



**International Center for Black Sea Studies**  
Building a Sustainable Future for the Black Sea Area

## **Investing in Human Capital in the South East Europe: The dynamic role of women and the youth**

*With the support of*

**HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR**



**GENERAL SECRETARIAT  
FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

he **International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)** was founded in 1998 as a not-for-profit organisation under Greek law. It has since fulfilled a dual function: on the one hand, it is an independent research and training institution focusing on the Black Sea region. On the other hand, it is a related body of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and in this capacity serves as its acknowledged think-tank. Thus the ICBSS is a uniquely positioned independent expert on the Black Sea area and its regional cooperation dynamics. **Moving towards a "Green Black Sea" is our new perspective**, one characterised by a focus on development, culture, as well as economic and social prosperity, one that goes beyond the traditional approach and makes the **concept of Sustainable Economic Development, Energy, Regional Governance and Stability our driving force**.

The present publication is available for download in electronic version from the ICBSS' webpage under [www.icbss.org](http://www.icbss.org).

In its effort to stimulate open and engaged debate, the ICBSS also welcomes enquiries and contributions from its readers under [icbss@icbss.org](mailto:icbss@icbss.org).

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# **Investing in Human Capital in the South East Europe: The dynamic role of women and the youth**

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Greece, May 2014

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## Preface

Human Capital constitutes a valuable factor in the process of economic, political and social transformation. The economic challenges of the past years have revealed a need for policy actors, namely states, stakeholders, civil society, academia, to go beyond the classical perception of economic growth and to focus more on the empowerment of human capital as key element for achieving sustainable development.

Within this framework, the ICBSS successfully organised the Round Table Discussion on *“Investing in Human Capital in the South East Europe: The dynamic role of women and the youth”*, on 1 April 2014, in Athens, with the support of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of the Hellenic Ministry of Interior.

The main objective of the event was to foster dialogue, to identify the current challenges and future opportunities for the empowerment of human capital, especially women and the youth, in South East Europe and the wider Black Sea region, and to promote best practices, aiming at strengthening economic and social structures in order to achieve development and sustainability.

Policy makers, researchers, academicians and more importantly the business community exchanged views for the optimum investment in the development of human capital.

Following up on the successful organisation of the event, the ICBSS is promoting the present joint publication based on the innovative ideas heard during the event.

In my capacity as Director General of ICBSS, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all speakers and participants, who trusted the ICBSS and without the invaluable help of whom the said publication could not come true. Furthermore, I would like to thank most sincerely the General Secretariat for Gender Equality for its valuable support, as well as the ICBSS organizing committee.

**Dr. Zefi Dimadama, ICBSS Director General**  
Athens, April 2014

# Empowering social capital and fostering a new civic consciousness can unveil tremendous opportunities in Azerbaijan

*Alexandros Costopoulos, Founder of Repower Greece, CEO at Foresight Strategy and Communications*

The broader socio-economic challenges across most of our nations' globe are creating misconceptions, fragile relations and a new environment of economies, nations and societies aiming for the same objective: jobs, investments, growth, security and prosperity. These ongoing developments and the constant reshuffle of the status quo have shaped a fluctuating reality that has given birth to a significant alteration of game rules.

These new rules have transferred a great deal of power to societies – phenomenon also orchestrated by the unprecedented development of new technologies – and today, we witness more and more bottom-up approaches having critical impact on what once was strictly reserved to governments' and institutions' jurisdiction.

In light of the above, the reputation and credibility of a government and a nation is often evaluated and judged depending on its civil society infrastructure and its ability to shape opportunities in order to achieve broadly shared prosperity. Another significant element which also serves as an index of democracy (therefore weighing on the 'scanning' of a country's profile) is how the government and its ramifications collaborate with the people, listens and responds to the emerging trends and needs. This perception/image that the country will convey to the international community will hold a significant role in determining whether someone will visit the country or invest in it.

Amongst these historical changes, Azerbaijan has shifted from a nation in need of international assistance to achieving the world's largest GNP growth in the recent year, today ranking an amazing 70 out of 189 economies in the world on the ease of doing business (statistics: World Bank Group). However, for the international community, it remains a country with increased corruption, promoting caviar diplomacy and having a fragile political and economic background.

