

## Workshop on “Inequality and Social Protection in South East Europe”

22 October 2018

FREN, Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade

### CALL FOR PAPERS

#### Background

Since the collapse of Yugoslavia twenty five years ago, the successor states have followed different transition paths, especially in relation to the varieties of capitalism that have evolved the forms of welfare systems that have been put in place. This has led to very different outcomes in terms of the distribution of incomes. For example Slovenia now has one of the lowest income inequalities in Europe (as measured by the Gini coefficient), Croatia has an average level of inequality, while Serbia has the highest Gini coefficients in Europe (according to Eurostat data<sup>1</sup>) and similar high levels of inequality can be observed throughout the Western Balkan region. In the latter countries, levels of social cohesion in the Western Balkans are threatened by extraordinarily high levels of inequality that have arisen as a consequence of the models of transition to market economies that have been adopted. One reason for such high levels of income inequality is that social protection systems are inadequate, and tax and benefit systems are regressive. Most tax revenues are derived from regressive VAT and excise arrangements, and the income tax systems are mainly based on proportional flat taxes set at low levels that generate little revenue. Moreover, the high level of regressive labour taxes discourages engagement with the formal economy and consequently informal economic activity is a major problem, reducing access to social benefits, health care and pensions. In addition, labour markets are weak and education systems are problematic leading to poor labour market outcomes characterised by skill gaps and widespread mismatches. The workshop is designed to gain a greater understanding of the nature and drivers of inequality in the countries of South East Europe, and to analyse the causes of different trajectories of transition and evolutions of welfare states in the region and learn lessons from the most successful examples of transition models that have achieved a combination of redistribution with growth. It also aims to engage with policy makers and social partners to discuss possible remedies to the more extreme instances of inequality in the transition processes in South East Europe.

#### Aims

The workshop aims to provide a forum for the presentation, dissemination and discussion of the latest research on inequality and social protection in South East Europe (SEE) among researchers and key stakeholders. After the workshop, papers will be considered for publication in an edited volume published by LSEE. Researchers are invited to submit abstracts of their papers by 1st October 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/tessi190>

## Workshop Themes

- The political economy of inequality
- Economic transition and inequality
- Inequality of incomes and wealth in SEE
- Inequality and social protection systems in SEE
- Inequality and the welfare state in SEE

## Important Dates

- 1st October 2018: Deadline for submission of abstracts
- 5th October 2018: Notification of acceptance
- 12th October 2018: Registration for workshop
- 22nd October 2018: Workshop, FREN, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, Serbia

## Abstracts

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should contain the title, author(s) name and affiliation, and contact details. Abstracts should clearly state the aims of the paper, the methodology used and the workshop theme to which the paper is addressed. Abstracts should be submitted by 1st October 2018 via email to Will Bartlett ([w.j.bartlett@lse.ac.uk](mailto:w.j.bartlett@lse.ac.uk)) or Jelena Žarković Rakić ([zarkovic@ekof.bg.ac.rs](mailto:zarkovic@ekof.bg.ac.rs)).

## Travel, Accommodation and Catering

There is no fee for participation at the workshop but participants will have to cover their own travel costs and accommodation. Coffee/tea and buffet lunch will be provided on the day of the workshop.

## Organisers

The workshop is organised by the [\*International Inequalities Institute \(III\)\*](#) at the LSE in collaboration with [\*LSE Research on South Eastern Europe \(LSEE\)\*](#), with the support of the [\*Atlantic Fellows in Social and Economic Equity \(AFSEE\)\*](#) programme. AFSEE is one of seven interconnected programmes who support Atlantic Fellows in working together to think critically about the root causes of social and economic inequalities and apply this to real-world practice. This workshop emerged from an [\*AFSEE-supported project titled "Goodbye Tito: The Role of Diverging Welfare State Trajectories on Income Inequality in Four Former Yugoslav Republics"\*](#). LSEE is based within the European Institute of the LSE. The workshop is an activity of the LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in South East Europe, and in particular its Working Group on Social Cohesion.

*Atlantic Fellows*

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ECONOMIC EQUITY