

Public Governance and Structural Reforms

*Seminar organized on behalf of the Austrian Authorities at the Joint Vienna Institute
by The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw)*

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Scientific coordinator: Prof. Vladimir Gligorov, wiiw

Coordinator: Magdalena Höllhuber, wiiw

Outline

The seminar provides an overview of policy challenges in key areas of structural reforms. In particular, approaches to legal reform, fiscal reform with emphasis on lecturing dealing with informal economy and corruption, competition policy, privatization and regulation policy, provision of infrastructure services and technology policy, and reforms of education and science and of the welfare system (health, pensions) will be discussed. The presentations will draw on the ongoing political and academic discussions in member states and candidate countries, as well as on Austria's reform process and experience in the wake of EU membership and its relevance for EU accession candidates.

The seminar will look more closely on the regulatory role of the state rather than on macroeconomic policy issues. The guiding idea is to analyse the reform goals and instruments from the point of view of the complex inter-relationship between states and markets, where markets provide the relevant environment for state actions and states are important environment for market behaviour. The complexity of these inter-relationship is especially high in Europe due to the deepening and widening of the European Union integration.

Aim of the seminar

The aim is to broaden the awareness of policy-makers of the strengths and weaknesses of particular reform strategies as well as of the conditions for their successful implementation. Also, to look at the most important and demanding structural reforms, which are topical in the EU and that are being faced by prospective EU members too. It also approaches the more advanced reform problems on the agenda of transition economies.

Structure

The seminar is structured in half-day blocks of about three hours each: from 9-12 AM and 2-5 PM. There will be a lecture before the break and discussion afterwards. Experts hold the lectures on the respective topics.

Target group

The seminar is open for applicants from Southeast Europe, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro.

Advanced language abilities in spoken and written English are expected.

The seminar addresses decision-makers in the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finance as well as representatives of the Parliament.

Readings

A compendium of appropriate chapters from books and articles provided by the organizer beforehand. Additional readings suggested by the speakers.

Programme

1. Rule of Law – economic aspects

The lecture deals with the main economic consequences of the existence or non-existence of the rule of law, reviews the law and economics approach.

2. Economics of organized crime

The lecture deals with the economic approach to crime and especially organized crime with a review of the empirical evidence and policy recommendations.

3. Fiscal reform: taxes, expenditures, decentralization and competition

The lecture deals with the issues of the determination of the reforms in tax systems, with the determination of the desired level of public expenditures and with the controversy over the desirability and efficiency of tax competition.

4. Corruption, informal economy and money laundering

The lectures will look at the role of corruption, the reasons for the high level of informal economy and there will be a special treatment of the issue of money laundering.

5. Restructuring Security: Police, military

The lecture will deal with experiences in restructuring of security forces in transition countries.

6. Competition policy during and after privatization

The lecture looks at the problems of the design and implementation of the appropriate competition policy during and especially after the privatization.

7. Banking and financial market reforms

The lecture deals with the controversial issue of the importance of the development of the financial services sector for faster economic growth.

8. Privatizing infrastructure

Experiences with the privatization of various aspects of infrastructure are reviewed and new ideas for private and public partnership are discussed.

9. Labour market reform: increasing flexibility

This key area of reform is approached from the point of view of the desirability and the efficiency of increased flexibility of labour market relations.

10. Research and technology

Especially the impacts of the new information technologies and the regulation of this sector in advanced and transition economies are going to be discussed.