The opportunities that are being shaped in the country could and should be the most powerful tools to breakdown these stereotypes. Its geo-strategic location being a gateway between Europe, Middle East and Asia, its hydrocarbons reserves allowing the country to be one of the fastest growing producers in recent years, but also the booming sectors of infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, ICT and education are forming a pool of unlimited potential for Azerbaijan to be distanced from

misconceptions that have followed the country since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

However, one of the biggest challenges today is how a country can capitalize effectively on the opportunities that exist within its borders. Within this environment, the power of collaboration and civil society gain a strategic function, as they will unlock the underlying potential of the driving force of the new role of Azerbaijan, which is the human capital.

In a spirit of collaboration, all the constructive players of the economy and the society have a duty to blend their talents and ideas and lay the foundations for a broadly shared social and economic property. Through new dynamic practices and synergies, entrepreneurship can be further developed, innovative ideas can be cultivated and a new civic consciousness can be empowered; thus fostering a society of individuals who are engaged citizens contributing to the improvement of their communities.

Azerbaijan has already witnessed the development of some very important civil society programs with tangible results in Baku and throughout the regions, working to enhance opportunities for youth and participating in diverse programs as a way to foster civic engagement, shyly building the infrastructure for an organized civil society platform contributing to the country's development.

As one of the top priorities of the government is to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment in the non-oil sectors, it is imperative to grasp the importance of civil society in paving an engaging, inclusive and sustainable path towards becoming a model nation upon which other countries of the region can look up to.

In FORESIGHT, we believe that the development of an advanced civic empowerment initiative, which will propel new programs and streamline all efforts to sustainable results aligned with the country's strategic orientation, will offer multi-layered socio-economic benefits to Azerbaijan, by focusing on emerging needs and trends of the country, such as:

- Youth and women's Entrepreneurship Empowerment
- Foster civic participation/democratic enhancement/reinforce institutional infrastructure
- Education/Employment: tackle skills mismatch through educational formation, professional training
- Education: Study abroad programs for Azerbaijanis, turning them into ambassadors of the opportunities of the country
- Public Diplomacy: Strengthen reputation of Azerbaijan, communicate opportunities that abound, enhance strategically selected bilateral relations



- Public Diplomacy: development of a discourse platform for the exchange of expertise and ideas, engaging in constructive dialogue.

It has been proven by a number of examples across nations, as well, by the programs FORESIGHT has orchestrated or engaged in during last 15 years, that building a healthy social capital and allowing a strong civil society platform to flourish is essential for sustainable development and positive socio-economic changes.

In light of the tremendous pool of opportunities that are being shaped in Azerbaijan, and within a volatile global socio-economic environment, the power of collaboration, of blending talents, of human potential and of civic consciousness remains indisputable for achieving sustainable economic development and social progress. When the reputation of a country is interrelated with its prospects and opportunities, such a strategy can play an instrumental role in achieving the desired objectives of a nation.

#### A few words on FORESIGHT

FORESIGHT was founded in 1997 and is specialized in strategic communications and the development of public affairs, reputation management and civil society engagement programs. The team of Foresight observes and analyzes the socioeconomic and political developments at a regional and international level, offering critical intelligence and strategies that forge the desired perception among the critical stakeholders of our clients. FORESIGHT has developed strategies and programs related amongst others to restoring the international credibility of Greece, confronting sensitive issues like anti-Americanism, empowering the entrepreneurship and investment potential in Cyprus, strengthening the international economic relations of Serbia and Ukraine, developing women and youth empowerment programs, as well as developing public awareness campaigns regarding health issues, cultural diplomacy and education (in collaboration with leading universities such as Harvard University).

# Human Capital: The key for innovation in the region of Southeastern Europe

*Zefi Dimadama, PhD. Regional and Environmental Economist, ICBSS Director General*

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to be here among you today to discuss a vital issue, such as empowering human capital for the prosperity of the countries. Today, in ICBSS, with the support of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, we organize this roundtable, on Investing on Human Capital in South East Europe: the dynamic role of women and the youth, one of our main priorities, an initiative for Human capital, in the South Eastern region of Europe.

