



PERFORM Round table on ESS 2018, Belgrade

ADVOCATING FOR SERBIA'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY (ESS)

**A brief analysis of relevant processes, key (f)actors for success, outcomes,
and remaining challenges**

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INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

From 2015 to 2019, Helvetas in consortia with the University of Fribourg implemented the Swiss Government funded project “PERFORM – Performing and Responsible Social Sciences” in Serbia and Albania. The aim of the project was to strengthen social science research systems and actors to provide meaningful impact on societies and to contribute to reform processes in the Western Balkans. PERFORM was taking a systemic approach, working with the actors in the social science system to develop advocacy actions for strengthening the voice of social sciences.

One of PERFORM’s interventions focused on supporting an advocacy campaign of a group of young social scientists from Serbia who tried to convince their government to join the [European Social Survey](#), which is part of the [European Research Infrastructure Consortium](#) (ESS ERIC). Regarded as one of the most comprehensive international comparative social surveys from a methodological and theoretical point of view, and implemented in most European countries in two-year rounds under the auspices of the European Research Infrastructure Consortium, the ESS was seen as an essential stepping stone for advancing the social sciences in Serbia. From 2017 onwards, PERFORM therefore helped to facilitate a dialogue between the scientific community and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) and brought in other relevant stakeholders.

Five years later, in early 2022, the Government of Serbia eventually adopted the decision to [join the ESS ERIC](#) as a full member, after having participated in two ESS rounds (2018/19 and 2020–21) under guest status. With this, Serbia has become the first member of the ESS ERIC in the Western Balkans.

Given the significance of this step for the Serbian research community, the Republic of Serbia, and the ESS ERIC, Helvetas decided to document the advocacy engagement which led to this success. The resulting ‘Story of Change’ therefore recounts the process, distinguishes the roles of different actors, and identifies relevant moments of change and factors for success. Finally, it singles out a few aspects that require attention to make Serbia’s accession to the ESS a lasting success. Thus, this ‘Story of Change’ shall not only serve as a documentation for those who were/are involved, but also as a learning tool for other, similar advocacy projects across the region

Evidence for this report was collected through desk research of relevant project documents and websites, as well as through semi-structured, individual and focus group interviews in Belgrade and online with a broad range of involved stakeholders representing the social sciences, the PERFORM project, the MoESTD, SDC, ESS ERIC, and others (see Annex 1 for a detailed research schedule).



© European Social Survey

European Social Survey Key Visual

1. PROCESS SUMMARY

Established in 2001, the European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that gets conducted across Europe every two years. While 22 countries joined the first round of research in 2002/3, the 10th round (2020) already covered 32 countries – including Serbia as one of only few countries from the Western Balkans. With European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) status since 2013, the ESS is meanwhile considered the most important social science infrastructure in Europe, if not worldwide. Following very rigid scientific and methodological criteria, the biannual survey generates a huge, highly valuable data set which is open for free to everyone (for non-commercial purposes) and allows for cutting edge social research within member states and encourages comparative research across Europe.

Obviously, any academic institution and individual scientists with the ambition to do high quality, longitudinal social research would have a vivid interest to be part of the ESS. The problem is, however, that only governments can apply for ESS membership, so that research institutions depend on state support to participate in the survey. Therefore, social scientists from Serbia have tried to enrol their country into the ESS since the early years of the survey – but have repeatedly failed (Pellini 2019, 17). While the Serbian government keeps providing substantial

funding to other fields of research (e.g. as an associate member of CERN since 2012), it does little to foster the social sciences and its integration into the European research community.

In 2016, a group of social scientists from various Serbian research institutions makes another attempt to convince the Serbian government. They even reach out to the ESS headquarters in London – but nonetheless fail to attract the attention of the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD). After that, in early 2017, Dragan Stanojević, Assistant Professor with the Institute for Sociological Research (University of Belgrade) and a leading figure in the researchers' efforts, gets in touch with PERFORM to see how the project could possibly help to accelerate the process.

