DYNAMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP – GENERATOR OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS*

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Fast-growing companies (gazelles) are the main creators of new jobs, revenue growth and vibrant, competitive economy. This paper reviews (a) conditions for dynamic entrepreneurship in Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia and (b) recent studies on dynamic enterprises (gazelles) conducted in these countries. However, since the authors are in the process of launching new research on gazelles (based on the same methodology and selection criteria), which is to be carried out simultaneously in all four countries in 2014, the paper provides (c) discussion on these initiatives and initial results as well. A constant growth of dynamic enterprises and gazelles and their increasing share in the economy

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presents an invaluable analytical instrument for forecasting overall economic growth in the next period. In order to define favorable, supportive environment for dynamic and sustainable entrepreneurship, the authors addressed the institutional and regulatory environment, level of knowledge of entrepreneurs, access to finance, incentives for introduction of modern technology, innovations, internationalization, etc. The authors also monitored the trends of entrepreneurial development index, entrepreneurial activity index and competitiveness index for each country. Since the integral pilot project was already implemented in Slovenia in 2011, and a number of conclusions were drown, the authors studied the main features of fast-growing companies and differences between the growth factors that affect growing companies in Slovenia, and compared respective results in all four countries. Among factors for growth, the most critical ones in Slovenia were: environmental barriers, management systems, and financing; these factors were further examined in other three countries. In addition, the growth rates of dynamic enterprises were compared with the ones of their European counterparts, and therefore these studies were able to offer an indication of what time is required by the Southeast European gazelles to catch up with their counterparts abroad. The most important findings of this research and its impacts on respective countries, served as a basis for making recommendations for better addressing the phenomenon of dynamic entrepreneurship, sustainable growth and rising competitiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we present the most important findings of the initial research and comparison of dynamic entrepreneurship that has been carried out in Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Serbia. We find that dynamic enterprises do not significantly differ in growth rates. If backed up by a favorable environment and supportive atmosphere for entrepreneurship, gazelles could catch up with their counterparts in the EU in ten years' time. Among factors for growth, the most critical are: environmental barriers, management systems and financing. Fast growing companies are crucial to the recovery of the economy.

Gazelles are the fast-growing companies that create most of the newly created jobs in the national economies. They represent not more than 3-5% of companies in the total number of businesses. These companies can achieve above average growth rates and can operate in any field of activity, even in those with low growth rates. The creator of the name gazelles is David Birch (Birch, 1987), professor of entrepreneurship from Boston MIT and founder of research and consultancy company Cognetics. During the seventies, with a booming Silicon Valley, it was learned that only 3% of the companies (the so-called dynamic businesses, gazelles) both survive and continue to grow.

2. THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF DYNAMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We have established that entrepreneurship, entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial organization have their roles in the economic science as well as in business science and that entrepreneurship cannot be automatically equated or restricted to small business only, or to the creation of new enterprises. However, both in literature and in everyday life this connection is frequently used and can be attributed to the fact that new economic entities do not emerge unless there is an entrepreneurial approach and entrepreneurs. On the other hand, there are not many economic entities in the small business sector that act in an entrepreneurial way, have real potential for growth, or demonstrate wish to generate growth.

We recognized the necessity of an interdisciplinary treatment of entrepreneurship as a socio-economic phenomenon of the twenty-first century (Pšeničny, 2002), linking at least three basic approaches:

(1) *the economic aspect:* from the macro-economic and socio-economic aspects we can establish, assess and measure the contribution of entrepreneurship to the economic growth, employment, advanced stage of the country's economy, and the prosperity of the society. From the micro-economic point of view, we can establish the economic effects of individual entrepreneurial entities, their optimum size to achieve the expected return and balance the use of resources to achieve the maximum effects;
(2) *the business-organizational aspect* helps us to assure the economic goals in an entrepreneurial organization – an enterprise – and administer and manage the business functions that are prerequisite for the specialization of entrepreneurship to achieve the economic and socio-economic goals;
(3) *the aspect of entrepreneurial management and entrepreneurial behavior* allows us to clarify, to a certain extent, what the entrepreneurial handling and conduct of the entrepreneur (or the entrepreneurial team) and the entrepreneurial organization should be like to be able to apply the professional techniques and models developed by the business and organizational science and achieve economic, as well as non-economic goals as set by the entrepreneur and all others entering the organizational relationship.

We have restricted our study of entrepreneurship at this point of time to a narrower scope – the *dynamic entrepreneurship* and its role in economic

growth. This has proved to have an exceptional macroeconomic role, and the growth of the most dynamic enterprises contributes crucially to the growth of national economies, social prosperity, job creation, technological progress and development, and also creates the highest added value (Pšeničny, 2009).

Dynamic entrepreneurship has been defined in great detail in the framework of the theory of growth (Penrose, 1959), by models and factors of growth divided into the environmental and internal ones (the enterprise and entrepreneur), by the motivation for growth (and harvest), by the strategies of growth, as well as by the management systems and development of the organization of enterprise. In the long run, growth stands for profit – i.e. the harvest for the entrepreneur who has identified and seized a market opportunity, and developed, on the basis of his clear vision and harvest expectation, a proactive strategy of growth and organization throughout all organizational stages up to the corporate entrepreneurship (Pšeničny, 2002). Dynamic enterprises are led by dynamic entrepreneurs who create the change and have an effect on the environment, are innovative and successful in the long-run, which can be measured by financial and non-financial indices, and whose business strategies are competitiveness, internationalization and globalization.

Dynamic enterprises can be found in all developmental stages of an enterprise, not only in the so-called stage of growth. The long-term growth is related to, and depends on, the assertion of the leadership professionalization and the development of an entrepreneurial and managerial team, as well as on an advanced, professional organizational structure, tailored to the nature of the business. Underlying for the dynamic enterprise leadership is the understanding and awareness of the management techniques of a growing enterprise, which means that we cannot expect the most dynamic enterprises to be led by individual entrepreneurs, but by strong entrepreneurial and management teams, under the lead of an influential entrepreneur or an entrepreneurial manager, who need not necessarily be the founder of the enterprise.

The study of the current cognizance has proved that the growth of (dynamic) enterprises depends on certain factors (Mei-Pochtler, 1999; Roure, 1999): (1) the business environment, (2) the entrepreneur and/ or the entrepreneurial-managerial team and their capability, (3) the attitude of the entrepreneur and the enterprise to innovation, development and research activities, and introducing changes, (4) the strategy or model of growth and harvest, (5) the management system and business model, (6) the employees and human resources management, and (7) the financing of growth. The factors of

growth have an external – environmental component (1) and several internal ones (2-7).

The similarities and differences in the interplay of these factors and individual principles on the dynamic enterprises in Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Serbia were scrutinized and compared with the dynamic enterprises in the European Union (EU). Dynamic enterprises and dynamic entrepreneurs were categorized, according to the EU criteria, among the fastest growing dynamic enterprises in Europe.

Our hypothesis is that the dynamic enterprises in studied countries emerge and operate in the same characteristics, but different internal and external conditions that are relevant for the fast growth of enterprises in the EU. In order to accelerate the enterprise growth and support to the dynamic entrepreneurship, we should at least provide similar conditions in the environment and inside the fast-growing enterprises, as the dynamic enterprises in Europe have.

