

# Editorial

The second issue of the *SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe* for 2017 addresses ‘Wage developments in Eastern Europe’ with two articles that provide an overview of wage developments across the broader region and three that give an in-depth analysis of wage setting and labour conditions in the low-wage garment industries of Serbia and Ukraine.

The issue of wages has been at the centre of trade union attention in the last period given the prolonged period of wage stagnation since the crisis, the practices of massive exploitation in which multinational companies have engaged and the lack of wage convergence between poorer and richer countries. In early 2017, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) launched its ‘Europe Needs a Pay Rise’ campaign across the continent and the network of organisations and unions involved in the Clean Clothes Campaign continued its fight for better wages and labour conditions in the garment industry. With this focus topic, the *SEER Journal* reflects on these campaign priorities, drawing also upon several projects and publications that have emerged to back up these initiatives.

In the second bloc of this issue, we carry three further articles on a range of issues from political-economic developments in Turkey to anti-corruption initiatives and peace-keeping missions.

The article by *Rajko Kosanović*, *Sanja Paunović* and *Bruno S. Sergi* reviews the recent performance of south-east European, and eastern European, economies on the issue of wages and inequality, and discusses also the role of the minimum wage in international comparison.

Based on a questionnaire survey and national statistics, the article by *Evelyn As-tor* gives an overview of the different relevant minimum wage provisions across south-east European countries covering Albania, Montenegro, FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Serbia.

Building on their country report for the Clean Clothes Campaign, the article by *Bojana Tamindžija*, *Stefan Aleksić* and *Bettina Musiolek* provides a thoughtful in-depth analysis of the terms and conditions of employment in the garment and shoe industry in Serbia. Documenting their field research, the authors depict the dramatic exploitation of workers by leading multinational companies and come to the conclusion that it is time to speak out, making also policy recommendations to the multinationals as well as to the government of Serbia.

*Oksana Dutchak* examines labour conditions and bargaining power in the Ukrainian made-for-brands garment industry in the context of multinational companies’ location practices, mapping its main structural factors and problems. The study reveals both significant differences and striking similarities in labour conditions and pay rates in the Ukrainian made-for-brands garment sector, rooted on the one hand in the peculiarities of post-Soviet development and, on the other, the logic and business model of global value chains in the garment sector framed as the ‘struggle to survive instead of labour struggles’.

*Oksana Dutchak, Artem Chapeye and Bettina Musiolek* address the dramatic conditions, such as the lack of a living wage and other rights violations, which predominate in the garment and shoe industry in Ukraine based on their original research into the experiences of workers in four workplaces. First, the study provides an overview of the basic characteristics of the Ukrainian garment industry, with a view also to wages and labour conditions, drawing then upon case studies of companies in the sector. Finally, the authors raise unpleasant questions about the media, the Ukrainian government and multinational companies concerning their responsibility in tolerating and maintaining persistent labour rights violations.

In the open section of this issue, *M. Kemal Oke* raises the very timely question of where Turkey is heading. Based on observations, an assessment of the specialist and general media and the analyses of experts and academic staff, the author elaborates the political situation in Turkey in general and particularly the era of the AKP (Justice and Development Party). The article provides an analysis of the current government in terms of ideology, performance, strategy and tactics, and additionally tries to understand the phenomena which lie beyond its success. It also provides some insight into the *coup d'état* of July 2016 and the referendum on constitutional change held in April 2017. Seeking an answer as to where Turkey is likely to be heading in the next decade, the author concludes that the path is either radicalisation or normalisation but that the current situation is certainly not sustainable.

*Fabian Teichmann* takes a look at a burning issue in the region – bribery and corruption – and weighs the challenges and potential solutions within multinational corporations. The author introduces the OECD framework for combating bribery and the problems encountered in practice by the implementation of this framework. He concludes that many multinational corporations in fact provide their employees with incentives that potentially foster bribery, so employee incentive systems should be put at the centre of the fight against corruption and bribery.

Finally, the article by *Remzije Istrefi* discusses the case of transitional justice and reconciliation from an international peace-building perspective. The author reviews theoretical critiques on the practice of peacebuilding missions in transitional justice processes and evaluates their contribution to shaping the concept and practices of reconciliation.

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