PERFORM quickly recognises the ESS' huge potential for the social sciences in Serbia whose support is at the core of the project. It agrees to facilitate a structured dialogue between the academic community and relevant state authorities and starts to explore its far-reaching networks with other relevant stakeholders. In the first half of 2017, PERFORM helps to establish an 'ESS Advocacy Working Group'. The group brings together engaged researchers and holds informal consultations in the



Meeting of researchers and government representatives in Belgrade, 1 July 2017

academic community to see who else would be interested to join and help advancing the issue. In a structured process, PERFORM helps the group to get clarity on how the social sciences would benefit from the ESS, to sharpen its key messages towards the MoESTD and other decision makers, and to agree on a joint advocacy strategy.

A first meeting of the ESS Advocacy Group with a MoESTD assistant yields little more than a polite expression of interest. Things start to move when PERFORM manages to arrange a meeting with the responsible State Secretary, who signals vivid interest and offers to continue dialogue. Nevertheless, the following meetings turn out to be tough, especially with regard to the government's financial contribution for ESS membership fees and fieldwork expenses, where the advocates sense most resistance and opposition. Only when PERFORM offers to co-fund the first round of research does the Ministry give in. Finally, after a large meeting with nearly 100 researchers and other interested stakeholders on 1st July 2017 in Belgrade, the Minister in charge sends the official membership application to the ESS headquarters, and later on appoints Goran Basic from the Institute of Social Sciences as Member of the General Assembly of ESS ERIC.

On 18th October 2017, Serbia gets officially awarded ESS guest status at the 10th meeting of the European Social Survey ERIC General Assembly in Frankfurt/Main. With this status, the country then takes part in Round 9 (2018/19) of the ESS. To make sure everything goes well and to demonstrate that the scientific community is up to the demanding task, academic institutions form a National Research Consortium looking after field research and data processing. It consists of six universities and institutes from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, and other places, and partners with the Statistical Office of Serbia. More than hundred mostly younger students and social scientists from Serbia actively participate in the 9th survey round and support the laborious and complex data collection in the field, which requires extensive trainings of enumerators and other field staff.

Throughout 2018/19, the ESS Advocacy Working Group holds several events to bring together involved researchers, state representatives, NGOs, and guests from other countries (e.g. Croatia, Switzerland, Slovenia) and maintain a constant dialogue and joint learning. According to senior researchers involved at that time, these meetings help to trigger interest and enthusiasm, especially among young researchers.

The successful completion of the 9th round also helps to convince the MoESTD to continue the ESS journey and commit for participation in Round 10 (2020-22) of the ESS. Although PERFORM has come to an end by now and can no longer co-fund Serbia's participation, the Ministry decides to carry on and takes on the total costs, including fieldwork. After two successfully completed survey rounds, the ESS ERIC on 26 April 2022 officially accepts Serbia as its 27th member with full voting rights at its General Assembly – notably as the first country from the Western Balkans. With this, Serbia commits to at least two more, consecutive rounds of the survey. Prof. Fitzgerald, Director of the ESS ERIC acknowledges the great efforts of the Serbian research community to make this happen: "This success is testament to the hard work and determination of our colleagues in Serbia who worked tirelessly for this outcome."

2. KEY (F)ACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Several factors have contributed for making Serbia's accession to the ESS ERIC a success. Besides internal factors like a highly committed, legitimate group of advocates and effective project support building on excellent institutional standing towards state authorities, also external aspects like the EU accession process helped to make change happen. This section examines some of these factors and tries to distinguish their respective contribution to the successful outcome of the advocacy effort.

