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**18th South-Eastern European Economic Research Workshop**

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**SHORT BIOS OF AUTHORS**

**Alice Albonico**

Alice Albonico is anAssociate Professor at the Department of Economics, Management and Statistics (University of Milan-Bicocca). He holds a PhD in Economic Sciences from the University of Pavia (2012). Before becoming associate professor, he was assistant professor at University of Milan-Bicocca (2017-2022) and he worked for the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (2015-2016) and he held Post-doc positions at the University of Milan Bicocca (2013-2015) and at the University of Pavia (2012-2013). His research areas are Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics, with a specific interest in Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) models, optimal monetary and fiscal policy, limited asset market participation and Bayesian estimation.

**Andrea Colabella**

[Andrea Colabella is a Senior Economist at Bank](https://www.researchgate.net/institution/Banca_dItalia?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InByb2ZpbGUiLCJwYWdlIjoicHJvZmlsZSJ9fQ) of Italy.

**Altin Tanku**

Altin Tanku is the director of the Research Department at the Bank of Albania. Altin serves as a member of Monetary Policy Implementation and Foreign Exchange Reserves Investment Committees. He holds an bachelor degree in Finance from the University of Tirana in 1993. He holdes a master degree and a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee in the December of 2005.

**Brunilda Kosta**

Brunilda Kosta is a [Professor at the Faculty of Economy](https://feut.edu.al/fakulteti/departamentet/departamenti-i-manaxhimit/stafi-i-departamentit-manaxhim/584-dr-brunilda-kosta), University of Tirana, since 2013. With over a decade of experience, her primary focus has been on the complex nature of undeclared work. Since 2012, Dr. Kosta has collaborated closely with international organizations such as the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Washington D.C., contributing significantly to understand the complexities of undeclared work within the Albanian context. Her efforts have been dedicated to formulating effective solutions, driven by the overarching goal of [facilitating the transition of informal enterprises into the formal market.](https://archiva.acer.org.al/images/FINAL_NBA_ENGLISH-ilovepdf-compressed_1.pdf)

**Drini Imami**

Drini Imamiearned the PhD from University of Bologna in 2011. Drini is currently a lecturer (Professor) at Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness, Agricultural University of Tirana and a consultant for IFC.  Over the past 20 years, Drini has worked as a consultant for more than a dozen international development organizations/agencies including WB, EBRD, UN-FAO, UNIDO, ILO, UNDP, GIZ, JICA etc. he has contributed to key strategic documents and policies. He has conducted research in several leading European research institutions and has contributed to more than 80 scientific journal articles.

**Edvin** **Zhllima**

Edvin Zhllima is a senior agricultural economist researcher and practitioner experienced with strong knowledge and practice skills on agriculture rural development economics and policies, focused on women and other marginalized groups. Currently Associated Professor at Agricultural University of Tirana, he carried research activities at various EU universities and co-authored more than 40 scientific papers/works.

**Elona Dushku**

Elona Dushku is Head of the Microeconomic Research Department at the Research Department of the Bank of Albania, where she leads the analysis of microeconomic trends and their impact on monetary policy and financial stability. She holds a Ph.D. in Banking and Finance from the University of Rome, Tor Vergata, and a Master's degree from the University of Tirana. Her research focuses on bridging microeconomic insights with macroeconomic policy challenges in the areas of financial stability and monetary policy.

**Elona Mulgeci**

Elona Mulgeci, is a specialist at Bank of Albania's Research Department. She holds a Master’s Degree in Economy and Finance at European University of Tirana. Elona Mulgeci brings experience from previous roles at Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Albania.  With a robust skill set that includes Loans, Risk Management, Financial Analysis, Commercial Banking, Credit Analysis and more.

**Emina Milisic**

Emina Milisic is a central banker, holding Master of science degree in Economics from the University of Sarajevo. Her professional experience includes working in banking sector for 15 years. Before joining Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CBBH) she worked five years in commercial bank as a Head of insurance and back-office department. After that she had become a part of CBBH as Monetary and financial statistics senior specialist. During her work experience in CBBH Statistics department she succeeds to finish project (with Austrian National Bank) of Introducing interest rate statistics according ECB methodology.

