

#### 4. MEĐUNARODNI MULTIDISCIPLINARNI KONGRES KLUBA STUDENATA GEOGRAFIJE ZAGREB

### SESSION LEVERS OF DEVELOPMENT

**D**ifferences in the degree of development of different regions are formed through processes that mostly occur spontaneously. Various social actors, such as state authorities and engaged citizens, for numerous reasons view the imbalance of spatial development as an unfair, harmful or dangerous phenomenon, which is why they strive to act with the aim of mitigating regional disparities. In order to make a change, it is first necessary to recognize the factors and to study and understand the processes that cause the underdevelopment of a place, and then to design and apply those measures that would have the greatest potential to break the vicious cycle or redirect it. The key elements of negative feedback need to be effectively targeted with the right measures by applying knowledge from various professions.

This session will deal with all the measures and policies by means of which actors in the space try to balance out spatial inequalities. The goal of this session is to provide a broader view of the methods, theory and practice of regional planning. That is why exhibitors from abroad participate in the session, in order to present the approaches and challenges of regional planning in other European countries and to exchange their opinions and experiences.

The following is a list of broad topics on which we invite students and young experts to present their work.

**Planners' regions:** What theories and tools can spatial planners use to define and delimit planning regions? How to use the spatial patterns of the flows of people and capital, the areas of influence of urban regions, the distribution of central functions and central places, regional identities and other elements to designate regions for the purposes of application of development policies? What are the relationships between observed spatial processes and administrative borders? How can levels of spatial development be measured, evaluated and compared?

**Doctrines of development:** Discussion of principles and approaches used for the creation of regional development policies. What are the goals of the EU Cohesion policy and how does it affect European regions and states? Is the concept of polycentricism really the way to go in regional development? How does it apply to the planning of, for instance, transport infrastructure or central functions such as education and healthcare? What is the role of place branding in regional planning? What is regional specialization and how can it be achieved? What should be the role of local and regional governments in regional development?

**Strategies and funds:** At the core of every development policy or programme is a strategy, the highest-order document in which the potentials and challenges of regions are analysed and goals are defined. All particular measures and projects stem from such a strategy. In the European Union, the creation of a strategic plan is often necessary for municipalities, government agencies etc. to apply for EU funds. Geographers can play an important role in the creation of these strategies. What are the opportunities for actors in regional development that EU funds present? How are these funds structured and what are their priority areas? What kinds of projects are the most effective and how can the effectiveness of regional development policies be measured? How are spatial development strategies created? What actors and interests are involved? What are the methods and best practices that can aid planners in the creation of strategic regional plans?

Session moderators: Bruno Novotny and Marko Perak