2.1. PERFORM: Building trust, brokering knowledge, improving strategy

Most observers agree that the PERFORM project played a decisive role to get things going and unlock an advocacy engagement that was totally stalled until early 2017. To do so, **the project successfully capitalised on the mutual trust it had built with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) on earlier occasions.** In the words of an external observer, "PERFORM was not too close to the government – but close enough to get things going." The fact that the project was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and was based on a Memorandum of Understanding with the MoESTD certainly helped to gain solid institutional standing towards state authorities and have direct access to key systemic actors. With this, PERFORM helped the social scientists to overcome one of the main obstacles they had struggled with so far.

This preferential position allowed PERFORM to **assume the role of an effective knowledge broker.** It not only opened doors for the social sciences to voice their demands vis-à-vis the Ministry, but also mobilised other actors to support the process and amplify the key message that joining the ESS would yield significant benefits for Serbia. This included, amongst others, experts from ESS Scientific Council (under Horizon 2020 SUSTAIN Project), who were brought in to explain the significance of the ESS as a part of the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). For Bernhard Fabianek, Senior Expert with Horizon at the European Commission (EC), PERFORM was crucial also in the sense that it helped them "to see who else engaged for the ESS in Serbia – and that this was not just about 'EU versus the Serbian government'!" In addition, EC representatives had (and still have) only limited access to the Serbian research community, so they highly

appreciated the project for opening doors in both directions. This gets also underlined by Prof. Peter Farago, former director of FORS (Swiss Center for Excellence in Social Sciences), who acted as 'roaming ESS ambassador' to Serbia and other countries in the region at that time: "PERFORM essentially facilitated and organised my contacts with the Serbian research community."

“There was no real opposition in that sense – it was more a lack of trust”
Dragan Stanojević
National ESS coordinator

Finally, PERFORM helped the group of engaged social scientists to **straighten up their advocacy strategy and get their narrative right** so that it would appeal to and convince the MoESTD and other decision makers. This included several meetings during which they jointly analysed and formulated the potential benefits of an ESS membership for the social sciences and for the country as such. The project also helped to make the advocacy strategy more effective by adjusting activities and proposals to official planning cycles and the budgeting process – something which was positively noted by government officials: "PERFORM came to us with a convincing story, and they understood the logic of policy making, the budget cycle, and relevant timelines." (Viktor Nedovic, former Assistant Minister for International Cooperation).

2.2. PERFORM and MoESTD: Co-funding as the key to success

Although trust building, dialogue facilitation and strategy development were important success factors, the whole process would probably have failed if PERFORM had not at some point agreed to bear part of the costs incurred for participation in the ESS. While the MoESTD and other state institutions were soon convinced of the many benefits of ESS participation, they remained sceptical of the arising costs. On the one hand, they shied at the expenses for ESS membership and data collection as such. On the other hand, there were certain reservations as to how this may cannibalise the limited state funds for science, and thus impinge on other fields of research – although the ESS is a relatively small

investment if compared to other research areas. Consequently, **PERFORM's offer to provide a 100'000 EUR grant to cover the costs of data collection and capacity building** for the 9th ESS round led to a breakthrough. Once the funding for this most significant (and to some extent unpredictable) part of the package was solved, the Ministry agreed to pay the remaining 46'000 EUR to acquire ESS guest status.

2.3. ESS Advocacy Working Group: Committed, legitimate, competent

As important as PERFORM's contribution to the whole process was – success would clearly have been out of reach without the highly committed group of social scientists. Under the lead of Dragan Stanojević, assistant professor at Belgrade university, several researchers from various academic institutions had already pushed for ESS membership long before PERFORM entered the scene. Suffering from international isolation in terms of networks and access to high quality data, they felt excluded from wider academic debates and developments – and were desperately set on becoming part of the ESS research community. One of the group's strengths was that it did not just consist of senior, established scientists, but of **young postgraduates with a clear vision of the future and the will and enthusiasm to make change happen**. While decision makers could easily have rejected them due their limited institutional standing, some state representatives were positively surprised to be approached 'from below' with a clear demand and a vision for the way forward. At the same time, group members came **from different academic institutions** – this certainly helped to convince policy makers that ESS membership would not only benefit a small academic elite (and thus cause internal disputes) but help to advance social sciences as a whole.