ICBSS attempted to gather under our umbrella representatives from the business community but also researchers, academicians and policy makers in order to discuss this crucial and dynamic issue, and organize periodically similar events for Human capital.

Moreover, I would like to thank you for honoring us with your presence today even though it is a really “difficult day” because of the ECOFIN meeting in Zappeion and all the problems it brings with the security measures.

It is obvious that one of the most significant parts of the economy is the human capital approach. Human capital is the stock of the productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in labor forces, and it concludes of one of the main factors of production.

People are the soul of the firms and businesses and without them nothing could be done as they are the value and only they can bring the innovation.

The countries of Southeastern Europe have a particularity that makes them important regional components. They have new economies emerging, ready for investments and they have more and more promising results. But more importantly they have young people with new ideas ready to expand them. We are here in order to give them that opportunity.

ICBSS promoting the social, economic and environmental issues of Black Sea countries is targeting on specific policies and techniques, to support economies and our people.

A well organized system of human capital development is the key supporting economic and social development and environmental protection.

Failing to pay attention and neglecting such an important factor as human capital in the present will lead to significant costs in the future.

The key for the future of these countries is the investment in the talent, skills and capabilities of women and young people, as investing in human capital produces welfare in the long run which is what we aim. The amelioration of this kind of investment is the best way to improve labor productivity. If our target are these groups not only we will achieve efficiency in production, but also innovation.

Human capital can be distinguished on two levels: country's level and corporation's level. It is important to understand the interrelation between the human development and economic growth, as human development has a great impact on economic growth.

Social policy would need to blend with the education and vocational training systems to raise labor force skills and flexibility.

Men, women and young people and the civil society need to act at a local basis and to proceed to a regional basis in order to reach a global basis on the long term.

For example Azerbaijan has approved a National Action plan on youth employment inviting several youth non governmental organizations to provide inputs into the development of the Action plan. Azerbaijan has acted through all these years and managed to continue the progress by enrolling actively the youth in the State youth policy, "Azerbaijan 2020: look into the future".

Greece despite being a much more evolved economy, a strong regional economic player and an old member of the EU is also facing significant problems regarding social policy. Its experience is quite significant for other regional economies, and it could be a valuable partner in this framework.

Human capital and social policy needs to be seen as an opportunity rather than a financial burden on resource allocation. If social policy becomes an integral part of the national development planning system, it will constitute a positive in the cost-benefit analysis as long as it is pursued with social and economic rationality. This would boost domestic investment and financial maturity.

Our greatest aspiration is to achieve more substantial results and for that we could stimulate regional cooperation and interaction between the business industry the civil society and the policy makers and stakeholders.

We have to offer the incentives to these countries in order to carry forward their main objectives.

By joining efforts we can make it possible. There are many challenges that are emerging in the area, and we should not allow that to affect us negatively and invoke separately feelings. We should use these challenges in order to build even stronger ties of cooperation. We all have common interests and as soon as we can perceive that, we will have the highest common benefits. Cooperation is the way to achieve sustainable economic development and to improve our perspectives on the global market. Supporting the most active part of our societies will lead us to success. They need strong incentives for that and we are here in order to see how to provide them.

Thank you very much.

# Speech on the effects of the economic and social crisis on women - The dynamic role of women in the economic and social stability

*Mika Ioannidou, President, Hellenic Office of the European Women's Lobby,  
Head of the Coordination of Greek Women NGO'S for the EWL*

Dear All,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity as the Head of the Greek Coordination to discuss with you on the role and the challenges of women and girls equal participation on the social and economic growth and stability.

At this crucial moment the social, economic and financial crisis is still hitting my country and Europe with cruelty. We as women must take a stronger attitude. We have predicated for a number of years that without a gender equality perspective and the direct involvement of women as part of the solution, the crisis will only deepen. Inequalities are preventing any sustainable economic growth, as they ignore the half of the human resources, a rich pool of talents ideas and knowledge.

Greek people are still the experimental victim of shot term budgetary policies. The crisis shows that Europe cannot afford to let women outside, missing the economic and social potential they represent.

Across our membership - over 2500 women's organisations some of them with more than one century of history - are reporting the dramatical impacts of the crisis and a backlash on women on issues such as unemployment, access to basic services, pay gap.

