

RESEARCH STUDENT SEMINAR

**Tuesday 18 February 2020
16:30 – 17:30**

**SEERC Conference Room,
Proxenou Koromila Building**

“Corporate Social Responsibility in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in South-East Europe in the Fashion Industry: An Investigation into Organisational Practices and Consumer Behaviour”

**By
Ms Natyra Xharavina,
PhD student
Management School, TUoS**

ABSTRACT

Companies have duties and responsibilities towards all parties that they affect, especially towards society. Scholars and business practitioners refer to this as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Since the beginning of the 1950s when the modern concept of CSR transpired, this concept has surged in importance worldwide. Consequently, CSR received huge attention from scholars and it led business enterprises into implementing CSR practices. Until now, the majority of the CSR discourse deals with large firms, as they are the ones that employ mostly CSR activities within their companies. However, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) dominate the global population of corporations by more than 90% and provide more than three-quarters of employment. Despite their huge impact on the national, regional and global economy, SMEs have not received reciprocal attention in academia, nor have they been employing CSR programs to the same extent as larger organisations. Hence, further research investigating the process that SMEs follow when implementing CSR practices is desired. Besides, the implementation of CSR outside the developed countries has been neglected in the CSR discourse – it is believed that in developing countries, CSR leads to a different interpretation. For instance, South-East Europe (SEE), which has been facing social and economic change during the last decades, lacks a CSR culture and it needs to overcome numerous obstacles before it fully adopts such a culture. Consequently, this study aims to explain the role of corporate social responsibility in small and medium-sized enterprises among six South-East European countries: Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece. It intends to focus on the fashion sector as it is among the three most developed industries in SEE and it is mostly composed of SMEs. In particular, this study aims to understand the perceptions of both owners/managers of SMEs (by conducting in-depth interviews with fashion SME owners/managers from six SEE countries) and consumers (by employing focus groups and netnographic research on consumers, who purchase clothes from SMEs in SEE) regarding CSR performance, CSR's benefits to SMEs and its role on consumer responses. It will contribute theoretically to the CSR literature by exploring the CSR drivers/motives of SMEs across different countries and by investigating consumers' responses to CSR activities implemented by SMEs. From a practical standpoint, this study aims to provide valuable insight to those responsible for CSR in SMEs in SEE about how to effectively structure future CSR strategies.

The seminar series is open to all members of *staff and students* of CITY and to any *externals* that wish to attend.