If we identified these differences, we could stimulate the activities that should lead to provide similar conditions for dynamic entrepreneurs in the near future, such as the European dynamic enterprises enjoy now. Therefore, our fundamental hypothesis shall read:

> **Hypothesis.** Even in the time of crisis, not more than 5% of economic entities generate almost all economic growth and most new jobs.

To verify the differences in growth between dynamic companies in studied countries, we have selected from the database of all enterprises such enterprises that fulfilled certain criteria, and checked them additionally against the criteria of growth as specified above. The criteria that were applied to select the most dynamic enterprises are equal to the criteria applied for the selection of the European dynamic enterprises – the *Europe's 500* (GrowthPlus, 2001).

2.1. The development and competitiveness of entrepreneurship in Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro

The entrepreneurial sector in analyzed countries accounts for 99.8% of the number of enterprises, in the structure of economy employs 2/3 of the employed, generates 2/3 of the turnover and 55% of the newly created value; it accounts for 49% of exports and 1/3 of the GDP. However, in comparison with large enterprises the entrepreneurial sector is less productive and less profitable.

Table 1. Weight of the entrepreneurial sector (SME[1]s) in the economy 2011 (%)

Indicators	Serbia	Slovenia	Croatia
No of enterprises	99.8	99.47	99.6
No of employees	65.3	64.62	65.6
Turnover	65.5	49	50.2
-GVA	55.2	53.91	58.9
Exports	48.5	46.12	42
Imports	55.8	61.95	40.4
Balance of goods	66.7	236.52	n/a
Investments	52.1	61.41	n/a

Source: National statistical offices.

In the structure of the entrepreneurial sector, micro enterprises are most numerous, while small and medium-sized enterprises dominate all the indicators of reference. Medium-sized enterprises export 47.2% and have the best export-import ratio; micro enterprises employ 45.6%, while the balance of goods is the highest in small enterprises.

The level of competitiveness of the SME sector of Serbia significantly lags behind the European average and most transition economies. Qualitative indicators of the development level of the entrepreneurial sector are lower in comparison with the EU average and the majority of analyzed countries (employment per enterprise, turnover, gross value added - GVA, and profit per employee). The rate of profitability is above average, consequence of a low starting point and not of the expansion or a higher level of this sector's internationalization.

Due to a deteriorated business climate, the number of start-ups as well as new entrepreneurs is decreasing, which heavily restricts opportunities for the creation of new jobs and productivity growth. For example, in the course of 2011 each month around 3,400 individuals established new business entities, much less than 5,000 individuals (an average number of people that set up businesses each month in 2007).

The entrepreneurial environment in Serbia has deteriorated since the outbreak of the economic crisis. Consumer demand has been decreasing and the loss of business trust has had an adverse impact on the availability of financial support; therefore the opening of new and development of existing enterprises

[1] Small and medium sized enterprises (SME).

and shops has been seriously limited. The rate of the setting up of new enterprises has slowed down substantially. Namely, in 2007 per each 6 newly established enterprises one was closed down, and per three newly opened shops two were closed. In 2011, per 6 newly established companies 10 were closed, and the number of established shops was by about 10% lower than the number of closed ones.

Table 2. Comparative indicators of entrepreneurship development in 2011

	EU	BG	CZ	HU	RO	SI	SR	HR*	MNE**
No of companies (in 000)	20989.9	287.0	934.5	552.7	535.3	106.9	319.3	1689	233
No of employees (in 000)	87818.2	1459.2	2368.8	1876.8	3032.3	396.9	786.9	1432	1237
No of SME per 1,000 citizens	41.8	38.9	89.1	55.3	25.0	52.1	43.6	334	373
No of employees per company	4.2	5.1	2.5	3.4	5.7	3.7	2.5	51	53
Turnover per employee (in EUR 000)	141.9	53.5	100.5	84.7	49.4	122.0	64.8	1392	n/a
GVA per employee (in EUR 000)	41.3	10.1	20.6	13.5	9.2	29.3	10.9	306	n/a
Profit per employee (in EUR 000)	10.9	4.2	3.6	0.6	7.2	2.4	4.0	n/a	n/a
Profitability rate	27.0	38.1	19	2.0	52.0	9.0	36.1	n/a	n/a

Source: EUROSTAT, DG Enterprise and Industry and national statistic offices.
* Data 2010
** Data 2009

The prospects of newly established companies to survive on the market diminished, and so the share of companies that live through the first two years of operating went down from 92.0% (2007) to 87.6% (2011), while the rate of survival of shops fell from 66.2% to 55.4%. At the same time, unemployment significantly increased, which leads to continued forced emigration, particularly

of the young and the educated. The global economic crisis has made an adverse impact both on economic entities in the early stage of operating and on the already established companies – there are fewer business opportunities and it is more difficult to start a business.

Since the beginning of the crisis in the second half of 2008 the Slovene business sector experienced an above average economic growth of annually 3 to 4%. In 2008, the Slovene gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in terms of purchasing power reached 91% of the EU average and in 2009 a sharp slump followed as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis. The GDP shrunk by 8 %. Initially, weak positive growth was observed followed by a slight deterioration in 2011. In the three years since the beginning of the economic crisis Slovenia has been lagging behind the European average and the difference rose by 7 percentage points. In comparison to the EU average, the fall of the GDP per capita in 2009 generally resulted from a relatively larger fall of productivity compared to the EU. In 2010, the unemployment rate adjusted to the economic situation in a great extent (SIB, 2013).

The lack of fresh property and loan financing resources presents the greatest risk for the economic recovery. Beside weak financial markets weakened by a long-term debt and financial crisis in the euro area, other obstacles in the way of recovery are the drop of the domestic demand and the decline of demand on foreign markets, where the Slovene economy is traditionally present. The Slovene economy is also too slow at accessing new, growing world markets or is only indirectly present.

The number of business entities in Slovenia rose by 3,800 or 2.5 % in 2006 and in 2009 (the first year of the crisis) by 6,310 or for more than 5 %. In 2011, more entries but also more deletions from the Slovenian Business Register were recorded (the difference being 4,141 entities). In the year 2012, the positive difference between new entries and deletions dropped to only 1,457 and that is significantly less than in the period before the crisis.

A positive element are high growth companies, which were practically responsible for the entire economic growth in the period 2006–2010, for the overall increase in added value and all new workplaces in the Slovene economy.

As per *Entrepreneurship Development Strategy* (2013-2020), proposed by the Croatian Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, which measured the number of enterprises, total employment in these companies and their value added, small business sector in Croatia shows no significant differences in

relation to the EU. In Croatia, there is a total of 168,931 small business entities (data for 2011, taken from Financial Agency's (FINA) report on the financial performance for 2011, the Trades/crafts registry at the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, and Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts).

The same source reports that, of these, 92.2% are micro enterprises (up to 9 employees), 6.3% are small businesses (10 to 49 employees) and medium-sized enterprises amounted to 1.2%. The sum of these percentages shows that in Croatia there are 99.7% of small business entities. Data for the EU Member States (EU-27) show that there are 99.8% small businesses.