Cuts and elimination of the essential services, such as health, education and childcare, have a double impact on women, both as employees and as recipients of public services. Also, women's NGOs are experiencing heavy difficulties due to cuts of funding. This prevents in sustaining vital services for women (for example, providing shelters in cases of violence) child care services due to restricted funding. Silencing women's voices and preventing women from participating in the post-crisis strategies on the labour market, education, decision making will only reproduce the only unsuccessful model.

Violence against women is increasing, as testified in the number of calls to help lines. The victims of domestic violence and trafficking are also increasing in my country, after the crisis and this costs a lot.

The recovery plans, must include the logical recognition that women inequalities is part of this crisis and costs. The heavy cuts in social services, the stop of funding for the Women NGOs the lack of infrastructures to fight poverty an male violence, the absence of childcare services and the dissolution of the equality mechanisms and structures will only prevent a fast recovery.

Although women are very well educated the unemployment rate for young women reached the 64% in Greece.

The already very low women salaries were dramatically reduced. The minimum wage in Greece was reduced 22% and 32% for the young people. It's a myth that Greek workers are working less hours than the European workers. According to Eurostat data for working hours, of Greek men and women, are over the E.U. average.

These are only some examples of the present situation and the transformative moment in our history. A moment that gives us the right to reassert that another vision of the whole world is necessary, in which the core values on equality of the 2020 E.U. strategy must be respected and the human rights must be protected. We recall that women represent a growing majority as Europe ages and a pool of talent and knowledge.

We are looking forward to seek equality between all and men, girls and boys in solidarity.

We urgently need to concentrate our efforts, cooperating with countries with similar problems for the next step. We demand an equal society where women and men share rights, power and resources. Investing in human capital especially youth, we invest in our next generations future.

Social infrastructures and care services is a key element to the equal participation in the labour market, a fundamental right and not a marginal issue.

For better times this gives the opportunity to women and girls on equal representation in economic, social and political decision-making. Work and family reconciliation in practical measures is an urgent tool as well as quotas are needed especially in our South and Eastern countries where the stereotypes are still preventing a balanced share of care responsibilities.

Numerous of studies point to the positive effect of gender equality in the sustainable growth. We support the maternity, paternity and parental leave and we have worked on that the last years with the European Parliament and the Commission.

We ask for women to earn the same wages as men, women entrepreneurship and equal participation in the economy.

We need the guarantee of the pensions system especially for women as the pensions level results the feminization of poverty.

We have worked a lot with Commissionaire Redding on binding legislation for quotas on the corporate boards.

A transparent and accountable financial architecture is needed. We have to apply alternative models and to put care economy in the job rich growth sector.

We are fighting for the values for which the EU stands for, namely: equality between women and men, human rights, anti-discrimination policies, democracy and the rule of law, which includes good governance.

We want a sustainable economic and social growth for the future for us and for the generations to come, with innovative ideas, life long learning and equal representation in the decision making.

The complexities of the crisis and its deepening impact on gender equality and democracy give us the sign that is a historical moment to ask for real structural changes. We cannot afford any more political leaders – predominately men, to ignore the needs and the perspectives of women and men that are in the real world' and who can support a vision of society that breaks with the past.

Because we have to break with the past, there is no going back to those conditions which brought the system down as the financial architecture of the past imploded. Gender equality is not a luxury of better times. We must place gender equality back into the heart of the revival of a new model for the present and the future. This is a message that we Greek women, members of the EWL, need to send and to share, in solidarity with your countries an your people.

Concluding, we will remind you the EWL Manifesto adopted in Budapest by all the European Members presenting before the U.N., the National and European parliament, the civil society and international authorities. For this work the EWL was awarded after a paneuropean open voting for its contribution and actions for the European cities.

# Investment in Human Capital

## Unlock your Business Potential

*Rebecca Pitsika, Career Management Expert - CEO, People for Business*

Investment in Human Capital is of a crucial sense, especially in the contemporary changing world. Attract, assess, place and mostly, retain talent is the critical success factor to achieve business results.

