

Structural Reforms: Public and Private Partnership

*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 co-ordinator: Prof. Vladimir Gligorov, WIIW

Co-ordinator: 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 federalism, 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 this 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 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 applicant countries for EU Membership, namely Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and from the Western Balkans, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Yugoslavia.

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 is provided by the organizer beforehand. Additional readings are suggested by the speakers.

Programme

- 1. New approach to regulation:** public and private relationship (decentralization, competition and partnership)
The lecture deals with the new ideas in regulation policy where states and markets interact in a number of different ways.
- 2. Legal reform:** main issues in law and economics
The lecture deals with the main economic consequences of different legal traditions as analysed in the law and economics literature.
- 3. Fiscal reform: taxes, expenditures, decentralization and competition**
The lecture deals with the issues of the determination of 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. 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 privatization.
- 5. 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.

6. Privatizing infrastructure

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

7. 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.

8. Pension and health care reforms

The issues in privatizing and regulating pension and health systems are discussed.

9. Education reform

Especially the impacts of the new information technologies are discussed.

10. Research and technology

The regulation of this sector in advanced and transition economies is discussed.