Employment in small enterprises in Croatia in 2010 amounted to 702,071, or 69.83% (calculation based on data at FINA and administration of the Central Bureau of Statistics for 2010) of total employment. Micro enterprises employed 26.06% of the total number of employees, small businesses 27.07% and medium-sized 16.71%. Data for the EU-27 amounted to 67.5% of all small businesses, and 20.6% for small businesses. Compared with the EU-27, a small business in Croatia is more important for the creation of employment.

With regard to value added, small business sector in Croatia amounted to 58.9% of the 11 total value added in 2009, out of which micro businesses created 20.3% of value added, small businesses 19.6 %, and medium-sized enterprises contributed with 19.1%. If the same data is compared to those from 2008, when the total value added of the small business sector amounted to 57.1% (of which micro enterprises incurred 16.6% of value added, small businesses 20.2%, and medium-sized ones 20.3%), it is evident that the percentage of value added in this sector has increased thanks to the micro-enterprises, which are the only continuing to give a positive contribution to the value added. In the EU-27, the share of the small business sector amounted to 58.4% of value added produced by all companies and of these, micro-enterprises to 21.5%, small businesses to 18.6% and medium-sized to 18.3%.

Small business sector in Croatia did not show significant differences with respect to the same sector in the EU Member States with regard to the composition and the importance of sub-sectors for the total number of enterprises, the share of total employment and contribution to total value added.

In the period between 2001 and 2010, the density of small businesses per 1,000 population in Croatia has increased from 12.71% in 2001 to 22.47% in 2010, as a result of increasing the number of small businesses and a declining population. The same data for the EU-27 average is 39.3%. The latest available

data also indicate that a significant percentage of the recorded number of small enterprises in Croatia is not active (28.4%).

Although Croatia shows very similar characteristics to those of the EU in terms of the share of small and medium enterprises in the total number of companies and its contribution to employment and value added, it is necessary to increase the number of active small and medium enterprises in the country.

2.2. The impact of the recession on the entrepreneurial sector

Before the outburst of the global economic crisis, the SME sector had been the most vital segment of the economy and a major source of new jobs. Due to general deterioration of business conditions, there was a considerable decrease in the volume of employed labor and, consequently, a comparative improvement of business performances relative to the number of employees.

Table 3. Performance indicators in the SME sector (growth rates)

	Serbia			Slovenia			Croatia			Montenegro		
	‘09	‘10	‘11	‘09	‘10	‘11	‘09	‘10	‘11	‘09	‘10	‘11
No. of companies	3.7	1.2	0.2	4	2.5	3.1	n/a	n/a	-5.7	n/a	-4.4	8.9
No. of employees	-7.2	-6.6	-3.4	-4.9	-3.5	-2.1	-3.6	-4.5	-1.4	4.8	-7.5	0.8
Turnover	-14.7	0.3	0.2	-14.8	4.4	4.3	n/a	-5.6	5.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
GVA	-15.7	-1.4	-3.2	-8.6	-0.5	1.3	n/a	-12.7	12	n/a	n/a	4.5
Exports	-8.9	15.9	6.0	-15.1	15.9	13.4	n/a	13.2	25.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Imports	-24.2	1.9	1.3	-24.5	13.8	11.6	n/a	-29.2	14.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Balance of goods	-33.1	-9.1	-3.5	-37.9	-9.8	-8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: EUROSTAT, DG Enterprise and Industry and national statistic offices.

The recession tide (decline of external and internal demand, investments, higher risks and costs of investment, as well as a fear of failure) hit the entrepreneurial sector in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro particularly hard. Robust entrepreneurial dynamics of the previous period was undermined (slower establishment, growth, and development of new enterprises, and faster closing), and so the number of shops fell and the number of enterprises is stagnating. -The research done on the basis of the GEDI index and its sub-indexes relating to key dimensions of entrepreneurial activity in 2008-2010 point to strong negative effects of the crisis on the entrepreneurial climate in SEE: deteriorated business conditions led to a decrease in perceived

opportunities for staring a new business, expansion of the fear of failure (induced by higher investment risks) and a decline in social support for entrepreneurial activities, coupled with more intensity of the market competition. At the same time, the share of new companies in the sector of medium and high technology is heavily decreasing, and chances for a company to apply new technologies and to introduce innovations into business strategies that ensure faster growth are slimmer. The degree of orientation of new companies to an external market is in ever greater decline, and so is their readiness to employ venture capital.

Data extracted from the Entrepreneurship Development Strategy for Croatia 2013-2020 includes the following: SME share in GDP is 51.6%; the number of small business entities: 168,931; the share of micro enterprises: 92.2%, of small businesses: 6.3% and of medium-sized companies: 1.2%; in total, 99.7% of all businesses are small businesses (EU average: 99.8%); SME's contribution to the GDP is 50.6% (EU: 67%); the number of employees in 2010 was 702,071, which contributes with 68.83% to total employment (EU: 67.5%); the share of value added (2009) was 58.9% (EU: 58.4%).

According to data from the 2012 Eurobarometer, 54% of the Croatian population experiences self-employment as positive event (EU: 37%), but 80% do not consider it feasible (EU: 67%). According to the same survey, 54% of Croatian citizens want to be entrepreneurs (EU: 37%), a significant increase compared to 2009 when 43% of Croatian citizens (EU: 45%) had a desire to be self-employed.

2.3. The quality of entrepreneurship

Measuring the quality of entrepreneurship entails a study of various dimensions of entrepreneurship development by states, the focus being on measuring the impact of innovations, the quality of technology, education of labor, and availability of the venture capital.

One of the most representative composite indicators for measuring the quality of entrepreneurship is *GEDI - Global Entrepreneurship Development Index*[2]. In particular, GEDI examines the effects of entrepreneurship and innovations that are produced by individual and institutional factors.

[2] Acs, Autio, and Szerb (2010, 2011, 2012). GEDI comprises three different entrepreneurship dimensions: *The entrepreneurial attitude (ATT)*; *The entrepreneurial activity (ACT)*; *The entrepreneurial aspiration (ASP)*.

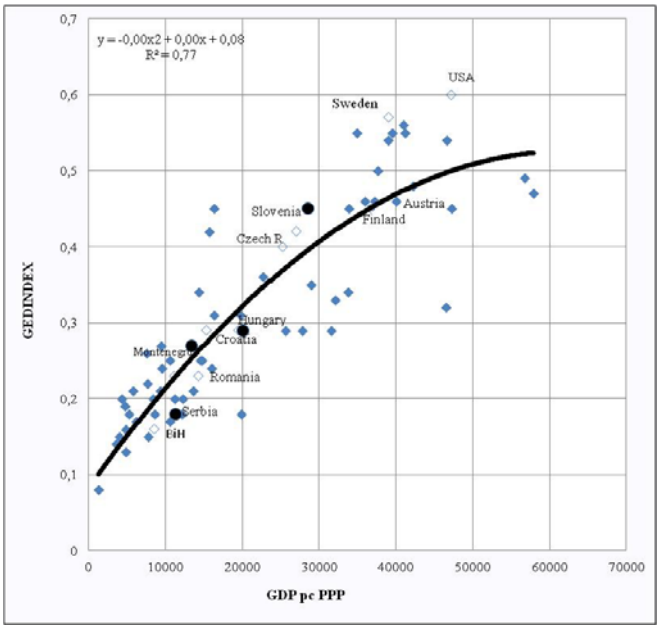

Figure 1. GEDI index

Source: GEDI 2012.