Currently she is working as a Head of Monetary and financial sector analysis at the CBBH in the Office of Chief economist. In her current role she is responsible for most complicated analyses about financial sector and monetary policy in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Beside that she is a member of Required reserves Committee in CBBH. During her time at office of Chief economist she has gained valuable skills in analysis, modeling, and become a monetary policy specialist.

Her professional interests include macroeconomics, monetary economics, monetary policy analysis. Regarding her overall education, she is currently working on PHD thesis in economics, monetary policy.

**Emina Žunić Dželihodžić**

Emina Žunić Dželihodžić, Ph.D., is an Expert for monetary policy serving with excellence at the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina since November 2014. She earned her Ph.D. in 2017 from the School of Economics and Business Sarajevo, showcasing her commitment to academic and professional advancement. In her initial role at the Central Bank, she functioned as a Senior Specialist for Portfolio Management, where she diligently oversaw the portfolio investment process and conducted comprehensive result analysis.

Since august 2020. she works at Office of Chief economist as Expert for monetary policy. In this capacity, she assumes responsibility for a comprehensive analysis of monetary policy, encompassing all related aspects Her dedication to continuous learning is reflected in her completion of different courses during her formal and informal education.

Her areas of research interest encompass finance, banking, and monetary policy, and she has made notable contributions to these fields through the publication of two books and 18 articles.

**Erhan Iscan**

Dr. Erhan Iscan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at Çukurova University, where he has been a faculty member since 2002. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Economics from the same university and began his academic career as a research assistant there. Dr. İşcan completed both his M.Sc. and Ph.D. at Çukurova University.

After receiving his Ph.D., he started teaching as an Assistant Professor at Çukurova University, Niğde University, and Osmaniye Korkut Ata University. He has also held various administrative roles, including Vice-Dean of the Faculty, Vice-Chair of the Department of Economics, and Chair of the Department of Economics.

In 2023, Dr. Iscan received the title of Associate Professor, and in 2024, he was appointed to Çukurova University. He continues to serve as the Vice-Chair of the Department of Economics and is the Editor of the *Journal of FEAS*, the official journal of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. His research focuses on commodity markets, financial markets, and the digital economy.

**Esida Bujupi**

Esida Bujupi is an economist at the World Bank. She holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Administration (Accounting) from the American University in Bulgaria. She has a master's degree in Finance, Banking & Real Estate from SDA Bocconi and AUBG. Previously, she worked at the Bank of Albania’s Research Department, the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers in Kosovo.

**Fiqiri Baholli**

Graduated in 1986 at the Economic University of Tirana. He holds a doctoral degree “PHD on Financial and Banking” with contributions in finance industry and Academia. His work experience on management positions is realized for several years on the Bank of Albania, Life and Nonlife Insure companies, and private pension funds.

For 14 years, Fiqiri Baholli has been lecturer for finance and accounting at the Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness of the Agricultural University of Tirana.

He is working, recently at the Bank of Albania, Research Department.

Researches, publications, cooperation and different programs with Albanian, and foreign institutions has been realized with an out-standing profile that knows English and Italian foreign languages.

**Gerti Shijaku**

Gerti Shijaku is a Senior Researcher at the Research Department (Bank of Albania). Since 2017, he holds a PhD degree in Banking and Finance from the University of Rome Tor Vergata. His main research interests (and works) are: fiscal and monetary transmission mechanism, the monetary operations, market liquidity forecasting and international reserves, financial stability and bank prudential behaviour, credit crunch and credit demand and supply, international trade, economic globalization, advanced econometrics techniques, etc. His recently interest focuses also on understanding issue related to climate change and sustainable development and other matter on metric analysis. Mr. Shijaku has also worked as a part-time teaching assistant at the Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana and other private universities.