When the Ministry eventually agreed to join the 9th ESS round as a guest member, the ESS Advocacy Working Group had to prove that the social sciences in Serbia were able to meet the survey's cutting-edge

“The engagement of the social scientists for the ESS was quite exceptional for Serbia. Their demand for joining the ESS came bottom-up, and not top-down as usual. I think that helped to make a difference”
 Viktor Nedović, former Assistant Minister International Cooperation

“PERFORM managed to close the gap between the academic community who was willing to join and the Serbian Government who was unwilling to pay.”
 Arnaldo Pellini
 former ODI consultant

methodological and technical standards. They clearly felt that both MoESTD and the ESS headquarters had some reservations about their ability to perform, also because Serbia had failed to deliver to another ERIC a few years earlier. However, thanks to an enormous effort of the involved scientists, the **timely mobilisation and training of hundreds of field enumerators, and creative solutions for technical problems** (like the initial lack of tablets and proper software for data collection), they managed to complete the first ESS round in time and not only meet the required standards but even outperform some longstanding ESS member countries. This certainly helped to convince relevant state actors to continue the ESS engagement and later join the survey as a full member.

“We had to show that our group of scholars can deliver what we promised.”
 Dragan Stanojević
 National ESS coordinator

2.4. ESS Advocacy Working Group: Informal networking as (dis)advantage

The main reason why the ESS Advocacy Working Group represented various academic institutions from across the country was because it decided not to use official channels, but instead to approach social scientists directly, via personal and informal contacts. In fact, building a powerful coalition via deans and secretariats would have taken far too long and would probably have choked the whole momentum. Thus, **the Group took advantage of the fact that many academic institutions were weak at the time to quickly assemble a larger group of engaged scientists**. In the short run, this certainly helped to strengthen the state actors' trust in the social sciences who seemed to act in a united and coordinated manner – and thus accelerated the ESS accession process. In the long run, however, this shortcut led to a lack of institutional ownership for



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the ESS, as only two academic institutions are currently leading the social sciences engagement with the survey.

2.5. European partners: Support and gentle pressure

Obviously, the ESS-ERIC itself was keen to win over Serbia as the first full non-EU member from the Western Balkans. Hence, it invested considerable resources to promote itself vis-à-vis state actors, and to indirectly support the social scientists in their efforts. Thus, representatives of the ESS-ERIC as well as of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission used every occasion to underline the ESS's significance as a steppingstone for Serbia's European integration. Already before, the **Serbian authorities had been under pressure to increase their engagement with ERIC**, which is widely regarded as an important aspect of the EU accession process and European Research Area (ERA). Unlike other European and EU collaboration schemes, Serbia enjoyed full access to ERIC, but made only limited use of it. Hence, joining the ESS was considered an 'easy win' for the authorities – at comparatively low costs, it would not only **send a positive signal towards Brussels**, but also yield obvious **benefits for the Serbian research community** and help to **improve**

public policy making. The latter two arguments got also emphasised by 'Roaming ESS Ambassador' Prof. Peter Farago and other ESS proponents, who paid several visits to Serbia at the time, always underlining how high quality, open access data would allow for better research, and how resulting comparative European studies would help to **position Serbia in the European academic landscape.** Finally, European partners also considered Serbia's accession to the ESS as a kind of a test. They wanted to see whether state authorities and the research community can contribute to the survey as foreseen, collect data in a timely manner and meet the high standards, and more generally reap the benefits of ESS membership. Serbia obviously passed the test and was granted full ESS-ERIC membership in 2022. Ironically, this does not necessarily take the pressure off the government – belonging to such a prestigious research infrastructure raises expectations, so leaving the ESS again would probably hamper Serbia's relations with its European partners more than if the country had not joined the ESS in the first place.

