



Special Session Proposal

Territorialising the Right to Food in a Transition Era: Universal Food Coverage, Social Food Infrastructures and Regional Inequalities

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Abstract

Regions across Europe are facing a convergence of shocks—cost-of-living crises, climate impacts, geopolitical instability, and widening socio-spatial inequalities—that are reshaping food insecurity patterns and the political economy of food provisioning. In this context, a rights-based approach to food is re-emerging as a powerful lens to rethink regional development, cohesion and resilience. This Special Session explores how the Right to Food can be operationalised through *place-based* policies and infrastructures—moving from fragmented food aid responses toward more structural, inclusive and territorially embedded frameworks (including debates around Universal Food Coverage and the development of social food infrastructures such as public procurement systems, food hubs, community kitchens, and territorially anchored solidarity mechanisms).

The session invites contributions that connect food governance to core regional science debates: spatial justice, territorial cohesion, policy evaluation, multilevel governance and institutional capacity, as well as the spatial incidence of poverty and exclusion. We welcome conceptual, methodological and empirical papers that examine: (1) how regions and cities measure and map food insecurity and food environments; (2) what policy instruments enable a shift from emergency relief to rights-based provisioning (including procurement, planning, welfare, and “foundational economy” approaches); (3) how social food infrastructures are governed, financed and evaluated across space; and (4) what types of participatory methods (living labs, co-production, deliberative governance) increase legitimacy and long-term effectiveness.

The session is aligned with ERSA2026’s focus on “Global Challenges and Regional Responses in a Transition Era” and connects particularly with themes on territorial resilience, socio-spatial inequalities, public policy assessment, agriculture/agrifood systems, the commons, and multilevel governance.