**Gülnihal Tüzün**

Gülnihal Tüzün is an Assistant Economist at the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT), where she plays a key role in the Macroeconomic Modeling and Forecasting Division. Her responsibilities include preparing and running the Quarterly Projection Model (QPM) to generate macroeconomic forecasts for the Monetary Policy Committee  and contributing to the Medium-Term Projections in the Inflation Report. She has specialized in macroeconomic modeling and forecasting. She holds an MSc in Economics from the London School of Economics and an MA in Economics from Koç University, Istanbul where her master’s thesis has been recognised as the Best Master’s Thesis Award by the Turkish Economic Association, and a BSc in Economics from Middle East Technical University from which she graduated as summa cum laude. Her research interests encompass applied macroeconomics, monetary policy, and international economics. She has published research on external shocks and monetary policy effects in small open economies while worked thoroughly for the real exchange rate dynamics and current account for Türkiye. She had chances to present her work at prestigious conferences, including the Dynamic Econometrics Conference at Nuffield College, Oxford and workshops on Structural VAR Models.

**Güngör Turan**

Güngör Turan is a former rector of Epoka University (2015-21) and a current professor of labor economics and social policy in the Economics Department of Epoka University. He has long and well experience in teaching, research, and projects on labor market studies such as human capital, human development, education, on-the-job training, dynamics of employment and unemployment, labor-management relations, managerial decision-making using economics and data science, enterprise development, economic growth, and circular economy. **He is currently the Chairperson of the Stakeholder Forum of Epoka University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences.** He has been appointed an external evaluator expert of the**Accreditation Board of Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL-Albania) since 9 June 2023.**

**Ivan Žilić**

Ivan Žilićworks as a senior adviser at Croatian National Bank. He is a research associate of the London School of Economics Research for South Eastern Europe (LSEE). He received his undergrad in Zagreb, master's in Madrid, and Ph.D. in Linz, all in economics. He spent one year in London working for LSEE as a research officer. He is very passionate about any kind of data and visualizations.

**Leonardo Tariffi**

Leonardo Tariffi isa Venezuelan economist with a Master, DEA and PhD in Economics at the University of Barcelona. He has previous experiences of working in private companies, policy-making institutions and academia. At the end of his studies in Economics at the University of the Andes, he worked at the Department of Quantitative Support of the Central Bank of Venezuela and the Macroeconomic Analysis Unit corresponding to the cooperation between the Economic and Finance Advisor Office to the National Assembly of Venezuela and the Inter-American Development Bank. He also studied the ESOL programme at Kensington and Chelsea College and he obtained experience working at the Research Department of Economics (University of Barcelona), Mediterranean Action Plan (United Nation Enviromental Programmme) and the Center for International Finance (IESE Business School). He have teaching experience lecturing Decision Analysis (European University), Research Methods (University of the Andes), and Epistemology Research (UPEL – IMPM) for undergraduate and postgraduate students among other several teaching courses. He also followed a post doctoral program as a research fellow at the University of Pavia. His last affiliations are the CIDIS of the University of the Andes as a Researcher and the Department of Economics and Business of the Pompeu Fabra University as an Adjunct Professor.

**Lindita Molishti**

Lindita Molishti holds a PhD for International relation in the field of economic integration. After a long working experience in the private sector as a banking consultant and at the same time as a university teacher on finance, she joined the Bank of Albania in 2011 in the supervision department for 3 years before moving to the Research department.

Lindita Molishti is working as senior specialist in Research Department at Bank of Albania. She is involved in producing research on topics relevant to the conduct of monetary policy. She is responsible for development of a banking confidence quarterly report for the Supervisory Counsel.

The field of research for Lindita, has been from the euroization of the economy and its impacts, to the emigration and its challenging for the labor market. Financial inclusion and the need for a strategy to increase numbers is another project that she has initiated and evolved.

The recent focus has been on the technological innovation on financial system and their integration in banking system.

