

Narrowing the gaps: 30 years after the transition started and 14 years after enlargement – where are we on convergence?

Conference organised by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)

Brussels, 25 January 2018, 14h30-17h00

European Economic and Social Committee, Rue Van Maerlant 2, 1040 Brussels, Room VM3

ETUI is organising a conference to openly debate effects of transition and EU integration on the Central and Eastern European countries and what this means in terms of upwards convergence for the region.

The Central and Eastern European countries have gone through an intense economic transition over the past 30 years and joined the European Union 14 years ago with the aspiration to have an upwards convergence with the then EU-15. Research is showing that while convergence has clearly occurred, this has not benefitted all regions and groups in society equally.

In addition recent research has concluded that the economic models on which the CEE countries have built their convergence could become a trap for future developments in the region. Against this backdrop, the conference will assess if current economic models and policies are responding the regions aspiration for upwards convergence, and if not what then needs to be done about it. Questions to be addressed are : what economic structure are relevant for the future development of the region? How can collective bargaining contribute to this? What is the role of the European institutions in ensuring upwards convergence? etc.

The conference is coinciding with the retirement of ETUI Senior researcher and Head of Unit "Economic, employment and social policies" Martin Myant, whose research agenda has strongly contributed to the thinking about the effects of transition and EU integration on the CEE countries. A drink will be held in his honour at the end of the conference.

Draft agenda

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14.30 – 14.45

Introduction

Philippe Pochet, ETUI General Director

14.45 – 15.45

What does research tell us about upwards convergence?

Speakers:

Martin Myant, Senior researcher and Head of Unit "Economic, employment and social policies" ETUI

The logo for the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), consisting of the lowercase letters "etui." in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Jan Drahokoupil, Senior researcher ETUI

Discussant:

Magdolna Sass, Hungarian Academy of Sciences TBC

15.45 – 16.45

Round table: Breaking the circle – Condemned to be left behind?

Speakers:

Josef Středula, President of the Czech-Moravian confederation of trade unions TBC

Esther Lynch, ETUC Confederal Secretary TBC

Laszlo Andor, Senior Fellow at Hertie School of Governance TBC

Stephany Griffith-Jones, Financial Markets Director at the Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University TBC

Jens Holscher, Professor and Head of Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Bournemouth University TBC

16.45 – 17.00

Conclusions

Bernard Chavance, Professor Emeritus Paris Diderot University TBC

17.00 Drink

The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union.