“.....
“Research infrastructures are a key area for the accession process of non-EU countries in Eastern Europe. (...) The fact that Serbia had full access to ERIC was an enabler with clear, obvious benefits, tangible results in the form of high-quality data available for everyone.”
 Bernhard Fabianek,
 Senior Expert, Horizon Europe
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3. DIRECT AND INDIRECT OUTCOMES

Serbia's participation in ESS round 9 and 10 yielded a few direct and indirect benefits – certainly for the social sciences, probably less for evidence-based policy making. This section examines some of these outcomes.

3.1. Strengthening the social sciences in Serbia

“There is a clear, proven pattern that the ESS helps to strengthen the social research community in many countries”, says Prof. Peter Farago who, in his function as roaming ESS ambassador, accompanied numerous countries on their way towards ESS membership. The first and most immediate outcome of the ESS for the social sciences in Serbia is the full access to high-quality social data – covering not only Serbia, but all ESS member countries across the continent. This opens countless **new entry points for sociological research**, whether with a domestic or a comparative bilateral or even multilateral perspective. Carried out on a regular basis, ESS data also invites for longitudinal research, which makes data even more interesting and compelling. Serbia's first participation in the 9th ESS round thus already led to numerous scientific publications on a broad range of issues including institutional trust, housing habits of young people, religiosity, or effects

of income increases on people's satisfaction (cf. [Sociologija, June 2021](#)). According to Dragan Stanojević, Assistant Professor with the Institute for Sociological Research in Belgrade, ESS data would be of particular value for PhD

students, whose publications gain scientific weight and significance when using ESS data. Besides scientific publications, ESS data also informed Serbia's latest [Human Development Report 2022](#) published by UNDP Serbia. Furthermore, through its participation in two ESS rounds, individual researchers and academic institutions alike have learned how to **conceptualise, organise and carry out large-scale surveys**, and how to process the huge amount of resulting data. In addition, the ESS does not only help to advance the level of research and scientific publications, but also of **academic teaching and education**. To participate in the 9th ESS round, Serbia had to train around 100 young researchers so that they could support the data collection as enu-

merators – an invaluable investment for the discipline's future.

Besides benefitting in terms of better teaching and empirical research, the discipline also profits from **new networks and opportunities for international collaboration**. To prepare for the 9th ESS round, Serbia joined a Western Balkans research group, and received knowledge and technical support from countries like Hungary and Slovenia. On top of such tangible, hands-on support, the country's inclusion in “the group of countries adopting what is considered one of the best social surveys in the world” (Pellini 2019, 17) “increases the visibility of the Serbian academic community internationally” ([Institute for Sociological Research and Institute of Social Sciences](#)). Another interesting aspect is that **Serbia is now more often subject of international comparative research** carried out by researchers from other countries, as ESS data is open to everyone, including from non-European institutions.

Finally, the improved visibility and inclusion of Serbian sociology in international networks has also led to **more successful acquisition of new research projects**. Especially the Institute of Social Sciences managed to secure a few substantial research man-

dates in recent years: “Our institute now gets much more requests for collaboration than in the past, especially in relation to EU-funded infrastructure projects where socio-economic impact studies are a must”, says Dr. Goran Bašić, Direc-

“**ESS membership strengthens the position of social sciences and the voice of social scientists toward policy makers.**”
Dr. Goran Bašić,
Director Institute of Social Sciences,
Member of General Assembly ESS-ERIC

tor of the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade. While there might be different reasons for this, it seems very likely that the Institute's active role in the ESS helped to increase its international visibility and prestige not only among academic actors, but also towards funding agencies. Bernhard Fabianek of Horizon Europe confirms: “The ESS is a kind of a bridge to access new funding opportunities. Being part of Horizon's first pillar ‘Excellent Science’, it brings prestige and is considered quite an achievement for a researcher – and good for governments to show off.”