**Lorena Skufi**

Lorena Skufi is a senior economist at the Bank of Albania. Prior to joining the Monetary Policy Department, she worked as a researcher in the Research Department and served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Tirana, teaching Macroeconomics and Monetary Policy. Her expertise lies in macro-financial modeling, analysis, and forecasting. She holds a PhD in Economics and Finance from Charles University and a master’s degree in Economics from the University of Tirana.

**Magdolna Sass**

Magdolna Sass is the director of CERS Institute of World Economics since 2020 April. Her research fields include: international economics and business, foreign trade, foreign direct investments and related policies in (former) transition economies, outward foreign direct investments and emerging multinationals in Hungary and in the Visegrad countries. She obtained her CSc/PhD degree in 1998. She worked for the CERS Institute of Economics and for the OECD. The number of her scientific publications exceeds 260, including articles in Europe-Asia Studies, Post-Communist Economies, Eastern European Economics,  European Urban and Regional Studies, European Planning Studies, Competition and Change and Applied Economics Letters.

**Margerita Topalli**

Margerita Topalli is a Visiting Fellow at the Grantham Research Institute for Environment and Climate Change at LSE. Dr. Margerita Topalli is the Head of the Macroeconomic Research Division at the Bank of Albania. She also serves as a consultant for international organizations, including FAO, the NAP Global Network, and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Her work focuses on sustainable finance, climate adaptation, and inclusive green finance. Dr. Topalli’s expertise extends to managing projects related to social infrastructure, economic development, and sustainability.

Prior to her current roles, she was a Research Analyst at the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) in Paris, where she contributed to projects on education, health, and socio-economic development. Dr. Topalli is an accomplished researcher, with publications addressing diverse topics such as the EU integration of the Western Balkans, the socio-political economy of transition economies, and the impact of climate risks on central banking.

Dr. Topalli holds a PhD in Transition Economics from the University of Lorraine and an MSc in Development Economics from Paris Dauphine University. Her academic career includes part-time lecturing at the University of Tirana and teaching experience at ICN Business School in France.

**Marina Kotsa**

Marina Kotsa is a PhD candidate in Economics at University College London, UK (UCL). Previously, she received an MSc in Economics from UCL with Distinction where she was awarded the Best Dissertation Prize.Her Master’s dissertation focused on monetary policy surprises and systematic changes in the Monetary Policy Committee. This work has shaped her ongoing research in Heterogeneous Agent models (HANK), which form the core of her current MRes and PhD studies.

Marina Kotsa earned a Bachelor's degree of Science in Economics (First Class Honours) from University of York, UK. She aims to advance her expertise in theoretical macroeconomics, particularly through the lens of HANK models. By integrating innovative macroeconomic models with empirical analysis, she seeks to develop policies that enhance economic resilience and improve the well-being of European citizens. She is also passionate about promoting the field of economics to young women, inspired by my own positive experiences in academia.

**Meri Papavangjeli**

Meri Papavangjeli is a Senior Economist in the Research Department of the Bank of Albania with extensive experience in macro-financial issues in emerging economies. Before joining the bank, she was working as a Fiscal Expert at the Ministry of Finance and a Professor Assistant of Macroeconomics at the University of Tirana.

**Milan Eliskovski**

Milan Eliskovski is a analyst Ii degree at the Monetary Policy and Research Department at National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia (NBRM). Milan Eliskovski brings experience from previous roles at Stopanska Banka Ad - Skopje. Milan Eliskovski holds a Master of Science in Economics, Business at Staffordshire University in the United Kingdom and Bachelor degree from "St. Kliment Ohridski" University-Bitola in the Republic of Macedonia.

**Miriam Scaglione**

Miriam Scaglione holds a Ph.D. in Computer Sciences and M.Sc. in Statistics (*Université de Neuchâtel*), M.Sc. in Cognitive Sciences (EHSS, Paris); B.Sc. in Scientific Computing (*Universidad de Buenos Aires*). She is Professor Emeritus at the School of Management and Tourism of the University of Applied Sciences of Valais (HES-SO Valais), being the first woman to achieve this honor at the aforementioned school. She was president of the Swiss section of the International Federation of Informatics and Travel and Tourism, and a member of the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism and the International Institute of Forecasters.