The value of GEDI is different from county to country: Serbia 0.18 (the rank being 63), Romania and Macedonia (0.23), Montenegro 0.27, Hungary and Croatia (0.29), Slovenia (0.42), Austria (0.46). The average value for SEE is three times less than in Denmark (0.55). In the group of countries whose development is driven by efficiency[3], Serbia is at the bottom of the list – the highest ranked country is Columbia (0.27), and the lowest value of GEDI is that of Ecuador (0.15). In relation to the attained level of economic development, the level of GEDI and all three sub-indicators (ATT, ACT, and ASP) in SEE countries is low.

Sub-indicators of the dimension *Entrepreneurial attitude* show that the deterioration of business conditions in Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro has led to a reduction of perceived opportunities for starting a new business, growing fear of failure (related to the amplification of investment risks), and a decline in social support for entrepreneurial activities. In comparison with adjacent countries and the EU average, a lower value of the sub-index Entrepreneurial

[3] Average of the group "Stage 2 – Efficiency-driven Economies" (WEF).

attitude (0.29) is registered only in Bosnia and Herzegovina/BiH (0.21) and Romania (0.22).

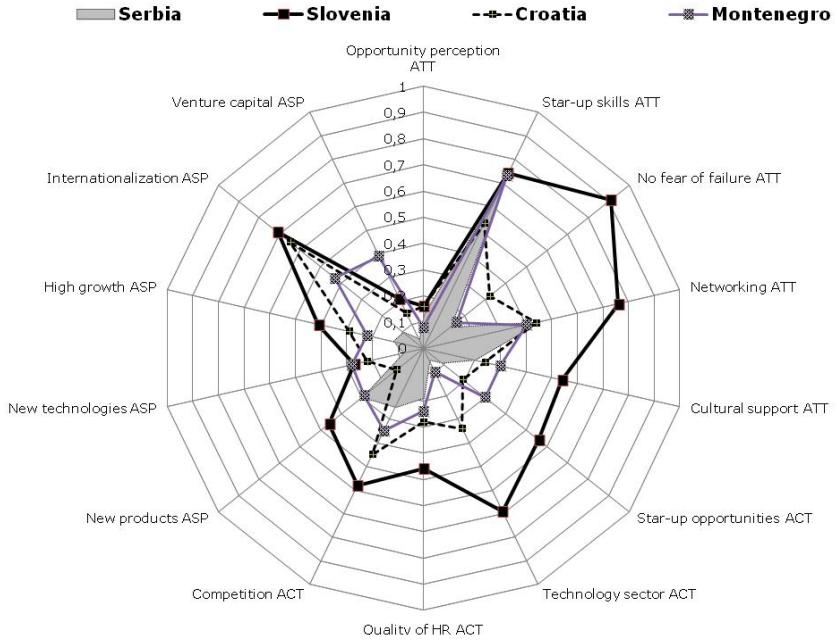

Figure 2. The quality of entrepreneurship in Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro

Source: GEDI 2012.

The trend of some sub-indexes of *Entrepreneurial activity* is extreme decline: the share of new companies in the sector of medium and high technology is heavily decreasing and opportunities of businesses to apply new technology are tighter. Serbia and BiH have the lowest values of this sub-index (0.14 each), while an above average value is that of Slovenia (0.46 vs. 0.44 of the EU). As for the segment of *Entrepreneurial aspiration,* the degree of state-of–the-art technology and innovation application is in decline, and so are entrepreneurs' chances to apply business strategies that provide faster growth, the level of openness of new companies to the international market, as well as the degree of venture capital usage. For example, the sub-indicator of the internationalization degree of the SME sector in Serbia is only by 0.10 and 5-6 times lower than that of Romania (0.65), Croatia (0.60), Macedonia (0.50), and Hungary (0.46).

2.4. Policy of entrepreneurship development - SBA

The official framework for the policy of entrepreneurship development in the European Union is based on the *Small Business Act - SBA*. The guidelines for the creation and implementation of policies at the level of the EU and SBA member states are defined in the form of 10 principles: creating a stimulating environment that appreciates entrepreneurship and family business; providing opportunities for the 'second chance' for honorable entrepreneurs that went bankrupt; defining rules and regulations in line with the principle 'think small first'; building up of public administration that is more responsive to the needs of SMEs; facilitating participation of SMEs in public procurement and better use of state aid; facilitating the access of SMEs to sources of funding and creating conditions for due payment of debts; providing assistance to SMEs so that they would take full advantage of the common market; improving skills and knowledge; encouraging innovations; facilitating eco-innovations, and SME's penetration into the emerging markets (especially those of China and India). All the principles are backed by elaborate proposals for concrete actions and activities, divided as commitments of the European Commission and recommendations for member states. Since 2009, the SBA has been the reference framework for policies of support for SMEs and Western Balkans countries.

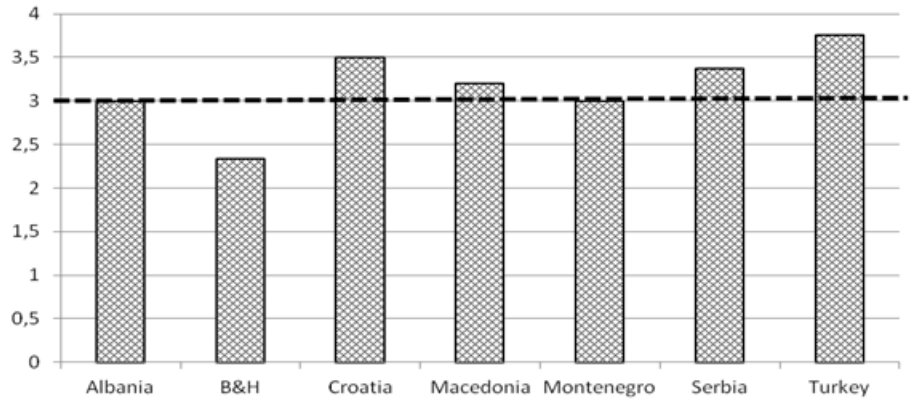

Figure 3. SME Policy Index in 2012

Source: OECD.

SBA is translated into practice through the monitoring of the *SME Policy Index* which has been developed by most eminent global institutions such as the OECD, European Commission, EBRD, and ETF (European Training Fund). On

the basis of the latest Report and the Index results, the rate of reforms has slowed down:

- Various levels of economic development and the fact that some countries have made greater progress in the process of EU accession have impacted on opportunities for development and an effective implementation of SMEs policies in a consistent and harmonized way.
- The global financial crisis diverted the attention of governments from structural reforms of SME policies to short-term measures of support.

