

Editorial

This third number in the current volume of the *SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe* is an open issue addressing diverse topics related to current social developments in eastern Europe.

The European integration perspective of the western Balkans region has been a long-term interest for the *SEER*. Here, we deliver an assessment of the recent period and weigh up possible future scenarios.

Turkey, a key interest of the *SEER*, appears in two articles: one taking a look at the social side of this booming European emerging economy; while the other examines the role of its trade union elite.

Two aspects of labour mobility – another long-term focus topic of ours – will be examined in two articles: one dealing with migration policy in the Ukraine; the other with the role that foreign workers play on the Czech labour market.

Regional disparities in central and eastern Europe pose a huge challenge to policy-makers and this number of the *SEER* provides an insight into the main results of an empirical survey into three regions of Slovakia.

Christophe Solioz reviews the stages of the ‘long and winding road’ of south-eastern Europe towards EU integration, evaluating both EU policy and the efforts taken by western Balkan states. The author concludes that most of the countries that started the process with enthusiasm are now in the slow lane and in a state of strategic uncertainty. The article gives a wake-up call both to the EU and to the region, calling for a new strategic approach by the EU to develop a ‘member state-building strategy’.

Dimitris Tsarouhas examines social policy, the labour market situation and the state of play in industrial relations in Europe’s truly booming economy, Turkey.

Stan de Spiegelaere draws a socio-demographic picture of the Turkish labour elite and examines the relations between the Turkish labour confederations and the political parties.

Kerstin Zimmer shows how the Ukraine became a major transit route towards EU countries and argues that EU policy has attempted to make Ukraine into a ‘safe third country’ by delegating questions of migration control and border protection.

Tomáš Pavelka draws our attention to a less-known aspect of labour mobility in the EU: a new member state from central and eastern Europe as a destination country for both intra-EU and non-EU migration. His article gives a detailed view of the involvement of foreign citizens in the Czech labour market.

The article by *Michaela Madzinová, Silvia Bystrická and Jaroslav Rusnák* examines the subjective sense of poverty in selected regions of Slovakia through an empirical household survey.

Tatiana Isachenko and Roman Krjuchkov give an overview of the customs union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and analyse its economic and regional effects.

Radosław Kossakowski takes a look at the development of Polish consumer society and highlights the emerging consumerism in contrast to the under-developed civil so-

ciety. The article is based on surveys and studies on Poland, but much of its findings are also relevant for the rest of central and eastern Europe's post-socialist societies.

Finally, *Katalin Lipták* uses discriminant analysis to explore the employment situation in the Visegrád Four countries, arguing that this could be improved via a more efficient co-operation by the region, with collective collaboration taking the place of the isolationist approach of each one individually.

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