Her research interests include applied statistics and time series in tourism, the hotel industry, transportation, and forecasting the diffusion of technology in telecommunications and e-tourism. She leads regional tourism impact studies and a big data project aiming to monitor visitor flows using data such as cell phones and destination guest cards in Switzerland.

She is the CEO & Founder of *Miriam Scaglione Sàrl – Data Analysis Consulting & Training*, based in Switzerland. Currently, she is the team leader of the project *'Improvement of Tourism Statistics and Electronic System of Tourism Statistics'* (Ref No: AL-ADF-365634-CS-QCBS), managed by the *IDRA & Horwath HTL consortium*.

She earned the “Hannes Werthner Tourism and Technology Lifetime Achievement Award” in 2020 deserved by the International Federation for IT and Travel & Tourism (IFITT).

**Nico Petz**

Nico Petz is an economist in the Central, East and Southeastern European Section of the Austrian National Bank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank, OeNB) with research focus on business cycle analysis in the CESEE region, time-series econometrics, and nonparametric models. In addition, he is currently in the process of finalizing a dissertation for a PhD in economics at the University of Salzburg (Austria), which deals with nonparametric methods in macroeconometric analysis.

**Orion Garo**

Orion Garo is a Specialist at Bank of Albania's Research Department, where he conducts economic research, focusing on microdata and employing contemprary methods such as Big Data, Web scraping and machine learning. With over 10 years of experience in the field of microeconomic research, Mr. Garo has several research publications addressing various topics on labour and real estate domestic markets. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management from the University of Minnesota, and a Doctor of Sciences degree in Economic Sciences form Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës. Outside professional engagements, he enjoys sports, and health-related activities and discourse.

**Rodica Ianole-Călin**

Rodica Ianole-Călin is Professor of Applied Economics and Vice-Dean for Research and International Relations at the Faculty of Business and Administration, University of Bucharest, Romania. She teaches behavioral, health, and environmental economics, while her research is focused on investigating the multifaceted dimensions of informality, from rational to social actor theories.

**Thomas O. Zoerner**

Thomas O. Zoerner is a research economist in the Monetary Policy Section of the Austrian National Bank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank, OeNB) with research focus on macroeconometrics, credit and business cycles, monetary policy issues, and non-linear models in economics. Before this position, he was an assistant professor of Macroeconomics at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, served as a consultant for the United Nations Industrial Organisation (UNIDO) and was a visiting researcher at the Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic). He holds a PhD in Economics and a BA in Anthropology.

**Thomas Scheiber**

Thomas Scheiber is a Senior Economist in the Central, Eastern and Southeastern European Section of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB). He joined the OeNB in 2006 and his research focuses on the analysis of euroization, trust and household financial decisions in Central, Eastern and Southeastern European (CESEE) economies using micro data from the OeNB Euro Survey. Since April 2022 he is involved in the monitoring of Bulgaria and of CESEE inflation. Thomas Scheiber represents the OeNB in the South-East Monetary History Network (SEEMHN), which currently aims at reconstructing and publishing historical central bank balance sheets of the interwar period. In 2017, he worked as a short-term expert for the IMF, providing technical assistance to the authorities of the Republic of Serbia in updating their dinarization strategy. More recently, he taught monetary economics at the Lauder Business School, Vienna.

**Tural Yusifzada**

Yusifzada Tural is a Lead Economist at the Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan, specializing in inflation forecasting, macroeconomic modeling, and scenario-based simulations. With a Ph.D. in Economics from Middle East Technical University, he has presented at international conferences and published research on topics like climate change's impact on inflation and macroeconomic policy. His academic and professional expertise is complemented by advanced skills in econometric tools such as MATLAB, R, and E-views, as well as a strong background in policy analysis.