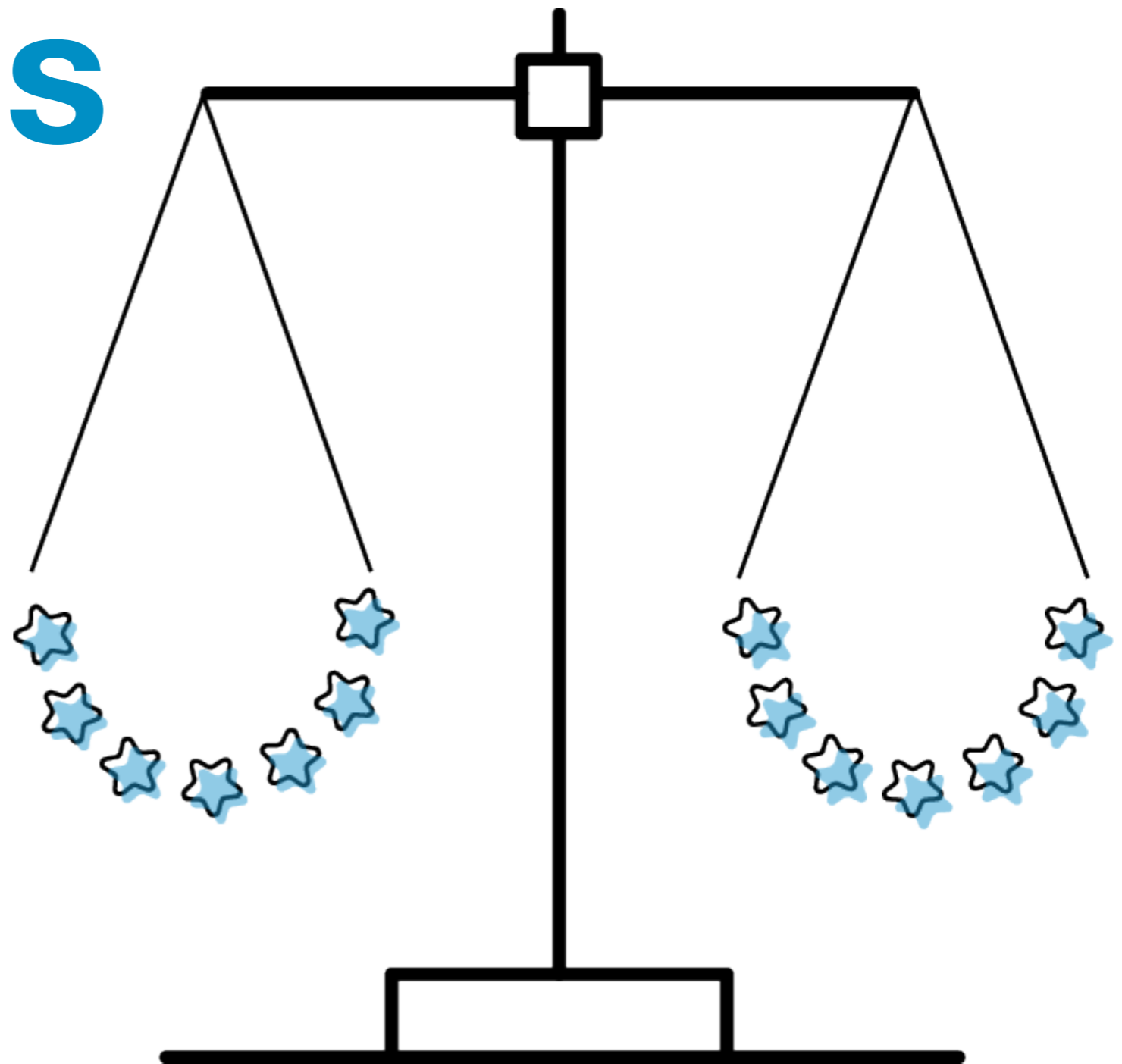




IMAJINE Scenario

Sketches

Future Visions For
European Spatial Justice



August 2020

What is IMAJINE?