Table 4. Index of SME policy by areas in 2012

	HR	SR	SI	MNE
1. Education and training	3.25	2.25	2.5	2.5
2. Bankruptcy and second chance	3	2.75	2.75	3.75
3. Regulatory framework for SMEs' policy making	3.75	4	4	3.75
4. Operational environment	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
5a. Business support for SMEs and start-ups	4	3.5	2.5	3
5b. Public procurement	3	3	2.5	3.25
6. Access to finance for SMEs	3.5	3.75	2.5	3
7. Standards and technical regulation	4.25	4	3.75	2.75
8a. Enterprise skills	3.25	3	2.75	2.75
8b. Innovation policy	3.75	3.25	2.75	2
9. SMEs in a green economy	3.25	2.75		2.25
10. Internationalization of SMEs	4	4.25	2.75	3.25

Source: OECD.

The SEE countries are given the following recommendations:

- Working environment should be improved and targeted measures of support for most dynamic enterprises designed and implemented. For example, while the system of business registration is largely efficient, it can be additionally improved by adjusting the company's registration number and expanding the online registration service that at the moment is available only to entrepreneurs.
- Bankruptcy procedures should be made more efficient.
- The existing network of incubators should be reinforced and support for them increased. Incubators need to be more oriented towards science-

based companies, i.e. high-quality services that provide greater value and support for innovations.

- The promotion of green economy could generate new opportunities for the SME sector, both in the country and on export markets. Eco-efficiency and eco-innovations should be underlined as priorities in the following SME strategies and linked to clear goals and measures.
- In the area of development of human capital, the role of higher education institutions in the promotion of cooperation with the business community, and the *cross campus* concept of entrepreneurial learning need to be promoted.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS IN SLOVENIA, SERBIA AND CROATIA

Since the projects in Slovenia and Serbia used the same methodology, their research results will be presented and compared in this chapter. In addition, research results from the Croatian gazelles project[4] will be presented separately.

3.1. Methodological framework and initial results

The research of company's growth is based on various methodological concepts, which include most representative indicators such as: an increase in total or business income, a newly created value, the number of employees, the market value of a company, market shares, the value of goods or service brands, company's assets, etc. The paper promotes an entirely new methodological concept of measuring the dynamic entrepreneurship in Serbia and Slovenia.

The criteria and indicators result from a continuous research into dynamic entrepreneurship in Serbia (Jakopin, 2003 and 2008) and Slovenia (Pšeničny 2002 and 2012). The research is based on the quantitative analysis of growth of all the companies in Serbia and Slovenia during the period 2005-2010. The methodological framework for studying the dynamic entrepreneurship in 2005-2010 was based on the following criteria that had to be met by rapidly growing companies:

- They had more than 2 employees in 2010 or more than one employee (this criterion refers to entrepreneurs);
- Their business income was higher than EUR 65000 (Serbia) and EUR 100000 (Slovenia) in 2010 (the border value represents average business income in an economy);

[4] Different criteria used.

- Their GVA (newly created value – Gross Value Added) per employee from 2006 to 2010 was larger than an average GVA per employee in the economy;
- Their enterprise worked continuously over the analyzed period of 5 years;
- Their enterprise had at least the same number of employees in 2010 and higher GVA in 2010 compared to 2006;
- They created at least twice as high average growth of business income than created in economy over the period 2006-2010;
- The minimal cumulative profit was registered over the period 2006-2010;
- Enterprises were not in majority ownership of the state (over 50%) on December 31st 2010;
- Enterprises dealing with the following activities were excluded: l – real estate; o – public administration and defense, compulsory social insurance; s – other services; t – household activities with employers; various goods; u – extra-territorial organizations and institutions.

The listed criteria were met by 2,583 enterprises in Serbia in 2010, which equaled 2.84% of the total number of enterprises in Serbia. In Slovenia, following the same criteria 4,511 fast-growing companies or 3.55% of the total number of enterprises, both value added and the number of employees grew even during the economic crisis. These enterprises generated 26,000 jobs while the economy lost 24,000 jobs in 5 years (2006-2010).

The methodological process of ascertaining gazelles in Serbia was based on the well-known Birch's indicator[5] (Birch, 1987), which analyzes changes to the number of the employed, the newly created value, or their combination. The application of the Birch's indicator helped differentiate 300 gazelles in Serbia, which is slightly more than 10% of dynamic enterprises.

In Croatia, somewhat different project aimed at identifying and promoting the concept of gazelles and fast growing companies, was initiated in 2006 (Ćorić, Meter & Bublić, 2012). Croatian newspaper Business.hr launched the study of fast growing companies (Croatian Gazelles) based on the growth

[5] The Birch's indicator aims to reduce the impact of a company's size on the growth indicator, and presents a combination of the proportional and absolute rise in employment: $m=(X_{i,t} - X_{i,t0})*(X_{i,t}/ X_{i,t0})$, whereby $X_{i,t}$ and $X_{i,t0}$ present the number of employees at the end and at the beginning of the period of reference. The Birch's indicator still depends on the size of the company, but the degree of bias is lower in relation to the company's size than with the proportional or absolute measure of growth.

criteria defined by achieving cumulative turnover growth of at least 20% (30%) in the three preceding years. Since then, Business.hr researched the data of over 5000 Croatian Gazelles in 6 consecutive listings, provided by the national financial agency FINA. The study was divided into six regions in Croatia.

Eligibility criteria for the selection among Croatian gazelles included the following:

- The company operates three full calendar years with a cumulative profit in all three years, provided that the profit is higher than 0 in the last (upper) reference year (n);
- The company is founded at the latest on January 1st of the year n-2 (lower reference year), and is still active;
- There are at least five employees in all these three years, and the company was not employing 1,000 or more employees in the year n-2
- At least three final accounts were submitted to the national financial agency for the years n-2, n-1 and n;
- Business income/turnover earned in the year n is at least 20% higher than the business income earned in the year n-2 (in the first 4 listings, the increase requirement was defined at 30%);
- Business income must be higher than HRK 3,000.000,00 in the year n-2, but should not exceed HRK 500,000.000,00 in the year n;
- Company must be market-oriented (not to be a utility company or institution);
- Financial institutions are excluded (due to different reporting obligations);
- Clean record - the company and/or management were not subjects of the open investigation(s), there were no verdicts against them for an economic or other serious wrongdoing in the business, and there were no doubts in the legality of the business.

Since 2010, when the additional criteria for establishing the priority in the ranking of companies were introduced, the priority was given to the companies that had growth in employment in the period of the three studied years, according to the Birch index, representing the absolute difference in employment between the upper (n) and the lower (n-2) reference year, multiplied by employment in the upper reference year, divided by employment in the lower reference year.

In 2010, in addition to the concept of gazelles as fast-growing companies, the concept of sustainable gazelles was introduced in the project Croatian Gazelles. Sustainable gazelles are gazelles that were featured (ranked) amongst

the winning gazelles in all the listings since the commencement of the project in 2006, and thus showing outstanding performance and growth for 8 years.

Referring to data from 2010, 1,085 companies-gazelles created 12,827 jobs between 2007-2009; on average, each company created 12 new jobs. However, the data reported in the 2011 gazelle report showed a significant drop in numbers: 976 gazelles created 6,767 new jobs between 2008 and 2010, which makes only 7 new jobs per company.

3.2. Dynamic enterprises and the economic growth in Slovenia and Serbia

Dynamic enterprises are present in all economies, both in the period of growth and in the period of recession. Their maximum number is up to 5% of all the enterprises, they report an above average increase in revenues and employment, and they drive innovation and sustainable development. Each economy should place its focus on these enterprises, encourage them, and continually create conditions for their growth. According to research done over the past ten years, dynamic enterprises have propelled economic growth of Serbia.