3.2. Improved trust between state and social sciences

Within Serbia, the common journey towards ESS membership helped to bridge or at least narrow the previously existing gap between the social sciences and state authorities. While in the past the government's attention was mainly focused on STEM subjects, it is now showing **much more understanding for the social sciences**. Besides an increased level of interest and understanding for the discipline's wider relevance and its potentially important role for accelerating the EU accession process, the numerous meetings and discussions around the ESS also helped to build mutual trust. However, it was not only the government's side who learnt to listen and understand, but **also the social scientists themselves who learnt how to explain what they are doing**, to convey their messages in a language understandable for policy makers and other non-experts, and to stand up for their interests, as Dragan Stanojević remembers: "We were young researchers when it all started – without vanity, but also without confidence. We were too academic, and not very convincing for external stakeholders. But we acquired many soft skills along the way. We learned how to convince others." A former state representative confirms that the relations with the social sciences improved a lot in recent years – emphasising the government's decision to take over full funding of the ESS as a very strong sign of trust in the involved researchers and institutions.

“Evidence-based policy making is not strong in Serbia – there is still a long way to go. Even if politicians have the right set of information, they follow other interests.”
Bilijana Džusić Radmilović,
National Programme Officer SDC

3.3. Improved evidence-based policy making – not quite (yet)

While the overall objective of the PERFORM project was to improve policy making in Serbia by facilitating dialogue between science and politics, this was not the primary motivation for its ESS engagement. Nevertheless, the positive effect of high-quality social data from the ESS on public policy making was a key argument used by the project and the social scientists in favour of Serbia's ESS membership. By contrast, **the government was always more interested in the positive effects of an ESS membership for Serbia's EU accession**, as Viktor Nedović, former Assistant Minister for International Cooperation, indirectly confirms: "Evidence-based policy making was not the primary motivation, as these effects may only be seen at a later stage." In fact, four years after the country's first participation in the ESS, **only few observers would notice a direct, positive effect on the way how policies are being drafted, endorsed, implemented, or monitored**. Despite the occasional



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translation of ESS data into policy recommendations, such as a policy brief on the public perception of the LGBTQI community, social scientists do not see any noticeable change in the ways how policies are made. “The current government is not so interested in good data”, one social scientist says, slightly disenchanted. PERFORM representatives emphasise, however, that while the effect of facts and figures

was obviously limited on high level politics, many **technocrats in ministries and at lower levels of the public administration would listen and understand**. “Our aim was always to improve those more internal decision-making processes, not public policy making” says Martin Dietz, former project manager of PERFORM.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

Serbia’s full membership in ESS-ERIC is a huge success for the social sciences in the country, and a posthumous gratification for PERFORM. The various outcomes described above obviously outweigh the project’s efforts in terms of funding and human resources. To secure this success and reap more benefits in future, however, the government, social sciences, and the international community need to stay alert and continue to engage in various dimensions:

4.1. Strengthen and broaden academic institutional ownership

Social scientists themselves admit that the ownership for the ESS among relevant academic institutions in Serbia is too weak. “Today, the lead for the ESS lies with the Institute of Social Sciences and the Institute for Sociological Research. The rest are individuals without institutional support”, says Goran Basić, Director of the Institute of Social Sciences and member of the ESS-ERIC General Assembly. He points out that other **universities and institutes first need capacity building to develop the methodological basics** before they can meaningfully engage with the ESS. Dragan Stanojević underlines that there was not even a **formalised agreement between the involved institutions**: “We never gave much thought to the future, so today we are in a kind of an ‘interregnum’, where some are still committed, while others are not. We have no institutional setup, we only have the legacy. It would be good to formalise this collaboration.” By doing so it will be important to **include a broad range of interested institutions to strengthen the supporter’s base and increase the project’s legitimacy** towards the government. After all, the MoESTD might start to question the usefulness of the ESS if only few institutions and researchers can profit. “There is a danger that some regions feel disconnected and start to complain because they can’t benefit. This would make it

difficult to justify budgets at national level”, warns Prof. Peter Farago, referring to other centralised countries like Austria where the ESS experienced such conflicts.