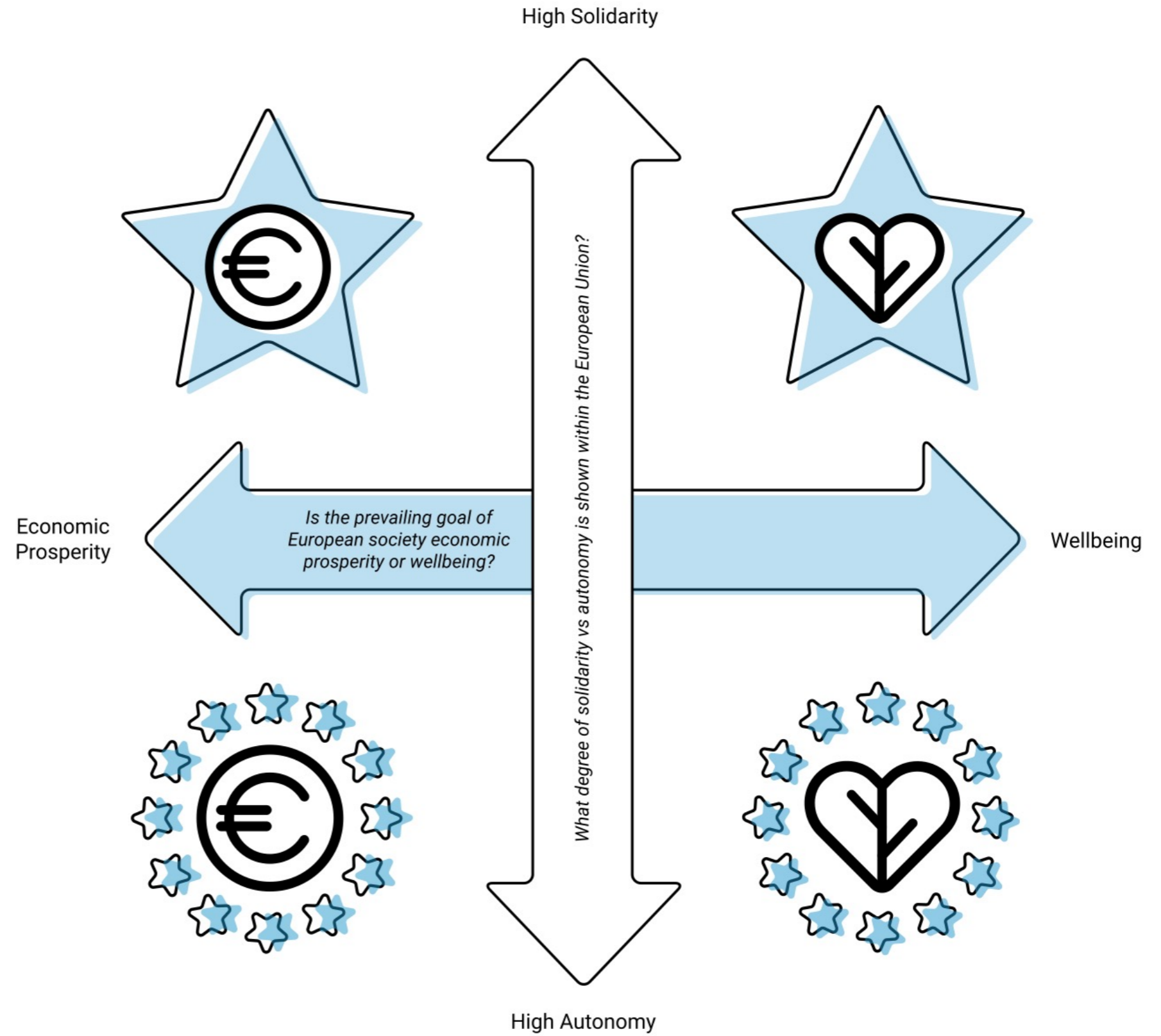
A Horizon 2020 European Union research project exploring ways to address two key issues in Europe:

- **Territorial inequality** - Disparities between different neighbourhoods, municipalities, regions, countries, which impede the principle that EU citizens should have equal rights and opportunities regardless of wherever they live
- **Spatial justice** - the question of whether different places are treated fairly, and whether the ability of people to realise their rights is compromised by where they live

Why scenarios?

