

International migration and local communities

ERSA 2026 – Special Session

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In the last twenty years, the intensity of regular and irregular migration towards European Union (EU) countries increased at an unprecedented rate. Importantly, international migration is highly heterogeneous, not only in terms of country of origin, skills and human capital, but also in the types of destination regions and neighborhoods they locate (Kourtit et al., 2021). As a result, the interaction between migrants and local communities is complex and affects both the development of the local areas, as well as the integration trajectories of migrants. Migration is likely to trigger different phenomena, including (but not restricted to):

- spatial segregation in the housing market;
- increase in job market competition for selected occupational profiles;
- change in voting participation, preferences and behaviour of the natives;
- cultural conflict and discrimination.

The difficulty in identifying the mechanisms leading to these phenomena relies in the complex set of mediating factors at work, such as the intensity and kind of exposure to migration, the cultural distance with the out-group, and the socioeconomic characteristics of the native and migrant communities. At the same time, the integration of migrants can be affected by the opportunities provided by local environments. For example, denser places with better labor markets may facilitate job entry and earnings. Moreover, local urban amenities may influence the extent of interaction across groups, potentially affecting existing segregation patterns.

The general aim of this special session is to provide new evidence on the effects of international migration on local communities, as well as the effect of how local contexts on the integration of migrants. Studies on the economic, political, sociological and cultural impact of international migration are welcome.

The multidisciplinary nature of the topic makes the ERSA conference an ideal forum in which to debate these issues. Economists, geographers, sociologists and political scientists are therefore invited to contribute to the special session.

References

Kourtit, K., Newbold, B., Nijkamp, P., & Partridge, M. D. (Eds.). (2021). The economic geography of cross-border migration. Berlin, Germany: Springer.