During the period 2006-2010, in Serbia 2583 dynamic enterprises did business, out of which 300 were gazelles (most dynamic enterprises) that during the period of major global recession (first since the Great Depression in 1929) in 2009 presented an economic buffer zone against the collapse of the economic system; they generated an overall economic growth. The potential for growth of dynamic enterprises is above average. In the period 2006-2010, 2583 rapidly growing enterprises in Serbia:

- participated in the increase in business income of Serbia with 114.14%, which means that these enterprises covered 14.14% of the loss of the remaining segment of economy;
- generated 90% of the increase in newly created value in Serbia;
- generated all the profit in economy;
- created 33,000 new jobs in the economy (7.45% of overall employment in the corporate sector), while in the corporate sector employment went down by 108,000.

The survey in Slovenia (Pšeničny et.al., 2012), whose partial results are presented in this article, shows that almost the total growth of net sales revenue (EUR 8 million) in the 2006-2010 period was generated by only 4,511 or 3.55% of all economic subjects. These enterprises generated 26,094 new jobs in five

years (a 46% increase compared to 2006), which was more than the loss of jobs in the economy in the same five-year period.

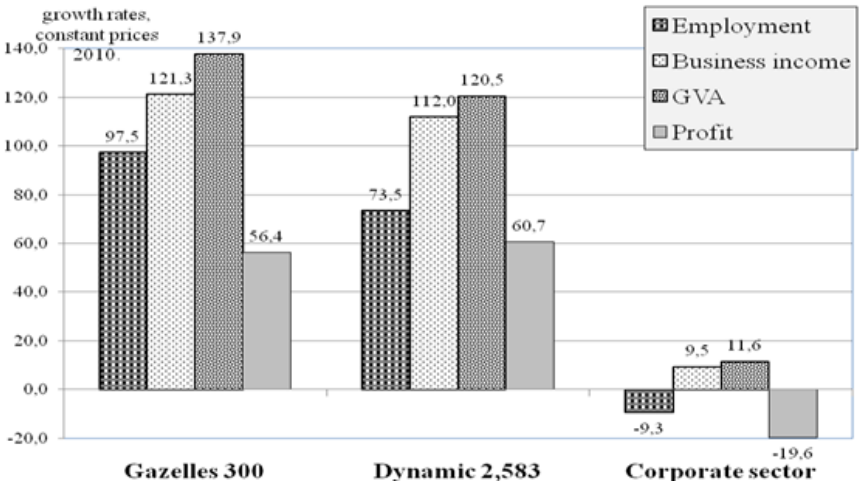

Figure 4. Growth indicators for gazelles, dynamic enterprises and the corporate sector

Source: Authors' calculations.

They increased value added by EUR 1.6 million (or by 71%), which equals the total increase of value added in the 2006-2010 period. They increased the value added per employee by 17%, however we need to stress that the average value added per employee in 2010 in potential high growth enterprises stood at EUR 47582, which is substantially above the economy's 2010 average that stood at EUR 35152 per employee (Vidovič, 2011). In the 2006–2010 period, these 4511 enterprises:

- generated 23.7% of the total net sales revenue in the country,
- employed 16% of all the employees,
- held 16% of the total capital,
- paid out 18.7% of all salaries, and
- generated 21.8% of the total value added in the economy.

Almost the entire economic growth in 2006-2010 was generated in Serbia by 2583 dynamic enterprises, i.e. 2.8% of all the enterprises, and by 4511 dynamic enterprises (3.55%) in Slovenia. This serves to confirm the well-known Birch's rule that at least 85% of economic growth and job creation in any economy is generated by 5% of enterprises at the most.

3.3. The overall growth in Croatia and dynamic entrepreneurship

The study *Diagnosis of Growth*, particularly its component *Is there an Entrepreneurial Deficit in Croatia*[6]? (as per Bićanić, 2012; and Šošić, 2012) showed that Croatian companies often roam between profit and loss, and that the growth was concentrated in a very small number of businesses.

It turned out that the fast-growing enterprises (gazelles) in the period from 1995 to 2009 on average accounted for about 2-6% of the total number of active firms, but their share in employment was between 10 and 20%. In addition, in the analyzed period, these companies generated almost the entire increase in net employment.

The study identified that the gazelles on average were more productive than other firms and had significant indirect effects on the companies in which they operated, and their efficiency. After the initial phase of fast growth, gazelles retained higher rate of productivity and thus also affected the productivity of the economy. These results suggest that among the fast-growing businesses in Croatia the prevalent type of productive entrepreneurship and the success of these companies in most cases does not depend on administrative barriers that would affect their competition.

Whatever the conclusion might be, as the research leaves the story open without confirmed conclusions, the gazelles can be considered to be a group large enough to affect the outcome, which is successful without being a part of clients' networks and corruption and, last but not least, their success is probably not related to the political model.

4. RISKS

4.1. National competitiveness decline trend

Before the outbreak of the economic crisis, economic growth in Serbia had been increasing by 23% per year (IMF) and getting closer to the SEE average. GDP per capita decreased in 2009 and 2010 (on average by 11%) but in 2011 Serbia again saw growth of 11%, which was not sufficient to get to the level before the start of the crisis (of all the adjacent countries Macedonia and Montenegro managed to achieve this).

[6] In Croatian: *Postoji li u Hrvatskoj poduzetnički deficit?*

Table 5. Indicators of international competitiveness

	Serbia			Croatia			Slovenia			Montenegro		
Competitive--ness pillars	**Rank**	**2012/ 2007**	**Eu=100**	**Rank**	**2012/ 2007**	**Eu=100**	**Rank**	**2012/ 2007**	**Eu=100**	**Rank**	**2012/ 2007**	**Eu=100**
GCI	**95**	**102.3**	**81.7**	**81**	**96.2**	**85.3**	**56**	**96.8**	**91.6**	**72**	**106.1**	**87.5**
Sub-index A: BASIC REQ'S.	*95*	*99.1*	*80.1*	*60*	*101.9*	*90.5*	*39*	*99.0*	*97.4*	*74*	*100.3*	*86.6*
1st pillar: Institutions	130	93.7	69.6	98	91.2	77.6	58	91.0	89.1	44	118.8	96.5
2nd pillar: Infrastructure	77	139.2	73.7	44	117.8	90.7	35	113.7	95.7	66	145.3	79.1
3rd pillar: Macro--economic environment	115	84.9	81.3	60	99.0	98.6	50	90.3	102.5	118	71.3	79.9
4th pillar: Health and primary education	66	94.9	92.1	60	100.6	93.4	24	102.1	101.1	73	94.3	90.9
Sub-index B: EFFICIENCY ENHANCERS	*88*	*107.7*	*81.5*	*72*	*100.3*	*85.2*	*55*	*96.5*	*90.2*	*74*	*110.7*	*84.7*
5th pillar: Higher education and training	85	108.8	77.4	56	103.8	87.2	23	102.3	101.4	51	124.7	90.3
6th pillar: Goods market efficiency	136	101.1	77.0	114	93.9	83.0	49	95.5	95.2	48	113.8	95.3
7th pillar: Labor market efficiency	100	104.6	89.9	106	91.2	89.0	91	93.6	92.4	93	93.7	92.1
8th pillar: Financial market development	100	98.5	83.8	92	89.0	86.5	128	70.4	75.0	40	94.5	102. 4
9th pillar: Technological readiness	58	122.8	77.9	50	126.0	82.8	34	115.5	94.0	56	117.7	78.7
10th pillar: Market size	67	112.4	82.9	71	103.6	81.4	78	105.4	78.9	130	158.2	47.4
Sub-index C: INNOVATIO N FACTORS	*124*	*89.6*	*68.6*	*83*	*90.0*	*78.7*	*36*	*95.6*	*93.1*	*69*	*112.2*	*82.7*
11th pillar: Business sophistication	132	88.3	67.5	96	89.2	79.4	53	89.8	90.6	76	104.2	83.0
12th pillar: Innovation	111	91.1	67.6	74	91.1	75.2	32	102.7	92.8	60	123.1	79.7

Source: WEF - Global Competitiveness Report 2012/2013.