In a world of rapid change, business needs to attract and retain talent: business need people, but not any people. They need talented people to achieve people results, people who will not only adapt, but even lead the change. It is PEOPLE who have to come up with the vision and the ideas to move organizations forward, it is not the microchips, machines or raw materials ; these cannot innovate by themselves, the man is the one who can.

In this framework, it is easy to understand that human capital has a direct impact on business results. This impact is in terms of increasing efficiency or minimizing business risk.

Regarding the increase of efficiency, we have to take into consideration three major factors, in which human capital is really crucial:

- Improve quality. Meeting SLA's and KPI's in order to achieve the set quality standards, to ensure quality and to keep customers satisfied.
- Minimize Cost: it is essential to use our resources in an effective way, in order to keep the balance between value and money.
- Meet the time. Meeting deadlines, following the plan.

On the other hand, risk can be considered in terms of finance or in terms of operations. Financial risk is dangerous but at the same time mis-operations can bear severe dangers for the sustainability of the business. Procedures can ensure all the above, but even in this case, it is the man who designs and follow up each single procedure, to ensure that is all going in the right way.

But why do we need profitable business? Just for one reason: Profitable business produce jobs! Profitable business lead to Job Creation and this subsequently, to economic development and a healthy society. Just imagine the whole cycle: We have business which are profitable, so they pay salaries and they need new people to expand business, so they create jobs. More people have more money to consume, and this leads to the development of other business that "absorb" this amount, so they grow, in a row and they also produce more jobs. At the end of the day, we have more and more employed people, and thus, a healthy society, with role models in each level: professional, social, family.



Even more, it is important to develop local business. Local business is less probable to leave the country, as they represent local money and interest. All countries need foreign investors, but the real and sustainable development arises from the development of local business, that in total create more jobs, when we sum up the total number of sme's and micro business. Job creation is relevant to all companies, no matter the size.

So business profitability relies on the human capital, who "makes the wheel running" at the end of the day. In order to develop human capital, there are various strategies:

- Long term: In this case, strategy is mainly linked to the education so as to contribute to the creation of marketable jobs. As a matter of fact, jobs for the future are focused on STEM professions, due to the development of technology and the economy of scale. We have to expand our pool of candidates, so we need to guide young girls and the youth in general to this kind of jobs. Even now, there are various openings, much more than the applicants! Unemployment could be attacked in an effective way, by this long term strategy.
- Short and Medium term strategies can vary and focus on different issues: Talent acquisition, talent development, strategic management of the people, or reinforcement of entrepreneurship, in sme's and micro business.

Talking about the trends in the people management, we are now at the era to move from human resources management to people function. We cannot manage human just like every other resource of the company – we have to invest on!

People function is focused on people analytics and people support. By the first one, we measure the gap of talent, the efficiency of people, the attraction of talent, the development of the driving force, the retention of talent. By the second one, we mean the insurance of business ethics, of the commitment and of the human capital development.

In order to conclude, Investment in Human Capital does not depend on business size, type of business, structure, knowhow, business scope, business nature. It just focuses on the Business Development and the job creation - even more, on the business development of local business, locally or internationally. Country economic growth, development of local business, human capital and jobs creation to attack unemployment are the links of the same chain!

# Addressing human capital in Romania

*Cristina Zamfirache, Second Secretary, Embassy of Romania to the Hellenic Republic*

Good evening from myself, as well. It gives me a great pleasure to be here this evening and to take part in a discussion on an important topic on the European agenda that concerns us all: the human capital, the investment in human capital and the dynamic role of women and youth. I would like to thank the International Centre for Black Sea Studies for the kind invitation extended to our Embassy that allows me to briefly present the situation in Romania and our experience in this regard.

The issue of human capital investment is a topic of major interest for all countries, but it has become increasingly important in the last few years, especially against the background of the economic crisis. Investing in education and training aims on the one hand to develop the human resources available and, on the other hand, to adapt the human resources to the structural changes of the economy and to the current labour market demands.

Tackling the high youth unemployment has become one of the key challenges for governments all across Europe. Young people aged 15-24 belong to the most vulnerable groups in our societies, as they are either newcomers to the labour market or their work experience is recent and not very consolidated. The economic crisis has hit all layers of society and young people became one of the most affected social groups. Youth unemployment is an acute problem faced by all EU Member States, in a greater or smaller extent.

