

Editorial

The second issue of the *SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe* for 2016 has two focus topics: we cover as our lead topic a fundamental issue that has been determining the transformation process since the early 1990s: ‘*the rule of law*’; while the second focus of this issue will be on *labour market transitions*.

Two articles address our lead topic directly, i.e. the basic legal framework that is the cornerstone of any functioning state as regards the independence of the judiciary and the protection afforded to private property. This is particularly true for a newly-founded state; here, Kosovo. The state-building process of Kosovo can be regarded as a symbolic case illustrating the consolidation process of the entire western Balkans region.

The article by *Iliriana Islami* addresses the rule of law and EU policy concerning the establishment of an independent and functioning judiciary. The main focus is devoted to the status and role of the Constitutional Court and the issue of how this can play its role in building the centre of a functioning constitutional democracy. Indeed, it is not only true of Kosovo that Progress Reports of the EU Commission have repeatedly claimed deficiencies in practice concerning the functioning of the rule of law, mostly concerning the inefficiency of the regular courts as a result of corruption and other malpractices.

Again focusing on Europe's youngest state, Kosovo, the article by Haxhi Gashi deals with the role of law with a view to its function of protecting private property in accordance with international standards. Guaranteed property rights are essential to a functioning economy and to investment, not least from international sources and – as before – such a position is relevant not only to Kosovo.

The article by *Gizem Sarıbay Öztürk* builds a bridge to the second focus of this issue: *labour market transitions*. The author examines the precarious situation of domestic workers in the light of Turkish labour law and ILO Convention No. 189.

Continuing to publish contributions by the ILO's School-to-Work Transition Survey (SWTS), after Montenegro – which we published in our first issue for 2016 – we turn our attention to Serbia. *Dragana Marjanović* examines the labour market transitions of young women and men in Serbia and presents an in-depth review of the specific employment challenges facing young people in that country. The survey provides a detailed statistical analysis of the various forms of under-employment of the young generation and formulates detailed policy recommendations to facilitate school-to-work transitions.

In the open section of this issue, *Darko Marinković* takes a look how employee participation defines economic policy and strategy in Serbia. The author argues that, even though the Labour Law defines the right of employees to establish works councils in enterprises at a general level, in practice, and on the basis of indirect data, works councils in Serbia hardly exist. The lack of interest of employers and the state in that respect may be expected, but the indifference of the trade unions is especially striking, concludes the author.

The article by *Vittorio D'Aleo* and *Bruno S. Sergi* deals with an issue to which insufficient attention had been paid (among others, also in the *SEER Journal*): the role of logistical performance in the Balkans. Economic co-operation and a functioning infrastructure needs proper logistics. Based on the World Bank Logistical Performance Index, the authors conduct a comparative survey to highlight the efficiency of the performance in logistics of Balkans countries.

Finally, *Zhivko Minkov* analyses the main problems and political challenges faced by the system of funded pension pillars in Bulgaria.

We hope that our readers find something of interest in the articles that we have featured in this edition – as well as something which may challenge findings from their own research programmes. If we have stimulated your thought processes, why not drop us a line with an idea for an article in response? We are always open to new approaches to established themes of study and would be happy to talk to you about how your work can fit within our themes.

Béla Galgóczi

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