The global barometer of competitiveness (World Economic Forum), which includes 114 countries, ranks Serbia 95th, and by GDP per capita of USD 6081 places it at the foot of the group of 33 countries (Stage 2 – *Efficiency-driven economies*) that by improving efficiency aim for economic growth and an improved competitiveness position overall. Almost all of the countries in the region are in the second stage of development except for Hungary (60) and Croatia (81) that are moving to the group of the most robust economies that already includes Slovenia (56) with GDP per capita of USD 24533.

For years, the competitiveness of Serbian economy has been stagnating and structural changes have been delayed, which is why the country fails to reach higher ranks in the global rankings that other SEE countries have. In this stage of development, Serbia should strive to develop its own production processes and upgrade the quality of its products through constant enhancement of high education, professional training of the workforce, and the ability to use available technologies so that eventually the price of work and the standard of living would go up. However, the prerequisite for boosting efficiency and transiting to innovative development in order to generate high productivity are solid *institutions* (pillar 1) and competent pursuit of *macroeconomic policy* (pillar 3), and with respect to these Serbia lags behind other countries a lot. These two pillars, apart from *innovations* (pillar 12), have registered the steepest drop in rankings compared to the year before.

Croatia's ranking for 2012 in the *Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013* dropped by five places compared to 2011. This year's real decline of four positions compared to 2011 puts Croatia in 81st place out of 144 countries. Since 2002, when it was first included in these rankings, Croatia's results in the competitiveness rankings have oscillated, registering improvements from 2005 to 2007 and then a continuous decline from 2008 to 2012. Croatia's results this year show the decline in infrastructure (44th) and in technological readiness (50th). In addition, the results in health and primary education (60th) continue to be a concern, while higher education (56th), goods market efficiency (114th) and market size (71st) are stagnating. The rankings for those pillars of competitiveness in which Croatia was already falling behind continued to deteriorate – financial market development (92nd), business sophistication (96th), and institutions (98th). The decline in the evaluation of innovation (74th) was halted, while there was an improvement in the evaluation of labor market efficiency (106th), but it continues to be at a very low level. The improvement in the pillar for macroeconomic environment (60th) is simply due to changes in methodology.

In the last few years, the international competitiveness of Slovenia has deteriorated. The ranking of Slovenia on various indexes, such as WEF - World Economic Forum, IMD (International Institute for Management Development) World Competitiveness ranking, Doing Business, GEM – Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, EIS – Europe Innovation Scoreboard, has either stagnated or declined. The reasons for this can be found in difficult financing conditions, the inefficient labor market, the ineffectiveness of the rule of law, smaller foreign investments, the high tax burden on employment as well as the current development of the business innovation environment.

In the framework of the WEF survey, in the years 2012 and 2013 Slovenia was placed 56 among a total of 144 economies, which means Slovenia gained 1 position compared to the previous year but lost 11 positions compared to two years before. Slovenia was well positioned in the pillars *higher education* and *training* as well as *health* and *primary education*, followed by the pillars *innovation*, *technological readiness*, and *goods market efficiency*. The most problematic areas of Slovene competitiveness in the last three years were (i) financial market efficiency and (ii) labor market efficiency. According to the survey's findings, access to financing is the biggest obstacle for business activities, followed by inefficiency of governmental administration, stiff labor legislation, tax rates, and tax regulations. Some of the 13 most critical areas for raising competitiveness are: protection of small shareholders, the scale of market domination, brain drain, efficiency of legal procedures, and efficiency of the anti-monopoly policy (see Table 6).

Table 6. The most critical competitive fields

Competitive fields according to WEF	Global rank out of 144 countries			
	SI	SR	HR	MNE
Protection of minority shareholders' interests	**126**	**143**	**120**	65
Efficiency of legal framework in settling disputes	**126**	**138**	**137**	51
Efficiency of corporate boards	**122**	**141**	**127**	93
Burden of government regulation	**124**	**136**	**139**	33
Extent of market dominance	71	142	117	59
Effectiveness of anti-monopoly policy	64	142	90	87
Intensity of local competition	41	137	120	114
Buyer sophistication	108	138	116	88
Brain drain	83	141	126	60
Cooperation in labor-employer relations	**114**	**139**	**133**	**109**
Availability of latest technologies	78	142	77	100
Nature of competitive advantage	35	134	43	59
Willingness to delegate authority	47	139	109	41

Source: WEF - Global Competitiveness Report 2012/2013.

In addition to the date presented in Tables 5 and 6, some of the significant declines have happened in Croatia (agricultural policy costs - 143), Slovenia (Hiring and firing - 142, soundness of banks - 137), Montenegro (all indicators in the 10th pillar of the market size - 130).

Common areas of the most critical fields for all four states are presented in bold. They include data on protection of small shareholders' interests, law efficiency in legal procedures, efficiency of state corporations, burden of government regulation and worker-employer working relation.

4.2. Improvement of the business environment

By conditions for doing business (World Bank, Doing Business 2013), Serbia is ranked 86th in the rankings of 185 countries. Of all the European countries, Serbia is better positioned only than Ukraine (137), BiH (126), Russia (112), and Malta (102). Although in 2011 Serbia made some positive reform steps (it promoted conditions for doing business in segments of starting a business, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency), Serbia has not seen a marked improvement in the business environment whereas some countries managed to promote operations and alleviate effects of the global economic crisis through faster structural reforms.

The lowest rank and 179th position Serbia occupies with respect to the *process of obtaining licenses and various permits* (for construction, electricity access, telephone, permits from various inspectorates, etc.). Although it improved its performances in this area (the number of procedures went down by 2, the number of days by 10, and costs by 11%), other countries develop much faster with respect to creating conditions for attracting potential investors, and thus the low rank is further lowered.

A very low rank of Serbia is induced by high costs of issuing construction permits although they have a declining trend, viewed by years. While in the EU on average it takes 99% of the GNI per capita (most in Ireland, 626%, and least in Hungary, 6%), in Serbia entrepreneurs need to pay a 14 times higher value than the value of the GNI/capita or 1.427% (only 11 countries located out of Europe face higher costs), while in countries located out of the EU costs stand at: in Montenegro 1.170%, in Bosnia 1.102%, in Croatia 573%, and in Macedonia 518% of the GNI per capita.