In Romania, just by looking at the statistical figures, one would say that the situation is pretty good, since the unemployment rate, including among youngsters, is below the EU average. However, this is not entirely reassuring, since slightly over 23% of the young people are unemployed. Even if the figure is below the EU average, it has gradually increased in the past few years, from 18.6% in 2008. This is an area of concern for the Romanian government which is committed to spare no efforts in order to safeguard the young generation. Three ministries are actively involved in developing policies and programmes to the benefit of young people: the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Taking into account that roughly 1 in 5 graduates cannot find a job, the Ministry of National Education launched last summer a web portal designed in such a way so as to assess the relationship between the labour market and the programmes offered by the universities. This assessment will lay the grounds of the academic offer and will also determine the level of public financing for the different specialities offered by universities starting this autumn.

This February, the Ministry of Labour launched two projects, "Youth Guarantee!" and "Investment in youth, investment in our future!", which will run until July 2015

and are open only to young persons aged 15-24. Specifically, through these projects, over 5,000 selected individuals will receive a personalized action plan, consisting in counselling, training, apprenticeship, prospecting and mediation in order to seek a job. Best business ideas will receive awards, and their designers will be further advised in order to start an independent business. Furthermore, 22 county and 4 regional centres will be set up in order to increase the awareness among citizens, local authorities and employers regarding job opportunities for young people. The projects also aim at employing 600 young people by the end of June 2015. In this framework, it might be of interest to share with you a meaningful fact, an example of a "success story": the leader of the Association of Young Entrepreneurs in Romania is today the Minister for SME, Business Environment and Tourism, which is a solid proof of the further enhanced focus of the government on policies addressing the young generation.

Youth on the labour market was also the main topic of the international conference entitled Keeping Young People in Employment, Education and/or Training: Common challenges - Shared Solutions organized in Bucharest by the Ministry of Labour this March. Among the keynote speakers were: the Prime Minister of the Romanian Government, Mr. Victor Ponta, the EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou, and Mr. Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, representing the Hellenic Presidency of the EU.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that Romania is among the first EU MS that launched the Erasmus+ programme that continues the previous European programmes "Lifelong Learning" and "Youth in Action", implemented in 2007-2013, which registered a national absorption rate of over 98%. Between 2007-2013, almost 80,000 students, young people, teachers, trainers and youth workers in Romania received grants under the "Lifelong Learning" and 'Youth in Action' programmes. Besides the opportunities for individual mobility, Erasmus+ will increase the quality and relevance of European systems of education, training and youth through support for teacher training and youth animators and by establishing closer partnerships between the education system and the employers. Another innovative dimension introduced by the Erasmus+ programme is that for the first time, it provides support for sport and it will assist cross-border projects focusing on good governance, gender equality, social inclusion, dual careers and physical activity for all.

Among the measures taken by the Ministry of Labour to increase employment and facilitate youth access to the labour market, I would only mention: the National Strategy for Employment 2013-2020; a national plan to boost youth employment by facilitating the first job and supporting the first work experience; the implementation of "Youth Guarantee scheme".

Various programmes are also envisaged by the Romanian government, among which I would refer to the second edition of the Internship Programme (July-September), which will offer young people the possibility to apply for an internship in the central

administration. The novelty brought about by this year's programme is that it was broadened in order to cover all ministries and government departments.

The emphasis put by the Romanian government on developing policies to the benefit of youth is also highlighted by the decision to re-establish the Ministry of Youth and Sports in January 2013, which is led by a lady Minister and former Olympic Champion in 2000. In one year since its establishment, the Ministry drafted and launched the National Strategy in youth for 2014-2020, which aims to support the active participation of youth to the economic, social, cultural and political life. At the same time, the Ministry supported the organization of school camps to the benefit of almost 45,000 young people and also last year, for the first time, children with disabilities, children and young persons in foster care also benefitted of this programme.

