on "Labour Markets in SEE" (**Vassilis Monastiriotis** and **Will Bartlett**), involving projects on public sector pay, occupational polarisation, skills gap and employment transitions. The other programme is 'Welfare systems and Minorities in SEE' (**Will Bartlett** and **Claire Gordon**), which involved work mainly on the inclusion of, and policies in relation to, the Roma minority in the region, but also covers wider issues concerning social exclusion and social cohesion in the Western Balkans.

In October 2012, members of the research network also participated in a workshop held in Brussels entitled 'The Social Sector Workshop'. The workshop was organized by the European Commission/IFI Coordination Unit, and was attended by members of the research network's advisory board.

An additional project that is currently being carried out by members of the research network is the project 'Mapping Vocational and Educational Training Policies and Practices for Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion'. The project is being managed by LSE Enterprise in collaboration with LSEE-Research on South Eastern Europe, and aims to deepen the understanding of the main barriers and potential opportunities for building inclusive and equitable VET systems in the Western Balkans .



## Publications

Our network members are also busy researching topics that contribute to promoting social cohesion throughout the region. This year, **Dr Vjeko Domljan**, Associate Professor at the **Sarajevo School of Science and Technology**, published a chapter Domljan, V. (2012) "Is a New Beginning of a Paralysed Society Possible?", in V. Džihic and D. Hamilton (eds.), *Unfinished Business: the Western Balkans and the International Community*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institutions Press. He also edited the Bosnia and Herzegovina Social Development report for 2010-11.



Recently, a book entitled *Health Reforms in South-East Europe*, edited by **Drs Will Bartlett, Jadranka Božikov and Bernd Rechel**, was published by Palgrave Macmillan as part of the LSEE edited book series on "New Perspectives on South Eastern Europe". The book analyses key aspects of health reforms in the region including primary health care, hospital management, health financing, decentralization and the internal and international migration of health workers.

A further edited book entitled '*Decentralization and Local Development in South East Europe*' has been published this year by Palgrave Macmillan. Members of the research network, **Will Bartlett, Sanja Maleković** and **Vassilis Monastiriotis** are the book's editors, while **Vjeko Domljan, Marija Risteska** and **Božidar Šišević** contributed chapters.

Additionally, an interesting publication entitled "Taxation of labor: the effect of labor taxes and costs on employment in Macedonia", was published by network member **Dr Nikica Mojososka Blazevski** in the journal *Post-Communist Economies*, 24 (2): p.241-256.

Also last year, an article on "Structural unemployment in the Western Balkans: challenges for skills anticipation and matching policies" by Will Bartlett was published in *European Planning Studies*.

## SEE 2020 – A Regional Strategy for Growth in South East Europe, The Regional Cooperation Council:

The Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat (RCC) has recognized the need and has gained the support of the countries of the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process (SEEC) as well as the European Commission to advance the preparation of a regional growth and development strategy – South East Europe 2020 (SEE2020).

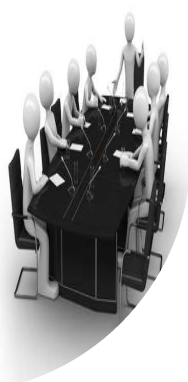
The strategy aims to build a comprehensive long-term regional development vision with clear targets, indicators and policy measures to guide cooperation in line with national priorities in the areas of smart, sustainable, inclusive and integrated growth under an overall governance for growth framework. In November 2012, Ministers of Economy of the Western Balkan countries have translated these priorities into specific regional and national targets.

SEE 2020 will contribute to demonstrate commitment and focus attention and resources to jointly identify and address key development challenges, establish relevant, attributable, comparable and verifiable tools for progress, ensure greater effectiveness and accountability and in light of the accession countries' aspiration for EU membership, align their policies and strategies with EU standards and experience.

While the main focus of the strategy is on growth and competitiveness, ensuring that this growth is shared, both in terms of contribution and benefits, is an important priority. Countries have agreed to work together in order to increase by 2020 the overall regional employment rate from 40 to 45 percent. In a consultative process with ministries of labour from the region and other relevant stakeholders, RCC has identified concrete areas for promoting employment, through joint national or regional cooperation actions under the SEE 2020 strategy. These priority areas include strengthening linkages between the worlds of education and work, improving labour market governance, facilitating labour mobility and developing social economy initiatives. In this process, the contribution of members of the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in South East Europe has been crucial in terms of providing much needed high quality research on social development, like the recent publication on labour market and skills, and actively contributing to policy dialogue and discussion in different forums. The full development and implementation of the SEE2020 strategy is an important context in which the established cooperation between the research network and RCC can be further enhanced.

### The Advisory Board

- Emina Kadrić-The Western Balkans Investment Framework
- Frederique Rychener-The European Commission
- Nand Shani-The Regional Cooperation Council, Sarajevo
- Milica Uvalić- The University of Perugia
- Ivan Vejvoda-The German Marshal Fund, Washington



### The Management Board

- Will Bartlett-LSEE, Research on South Eastern Europe
- Claire Gordon-The European Institute, London School of Economics
- Vassilis Monastiriotis-LSEE, Research on South Eastern Europe

# NETWORK MEMBERS:

- ♦ Mihail Arandarenko, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade
- ♦ Marijana Badjun, The Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb, Croatia
- ♦ Will Bartlett, LSEE-Research on South Eastern Europe
- ♦ Predrag Bejaković, Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb
- ♦ Nevenka Čučković, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for International Relations, Zagreb
- ♦ Vjekoslav Domljan, Centre for Regional Economic Studies, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ♦ Vojmir Franičević, Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb
- ♦ Maja Gerovska, Faculty of Philosophy, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Macedonia
- ♦ Claire Gordon, The European Institute, London School of Economics
- ♦ Olgica Ivančev, Faculty of Economics Subotica, University of Novi Sad, Serbia
- ♦ Gordana Krstić, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade
- ♦ Iskra Maksimović, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade
- ♦ Sanja Maleković, Institute for International Relations, Zagreb
- ♦ Simona Milio, LSE Enterprise, London School of Economics
- ♦ Vassilis Monastiriotis, LSEE-Research on South Eastern Europe
- ♦ Nikica Mojsoska Blazevski, University American College, Skopje, Macedonia
- ♦ Silvana Mojsoska, Institute of Economics, University of Skopje
- ♦ Jovan Pejkovski, Faculty of Philosophy, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Macedonia
- ♦ Marija Risteska, Centre for Research and Policy Making, Macedonia
- ♦ Božidar Šišević, Employment Agency of Montenegro
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- ♦ Maja Vehovac, Institute of Economics, Zagreb
- ♦ Sunčica Vujić, Department of Economics, University of Bath
- ♦ Merita Xhumari, Professor of Social Policy, University of Tirana



## Contact Us By Email...

**Network Coordinator:**  
**Dr Will Bartlett, W.J Bartlett@lse.ac.uk**



**LSEE Administrator:**  
**euroinst.lsee@lse.ac.uk**

## Contact Us By Post...

**Research on South Eastern Europe**  
**European Institute, LSE**  
**Cowdray House, COW 2.01,**  
**Houghton Street, London WC2 2A E**  
**United Kingdom**