

**Monday 12th October 2009, 10.45 – 12.00**

**Košice, Šrobárova 2, Historical Hall at University Main Building**

**Prof. Martin Bobak**

**Social inequalities  
in Central and Eastern Europe  
in the period of societal transformation**

The health status of populations of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union underwent major changes after the fall of communism. While mortality started declining in Central Europe, mortality rates in Russia and most other countries of the former Soviet Union rose dramatically and have yet to improve. Fertility, to give another example, declined to lowest-low levels, mainly due to stopping / postponing second births. In terms of socioeconomic changes, some countries, mainly in Central Europe, were able to contain the fall in income and rise in income inequalities but across the former Soviet Union gross domestic product plummeted and income inequalities grew rapidly. This has led to two types of inequality: first, the widening gap in health between countries, and second, the increasing social gradients in health within countries. The exact pathways are not entirely clear but available evidence confirms the importance of both psychosocial mechanism and health behaviours (e.g. excessive alcohol intake).

**Watch online on <http://www.lf.upjs.sk/omek/lectures.html>**

*Prof. Martin Bobak (1963), MSc, MD, PhD, is Professor of Epidemiology and leader of the East-West research group in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London. He is the principal investigator of the multi-centre Health, Alcohol and Psychosocial Factors in Eastern Europe (HAPIEE) study. He qualified as a medical doctor at Charles University in Prague, subsequently obtaining MSc and PhD in Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He joined the Department of Epidemiology at UCL in 1994. His research interests focus on social, environmental, behavioral, genetic and psychosocial determinants of chronic diseases and well-being in Central and Eastern Europe and on health effects of rapid societal changes.*

