

Editorial

This 2012-4 issue of the *SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe* is an open issue focusing on key aspects of social and economic developments in the south-east Europe region. This issue also gets back to two previous SEER topics: employment policies; and trade union weakness.

The article by Qerim Qerimi and Bruno Sergi looks at the effect of the Eurozone crisis on the labour markets of south-east European countries. The mounting crisis and the interdependence of the economies of the region have, the authors argue, resulted in a further deterioration of already-stressed labour markets. On the basis of comparative statistical analysis, the article observes that the effects of the crisis are clear and that these have had a further impact on the western Balkans in ways that have led to a further increase in unemployment. The authors conclude that consolidation of the economic fundamentals and labour market reforms are both necessary in order to tackle the situation.

Viorica Antonov gives an overview of labour market developments in Moldova for the period between 2006 and 2011, drawing challenges, opportunities and scenarios for the country. Moldova has probably the most precarious labour market situation in Europe, where a pronounced demographic crisis over the last twenty years has been aggravated by the difficult times of the transition to a market economy as well as by the large scale migration of the population.

In his article, Vojin Golubović examines employment policies and their impact on the labour market in Montenegro. The situation on the Montenegrin labour market has improved in recent years, but the number of long-term unemployed people continues at a relatively high level. The author argues that addressing this phenomenon should be the key target of labour market policy in the future.

Pavol Schwarcz, Ladislav Mura, Mário Pátopršty and Loreta Schwarczová look at the impact of employment in agriculture on overall employment in Slovakia through a regional case study. Agricultural employment makes up a larger part of overall employment in south-east Europe, so the case from Slovakia delivers some lessons which are applicable for the whole region.

The controversial new Labour Code in Hungary has caused wider repercussions throughout the whole European Union, but lessons from it are of particular interest to the south-east Europe region. The article by Tamás Prugberger and Andrea Szöllös provides a thorough analysis of the Labour Code that came into effect in mid-2012 in Hungary, with its potential consequences on the labour force in Hungary and beyond.

The article by Ekaterina Ribarova reviews the impact of European Union long-term strategies on industrial relations standards at both international and national levels, with a particular focus on Bulgaria. The article concludes that there needs to be better integration between European and national-level systems if long-term strategies are to have a chance, but that resistance and fear may act as an effective block on the potential success of trans-nationalisation.

Vladimir Marinković and Natasa Stanisavljević look at capitalism as a model, with its varieties across countries through the prism of the global economic crisis, and come

to the conclusion that a new social order or, at least, a more solid social fundamental is necessary for its survival.

Slobodan Petrović examines the dynamic relationship between social democracy and trade unions in its historical perspective but with some lessons regarding present-day Serbia.

Andjelka Račić addresses the issue of trade union and social rights as a part of human rights in the context of contemporary Serbia, with the conclusion that even though the country may have enacted all major international standards, the state has no capacity to enforce these.

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