

Special Session Proposal – 65th ERSA Congress, Sofia

“Talent Geographies and Regional Resilience: Peripheral Responses to Global Transformation”

Convenors

- **Dr. Tibor Kovács**, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Hungary)
– leader of research project (corresponding author)
- **Dr. Szabolcs Mátyás**, Ludovika University of Public Service (Hungary)
- **Dr. Mária Vasvári**, University of Debrecen (Hungary)

Type

Special Session based on a Research Project (Comparative Research on European Peripheral Talent Ecosystems)

Rationale and Objectives

The accelerating demographic, technological, and social transitions of the 21st century expose Europe’s peripheral regions to unprecedented challenges. Yet these same regions hold untapped human potential that can drive renewal if effectively recognised and mobilised. This Special Session explores how *talent geography*—the spatial patterns of human capital recognition, retention, and attraction—can become a cornerstone of *regional resilience*.

Building on comparative research across Hungary, Finland, and Germany, the session aims to develop a cross-national dialogue on how peripheral territories can design place-based, talent-driven strategies to enhance socio-economic adaptability. By integrating quantitative indicators (GDP, R&D intensity, migration balance, innovation outputs) with qualitative insights on governance and social openness, the session contributes to the Congress theme “*Global Challenges and Regional Responses in a Transition Era*” through an original focus on the human dimension of resilience.

Main Themes / Scope

- Talent geography and demographic adaptation in peripheral regions
- Institutional and innovation ecosystems supporting regional resilience
- Comparative models of talent retention and attraction
- The role of universities and governance networks in peripheries
- Methodological innovation in analysing talent flows (mixed-methods, spatial data, correlation models)

Expected Contributions and Participants

We invite contributions from researchers, practitioners, and policy experts examining regional talent policies, demographic transitions, or innovation systems, especially in peripheral and/or rural contexts. Comparative European or global studies are particularly welcome. The session will serve as a platform for interdisciplinary exchange and potential joint publication within ERSA’s networks.

Expected Outcome

The session will synthesise lessons on how regions can transform *talent ecosystems* into *resilience strategies*—bridging human capital development, innovation policy, and spatial justice.