- A way of looking at the future, not to predict what will definitely come to pass, but to **challenge our assumptions** about what comes next
- **Multiple, plausible futures** imagined in order to question current understandings of spatial justice and territorial inequality
- Scenario sketches presented here as a **first step towards developing rich and useful visions** of what Europe might look like in terms of geographical disparities and spatial justice

The key factors



The key factors

- Drawn (for the purposes of setting a scenario focus) from a set of uncertainties affecting decisions made by the European Commission's **Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy** (DG-REGIO)
- DG-REGIO's decisions play a fundamental policy role in questions of spatial justice and territorial inequality across the EU; they anchor these scenarios in present reality
- **Visions of the year 2048**, with distinct notions of spatial justice and territorial inequality in Europe
- 2048 represents 4 of the 7-year cycles by which DG-REGIO plans for disbursement of its development funds

High solidarity / economic prosperity

- Spatial justice means an **equitable distribution of wealth between regions**
- Increasingly centralised **pan-European approach** evolves from the COVID-19 response



High solidarity / economic prosperity (continued)

- **Reindustrialisation:** biotechnology transforms food & energy security; advanced 3D printing and manufacturing take place locally; Europe is a global exemplar of the circular economy
- **Automation** reduces the need for low-skilled migration; an expanded "Fortress Europe" combats migration from climate refugees and clashes with its eastern neighbours
- In a **comfortable but increasingly conformist** Europe, some citizens push for new political and economic freedoms

High solidarity / wellbeing

- Spatial justice means **mutual assistance between regions** to help each other adapt to change
- COVID-19 and climate crisis drive populations away from cities & coastlines to less densely populated rural regions - **the old territorial inequalities are reversed**