In reference to the topic of equality between women and men, I would like to start by reminding ourselves that this is one of the key values promoted by the EU. In Romania, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is a gender policy introduced in 2002 by Law. To have a better picture of the role women play in the Romanian society, I would briefly point to the statistical data which show that in 2013, Romania ranked first among EU Member States in respect to the ratio of women in public leadership (Tier I), with 47%, followed by Slovenia (46%) and Greece (45%). It is interesting to note that the situation completely reverses in the ranking of men in public leadership (Tier I), where Romania ranks 28 of EU-28, with 53%, while the leaders in this field are Luxemburg and Belgium, both with 100% men in public leadership.

To sum up the different points expressed so far, it is obvious that the Romanian government places a special emphasis on investing in human capital and the focus on youth has constantly increased in the last few years. The economic and financial crisis caused the loss of many jobs and opportunities and therefore a joint effort was more than necessary in order to develop new strategies aiming the most vulnerable, the young generation included. A mix of policies is therefore needed, through national contributions and access to European funds. The European funds provide an essential tool to support and maintain jobs, to start small businesses, for the training and continuous development of quality services. At the same time, public-private partnerships and joint actions need to be directed towards new employment opportunities, while education and training need to be more and more linked to the current demands of the labour market.

Thank you very much for your attention!

# Investing in Human Capital in the South East Europe: the dynamic role of women and the youth

**Amb. Petros Panayotopoulos**, *Director for Economic relations with SE Europe, CIS and BSEC, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Dear Director General,  
Distinguished Speakers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all, to thank the ICBSS and the Director General Dr. Zefi Dimadama, for the excellent organization of this event that addresses a crucial issue of our era, the role of human capital, and especially that of women and the youth, in the development process of the states of the South East Europe and the wider Black Sea region.

On behalf of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I would like to highlight the momentum of Greece currently, holding the EU Presidency, while at the second semester of 2014 it will assume the Chairmanship of the Organisation of Black Sea Economic Cooperation; two Organisations actively involved in developing synergies and innovative initiatives amongst their Member States, aiming at improving the regions' capacity and efficiency for the benefit of their people.

The economic challenges of the past years have revealed the need for governments and policy stakeholders to go beyond the classical perception of economic growth and to endorse new and innovative ways of development in order to achieve sustainability and longevity.

To this end, human capital has been elevated to a valuable actor in the process to economic, political and social transformations domestically and internationally. People should be in the center of our policies; should be the beginning and the end of our policies, the vehicle for the best implementation of our action plan, if we wish to achieve the best results and to ameliorate our indexes.

A well organized system of human capital development is the key supporting economic and social development. Failing to pay attention and neglecting such an important factor as human capital in the present will lead to significant costs in the future.

Our greatest aspiration is to achieve more substantial results and for that we could stimulate regional cooperation and interaction between the business industry, the

civil society and the policy makers and stakeholders. Investing in human capital produces welfare in the long run which is what we aim.

Supporting the most active part of our societies will lead us to success; investing in the talent, skills and capabilities of women and young people should be in our main priorities.

By joining efforts we can make it possible. Through its role as Chairman to the EU and the BSEC, Greece will work hard to achieving cooperation towards this end.

In conclusion, I wish to express once again the support of the Ministry for the Center's future endeavours in critical areas of current interest, as well as our deep satisfaction for the work already accomplished.

I wish you all a fruitful and productive discussion.

Thank you.

# Developing efficient Human Capital through education and training

*Mr. Marcel Cremer LLM, Attorney at Law- CIArb Accredited Mediator*

Key points:

- General preview – characteristics / features / a very new approach
- Personal experience – school / law school / mediation / coaching / different approach to productivity by younger ages / Young people without prejudice working closely and creating friendships that will last forever and value that will follow them to the rest of their lives
- Country view – schooling / educational / family values +/- - Greece has good educated HC
- Failure mentality

Loosely speaking, human capital corresponds to any stock of knowledge or characteristics the worker has (either innate or acquired) that contributes to his or her “productivity”. This definition is broad, and this has both advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages are clear: it enables us to think of not only the years of schooling, but also of a variety of other characteristics as part of human capital investments. These include school quality, training, attitudes towards work, etc. Using this type of reasoning, we can make some progress towards understanding some of the differences in earnings across workers that are not accounted by schooling differences alone.

- Show the action!
- Civil society
- New technology
- Collaboration
- Result oriented
- Failure
- Solidarity

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