

Welcome to our RELOCAL project – and to our first newsletter!

The European Union is increasingly concerned about the negative effects of the recent economic crises, the rise of Euroscepticism and lacking identification with the European project among its citizens. With regard to European policy-making, achieving higher levels of spatial justice, including fairness and well-being, and territorial cohesion are seen as one key approach to reversing these negative trends.

RELOCAL is a four-year research project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Programme focusing on the role of localities in achieving higher levels of spatial justice and cohesion. In particular, this concerns the question how places and communities can strengthen their involvement in the design, delivery and deployment of European cohesion policies.

Applying a distinctly bottom-up approach, including contextual and territorially specific case studies and continuous, multi-level stakeholder engagement in the research process, RELOCAL will identify factors that determine the local accessibility of European policies and funds, and the local abilities to articulate capacities for benefitting from European opportunity structures.

The RELOCAL consortium, co-operating intensively with policy-stakeholders at local, regional, national and European levels, hopes that its findings and results will help to positively shape future cohesion policies as well as local development initiatives, thus ultimately being of benefit the well-being of European citizens.

RELOCAL in brief

- departs from the premise that “place” can precondition the local action chances in promoting fairness and well-being
- aims at identifying factors that favour local accessibility of European policies and funds
- examines which are the local abilities that allow better exploiting European policy and funding opportunities
- contributes to enhancing the knowledge base on spatial justice and territorial inequalities empirically
- applies a bottom-up perspective based on contextual territorially differentiated case studies

Project Consortium

ILS – Institut für Landes- und
Stadtentwicklungsforschungwww.relocal.eu

Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development



RELOCAL has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement N° 727097

RELOCAL Kick-off meeting in Joensuu

As the Lead Partner of the project consortium, the Karelian Institute at the University of Eastern Finland hosted the kick-off meeting on the 25th and 26th of October 2016 in the city of Joensuu in the region of North Karelia. Approximately 30 participants from all 13 partners and our project officer from the Research Executive Agency, attended the meeting in the lakeside mansion of Vainoniemi. The discussions particularly focused on management aspects and planning the actions for the first six months of the research. Acting as scientific and project co-ordinators, Dr Petri Kahila and Professor James W. Scott were happy to see the commitment and collaborative atmosphere promising a productive and enjoyable 4 years ahead.

Some RELOCAL researchers stayed in Joensuu after the end of the project meeting in order to participate in a session organised by the Lead Partner as part of the Annual Meeting of Finnish Geographers. The title of the session was "Cohesion and Spatial Justice in Europe: What Role for Places, Localities and Communities" and the lively discussion on the RELOCAL topic was enriched by the contributions from academics outside the Consortium.

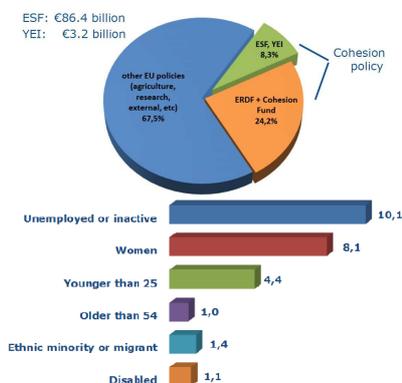


European Funds addressed at social and spatial justice action

The ESF is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens.

The European Social Fund investments cover all EU regions. More than €80 billion is earmarked for human capital investment in Member States between 2014 and 2020, with an extra of at least €3.2 billion allocated to the Youth Employment Initiative. The ESF focus on four of the cohesion policy's thematic objectives: promoting employment and supporting labour mobility; promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; investing in education, skills and lifelong learning; enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration.

Pilot ESF impact evaluations currently being brought forward by the JRC provide some insights on the benefits from the ESF, with employment increasing 4% to 11% among beneficiaries or earnings increasing up to 6%.



Estimated size of target groups (million beneficiaries)

Next milestones

- Spring 2017. Conceptual framework draft.
- Spring 2017. Initial literature review concluded. Virtual library online
- Autumn 2017. Local case studies begin in 11 countries
- Winter 2018. RELOCAL Workshop in Stockholm.

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| Project Full Title | RELOCAL - Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development |
| Grant Agreement | GA. 727097 |
| Project Budget | € 4.885.750 |
| Project Duration | October 2016 - Sep 2020 (48 months) |
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