Table 7. Poorer conditions for doing business

	Serbia			Croatia			Slovenia			Montenegro		
Doing business 2013	**2011**	**2012**	**Δ**	**2011**	**2012**	**Δ**	**2011**	**2012**	**Δ**	**2011**	**2012**	**Δ**
BUSINESS CONDITIONS, rank	***95***	***86***	***9***	***80***	***84***	***-4***	***35***	***35***	***0***	***57***	***51***	***6***
Dealing with construction permits, rank	**178**	**179**	**-1**	**141**	**143**	**-2**	**61**	**61**	**0**	**175**	**176**	**-1**
Procedures (number)	18	18	12	12	n/a	11	11	n/a	16	16	n/a	n/a
Time (days)	279	269	317	317	n/a	197	197	n/a	267	267	n/a	n/a
Cost (% of income per capita)	1.603	1.427	591.1	573.3	n/a	64.9	65.3	n/a	1469.9	1169.6	n/a	n/a
Paying taxes, rank	**145**	**149**	**-4**	**47**	**42**	**5**	**80**	**63**	**17**	**119**	**81**	**38**
Payments (number)	66	66	18	18	n/a	22	11	n/a	42	29	n/a	n/a
Time (hour)	279	279	196	196	n/a	260	260	n/a	372	320	n/a	n/a
Income tax (%)	n/a	11.6	n/a	11.3	n/a	n/a	14.1	n/a	n/a	7.1	n/a	n/a
Taxes and contributions for employees (%)	n/a	20.2	n/a	19.4	n/a	n/a	18.2	n/a	n/a	12.8	n/a	n/a
Other taxes (%)	n/a	2.2	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	2.4	n/a	n/a	2.5	n/a	n/a
Total tax rate (% profit)	34	34	32.9	32.8	n/a	34.7	34.7	n/a	22.3	22.3	n/a	n/a

Source: The World Bank Group, Doing Business 2013

In the year 2012, as well as the year before, the World Bank survey "Doing Business", which analyses the regulations of doing business in individual countries, ranked Slovenia as the35th among the 183 surveyed economies, what represents a relatively high position. Most obvious is that Slovenia gained 16 positions in 2011; this is a consequence of the changed methodology (the indicator "employment", where Slovenia achieved a very low position, has been removed). The county's decline is a result of an even deeper credit crunch, which slows down financing and growth (SIB, 2013).

5. CONCLUSION

If backed up by a favorable, supportive atmosphere for entrepreneurship, dynamic enterprises in Southeastern Europe could catch up with their

counterparts abroad in ten years' time. However, among factors for growth, the most critical in the four studied countries are: environmental barriers, management systems and financing. As state capacities should act as an enabling factor and thus support entrepreneurship and growth in all sectors, it is necessary to direct them and produce incentive mechanisms capable to strengthen entrepreneurship in all stages and types of entrepreneurial development, not only in those of individual entrepreneurs.

The analysis of conditions for dynamic entrepreneurship, doing business in four countries and sharing of initial results of the stable performance of sustainable gazelles during these years in respective countries, produced an additional proof that the authors should continue with exchange of information, experiences and sharing the results of projects in these countries. This should serve as a platform for improving studies of gazelles as real job creators and launching a joint study in order to benefit from mutual comparisons, exchange of best practices and lessons learned from mistakes. The authors should also continue their search for sustainable growers, business excellence of gazelles, and enablers of sustainable growth. The understanding of particular reasons and driving forces behind sustainable fast-growing companies should be deepened, so that the slowdown factors will result in creating a range of strategies and a large variety of options for achieving stability and dealing with issues such as lack of demand, turnaround factors, recession, growth in unemployment, etc.

Recessionary waves had an impact on reducing demand in the whole Southeastern Europe, which consequently affected the increase in unemployment. The model of growth based on domestic demand is exhausted (very high fiscal deficit, high public debt, problems with restraining inflation, etc.). After fiscal consolidation, economic policy makers have no possibility to achieve further growth, but must focus on finding new sources of growth - especially exports, for which it is necessary to start production. It should be stressed that structural reforms and constantly delayed reform of the public sector are of equal importance of. It seems that the growth model based on exports mostly depend on the export possibilities of dynamic companies in the manufacturing industry.

Understanding weaknesses of the present environment(s), the effectiveness of the past and current support programs, and identifying upcoming trends, should improve the effectiveness of forecasting scenarios for future development of gazelles, their impact and flexibility, and thus provide better conditions for higher quality dynamic entrepreneurship in all four countries.

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DINAMIČNO PODUZETNIŠTVO – GENERATOR ODRŽIVOG EKONOMSKOG RASTA I KONKURENTNOSTI

Sažetak

Brzorastuća poduzeća (gazele) su glavni kreatori novih poslova, rasta prihoda i dinamičnog, konkurentnog gospodarstva. Ovaj rad analizira: (a) uvjete za dinamično poduzetništvo u Hrvatskoj, Crnoj Gori, Srbiji i Sloveniji te (b) nedavne studije dinamičnog poduzetništva (poduzeća – gazela) u navedenim državama. S obzirom da autori kreiraju novo istraživanje gazela (na temelju iste metodologije i kriterija izbora), koje će se simultano provesti u sve četiri države tijekom 2014. godine, treća sadržajna odrednica ovog rada je i (c) rasprava o navedenoj inicijativi i njezinim početnim rezultatima. Stalni rast dinamičnih poduzeća/gazela i njihov povećani udjel u gospodarstvu je nezaobilazan analitički instrument za predviđanje budućeg gospodarskog rasta. Kako bi se definirao pozitivno, podržavajuće okruženje za dinamično i održivo poduzetništvo, autori analiziraju institucionalnu i regulatornu okolinu, razinu znanja poduzetnika, pristup financiranju, poticaje za uvođenje suvremene tehnologije/inovacije/internacionalizacije, itd. Autori su, također, pratili trendove kretanja indeksa razvoja poduzetništva, poduzetničke aktivnosti i konkurentnosti za sve četiri zemlje. S obzirom da je integralni pilot projekt već implementiran u Sloveniji 2011. godine, pri čemu se došlo do nekoliko zaključaka, autori su analizirali temeljne karakteristike brzorastućih poduzeća i razlike između čimbenika rasta, koje su djelovale na rastuća slovenska poduzeća te usporedila odgovarajuće rezultate u sve četiri države. Među čimbenicima koji djeluju na rast, u Sloveniji su kao najkritičniji pokazali: zapreke u okruženju te sustavi menadžmenta i financiranja, zbog čega su navedeni čimbenici posebno proučeni i u ostalim trima državama. Nadalje, stope rasta dinamičnih poduzeća se uspoređuju s drugim europskim državama, na temelju čega se može zaključiti koliko je vremena gazelama iz jugoistočne Europe potrebno da dosegnu zaostatak za sličnim stranim poduzećima.

Najvažniji rezultati istraživanja i njegovog djelovanja na različite zemlje služe kao temelj za preporuke, kojima će se bolje djelovati na fenomene dinamičnog poduzetništva, održivog rasta i povećanja konkurentnosti.