

***Special Session (SS08) on:
Territorial disparities defined
along rural-urban axes***



Organizers:

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The purpose and scope of the special session

The growing dynamism of cities, which attract more and more people in search of employment opportunities and prosperity, has often been the source of deep inequalities. These, however, are not limited to differences between neighbourhoods or peripheral and central areas but extend to the territorial scale. Thus, urban-rural population movements have been particularly strong in Europe since the mid-20th century and continue today. This phenomenon has led to great fragility in -both physically and mentally- remote areas which, generally due to the fact they are located far from the dynamics of the big cities, often suffer from problems of population aging, poverty, abandonment, ruin, or even desertification. These areas are mainly rural, although in other cases they are structured by small towns or medium-sized cities. Their sustainability constitutes one of the main challenges occidental societies are facing today, which has been compounded by the physical isolation effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the security risks.

The session incorporates research papers that address, from an innovative perspective, the intervention, management, and communication of the dispersed (small) towns existing in rural, remote, or peripheral areas of Europe. These territories, although threatened by depopulation and vulnerability, nevertheless possess a valuable historical and cultural legacy, as well as numerous social, cultural, environmental and economic assets of a very diverse nature. For this reason, the aim is to analyse how to promote their local and regional development based on their endogenous resources by a group of international, trans-generational, and interdisciplinary researchers.

The contributions include works on very diverse aspects and typologies of peripheries and within them (small) towns that fulfil a central function: territorial cooperation, development possibilities (economic power), influence of land-use planning, impact of public administration changes, functional rural/urban areas, social and cultural resilience, identity and links with the territory, or evaluation of socio-economic development due to cultural heritage.

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