

IMAJINE – Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe

IMAJINE (Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe) is a new Horizon 2020 project starting in January 2017. With a budget of just under €5 million and a five year timescale, IMAJINE is one of the largest social science grants to have been awarded in Horizon 2020 or its predecessor Framework Programmes.

The core aim of IMAJINE is to **formulate new integrative policy mechanisms to enable European, national and regional government agencies to more effectively address territorial inequalities within the European Union**, and to imagine a future for European regions in which the distribution of resources is consistent with principles of social and spatial justice. Territorial cohesion is a guiding principle for EU policy, alongside social cohesion and economic cohesion, yet in recent years territorial inequalities within the EU have widened as the post-2008 economic crisis and adoption of austerity policies have had an uneven geographical impact. There is, accordingly, a pressing need to re-appraise the appropriateness and efficacy of existing policy instruments for tackling territorial inequalities, and to consider and develop alternative mechanisms. In order to achieve this aim, IMAJINE will adopt a multi-disciplinary approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data and macro-scale analysis and case study research, involving economists, geographers, political scientists, psychologists and sociologists.

IMAJINE involves 16 international partners led by Aberystwyth University in Wales, UK, and including the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest; Athens University of Economics and Business; Groningen University; Harokopio University (Athens); Helsinki University; Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique in Dijon; Leibniz-Institut für Ländekunde, Leipzig; National University of Ireland, Galway; Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw); Siena University; TNS Opinion; University of Bern; University of Chieti-Pescara; University of Oviedo; and the ESRC Centre for Constitutional Change at the University of Stirling.

The work programme will be delivered through ten work packages that build sequentially from qualitative and quantitative scoping surveys through case study research to policy engagement and dissemination:

WP1: Conceptual and Policy Review, will use interviews and document analysis to outline the development and conceptualisation of ‘Spatial Justice’ and ‘Territorial Inequality’ in EU policy;

WP2: Analysis of Territorial Inequalities in Europe, will present an overview of current patterns and recent trajectories of territorial inequalities across Europe, through analysis of Europe-wide quantitative data;

WP3: Territorial Inequalities and Economic Growth, will investigate the relationships between levels and forms of economic and political governance across European nations and territories, and levels of economic development and rates of economic growth, through econometric analysis at various scales.

WP4: Experimental Survey on Solidarity and Territorial Cohesion, will design, implement and analyse an online experimental survey to explore public attitudes towards regional autonomy,

territorial cohesion, solidarity and mobility in France, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain and the UK.

WP5: *Migration, Territorial Inequalities and Spatial Justice*, will examine connections between trans-national migration and long-distance commuting and perceived and actual spatial inequalities, through case study research in Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland and Wales.

WP6: *Multilevel Policy-making and Inequalities*, will explore how states design fiscal regimes and public services to mitigate the effects of socio-spatial inequalities, through case studies in Greece, Poland, Scotland and Wales.

WP7: *Autonomy Movements and Social, Economic and Territorial Justice*, will investigate how claims for political autonomy are interwoven with territorial inequalities and whether political autonomy can present a mechanism for addressing issues of spatial justice, with case studies of Corsica, Lombardy, Sardinia, Friesland, Galicia, Scotland, Wales, the Kashubian minority in Poland and the Hungarian minority in Romania.

WP8: *Re-imagining Rural Futures*, will integrate and synthesise data from WPs 1-7 to translate research findings into policy recommendations, employing the techniques of participatory scenario building and policy scenario testing.

WP9: *Dissemination and Engagement*, and **WP10: *Project Management***, complete the work programme. WISERD at Aberystwyth will be involved in all work packages.

The expected outputs from IMAJINE include scientific and policy-focused publications and presentations, a digital Atlas of Territorial Inequalities in Europe to be designed as an app for smart phones and tablets, and the establishment of a European Spatial Justice Network of governance and civil society stakeholders.