4.2. Keep lobbying for ESS membership

As countries are allowed to leave and re-join from one round to another, Serbia’s membership in ESS-ERIC is not cast in stone. It is therefore important that the social sciences **continuously demonstrate measurable improvements** in the quality of their teaching and research, and their ability and willingness to translate ESS research into comprehensible messages for policy makers and the broad public. Otherwise, future governments might set other budget priorities and freeze or even cancel funding in case they no longer see a clear return on investment. Hence, all involved actors with an interest in the social sciences, in Serbia’s convergence with European standards and processes, and in evidence-based policy making, seem well advised to at least **maintain their current level of engagement** and support.

4.3. Reassume the role of knowledge broker

Had PERFORM existed for a few years more, the transformation of knowledge generated by the ESS between the scientific community, the state and the broad public might have worked even better than it actually did. After all, the project considered itself a knowledge broker, **facilitating between various interest groups, opening spaces for dialogue, and enhancing mutual understanding**. “It would have been good if they [PERFORM] stayed a few years more. We could have continued with public events to spread the word and strengthen the consortium of researchers”, says Dragan Stanojević of the Institute for Sociological Research. In addition, the researchers would also have welcomed some

more technical support, as they keep struggling with hardware shortages like suitable tablets and software for proper and timely data collection. Unfortunately, there was no systematic continuation of this important mechanism once PERFORM came to an end in late 2017. SDC and GIZ incorporated some elements in their new 'SDGs for All' project, which contains a component on evidence-based decision making, but with no specific focus on the social sciences and the ESS. And while SDC's overall goal to support Serbia in the EU integration process remains, little attention is paid to the respective potential of the country's membership in ESS-ERIC. But the realisation that more effort is needed is there,

as Bilijana DjusićRadmilović, SDC National Programme Officer says: "We need to continue creating space for such policy-making processes." In view of the European Social Survey's great potential to strengthen the social sciences and their integration in international networks, to inform public and policy debates, to accelerate Serbia's European accession process, and, consequently, help transforming society, the donor and INGO community seem well advised to **find ways for reassuming the role of an active but impartial knowledge broker** and take the respective facilitation between science, politics and the broad public a few steps further.

ANNEX

Research schedule & list of respondents

| Date | Meeting / Activity | Place / Address |
|----------------|--|---|
| WE 31 August | 10:30 Arnaldo Pellini, former ODI consultant | Online (Teams) |
| SU 4 September | 19:45 Nenad Celarević, former PERFORM Deputy PM | |
| MO 5 September | 10:00 Group of young researchers and National ESS Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dragan Stanojević NC ESS • Vladimir Mentus • Bojan Todosijević • Vera Backović | University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Sociological Research Address: Cika Ljubina 18, Belgrade |
| | 12:00 Working lunch with young researchers | Prolece Restaurant |
| | 15:00 Bilijana Djusić Radmilović (SDC National Programme Officer) | SDC Office, Francuska 6/II, Belgrade |
| | 16:30 Martin Dietz, former project manager PERFORM | Online (Teams) |
| | 18:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Goran Bašić, Director Institute of Social Sciences • Prof. Viktor Nedović, former Assistant Minister for International Cooperation • Ivana Stjelja, Project Officer Institute of Social Sciences | Le Teniza, Resavska 23, Belgrade |
| TU 6 September | 10:00 Prof. Peter Farago, former director of Swiss Center for Excellence in Social Sciences FORS | Online (Zoom) |
| | 14:00 European Commission DR Research and Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernhard Fabianek • Nikelina Naska | Online (Webex) |

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- Institute for Sociological Research, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy: <https://isi.f.bg.ac.rs/en/projects/>



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