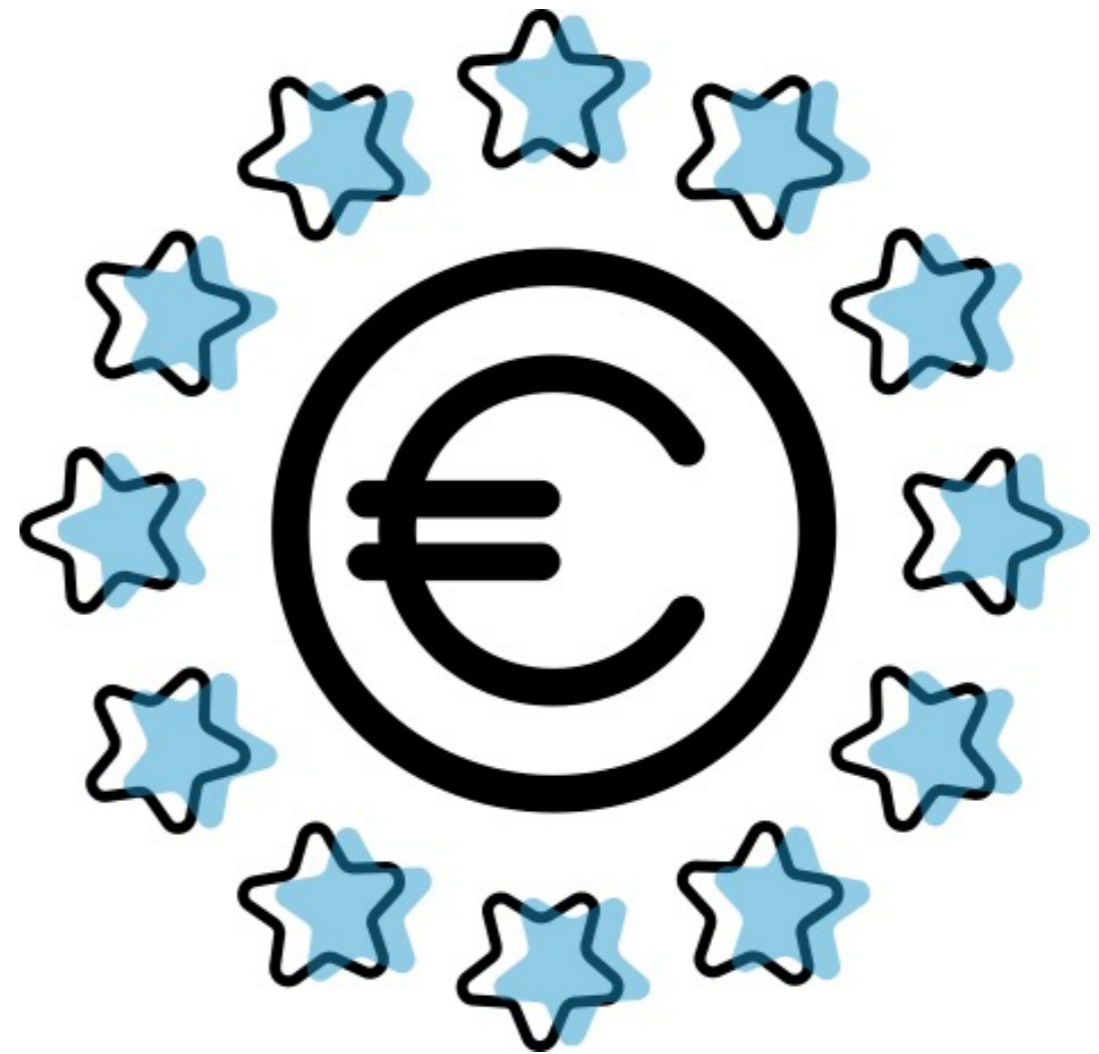


High solidarity / wellbeing (continued)

- A new world order led by China focuses on **sustainability and resilience**; Europe pays reparations for its role in causing climate change
- By 2048, Europeans look back with regret on the last days of capitalism - **notions of wellbeing expand** to include subtle notions of aesthetic, mental, and occupational health
- Europeans increasingly value **a shared sense of community and culture** - a New Olympiad which prizes the arts, philosophy, and humanitarianism as well as athletic skills is the highlight of the cultural calendar

High autonomy / economic prosperity

- The EU focuses on **digital identities** in a world shaped by transnational corporations
- Spatial justice is understood as **the right of regions to hold on to the wealth that they have generated**



High autonomy / economic prosperity (continued)

- Telepresence and communication technologies means that the communities we live and work in may be virtual and extended around the world; **physical distance is less important than digital access**
- **Citizenship is digital and can be disaggregated** by citizens, delegated, shared, and traded around the world
- **Pre-packaged citizenship options** are designed by corporations and territories to suit their needs

High autonomy / wellbeing

- In a Europe fragmented by differing cultural values, the EU is the last talking shop for increasingly divergent regions; **spatial justice is the right of communities to define their own values**
- **Attitudes to gender, identity, and social roles vary wildly** from the reactionary to ultra-progressive



High autonomy / wellbeing (continued)

- **Territorial inequality has increased, but along new lines** - this future includes leading examples of degrowth alongside shanty towns formed by people drawn to the more successful regions in this patchwork Europe
- Globally, Europe is becoming a backwater compared to more technologically advanced countries, but amid its patchwork are **some of the most liveable places in the world**
- The EU provides a place for its many diverse members to **resolve internal conflicts and deal with the new great powers** on the world stage

These “scenario sketches” are preliminary outlines of the futures being explored by the IMAJINE project “Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe”. Through 2020 and 2021, the IMAJINE team will be exploring these futures, and their implications for strategic decisions in the present, in greater depth with a range of policymakers and stakeholders from across Europe.

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Disclaimer: This document reflects only the authors’ view. The Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Want to know more?

Visit <http://imajine-project.eu/>

or contact marie.mahon@nuigalway.ie