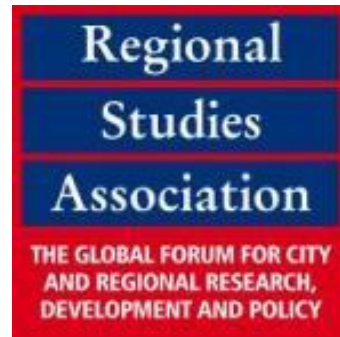




# TRAVEL GRANT

# EVENT REPORT



FULL NAME	Christopher Huggins
DATE AND PLACE OF EVENT COVERED BY THE RSA TRAVEL GRANT	Council for European Studies Conference Amsterdam, The Netherlands 25-27 June 2013
TITLE OF PRESENTATION	How effective are local authorities at engaging in transnational networking?
EMAIL ADDRESS	christopher.huggins@port.ac.uk

**I. Please write the event report below (300 words minimum)**

The Council for European Studies (CES) held their annual conference in Amsterdam between 25 and 27 June 2013. This year's conference was the CES's largest ever, attracting over 1,000 participants representing universities from across the world. The conference was organized under the broad theme of 'Crisis and Contingency: States of (In)stability'.

From a regional studies perspective, there were seven panels organized under the auspices of the 'Territorial Politics and Federalism' research network. The first two of these panels were focused around a theme of 'Crisis and Austerity from a Sub-National Perspective'. In the first of these panels (focusing specifically on the transnational activities of sub-national government) I presented my paper 'How effective are local authorities at engaging in transnational networking?' I then acted as discussant for the second panel (focusing specifically on the impact of the crisis on EU cohesion policy). During the discussions on the papers presented, two general themes emerged. Firstly, the crisis is having an unpredictable effect on local and regional engagement with Europe; in some cases sub-national authorities are being forced to scale back their activities and focus on delivering their 'core' services, while others are being 'pushed' towards transnational activities by budget pressures and the need to make localities more internationally competitive. Secondly, the need for 'effectiveness' in local and regional transnational engagement is becoming more important as budget pressures are increasing scrutiny on sub-national expenditure, especially in non-statutory areas such as international activities. A broader trend towards centralization was also observed, but again had unpredictable effects of local and regional engagement with Europe.

Other panels in the territorial politics group included 'Regionalist Parties in Multilevel States', 'Territoriality in the National and Regional Vote in Central and Eastern Europe', 'Brussels Paradiplomats: Regional Presence, Impact and Activities At the Heart of Europe', 'Multi-Jurisdictional Embeddedness: Sub-State

Authorities in Global Governance' and 'Recent Trends in Research On Subnational Authority'.

Beyond regional studies, there were over 270 panels representing research across a diverse range of disciplines in European studies. The two plenary sessions (on 'European Democracy and the Financial Crisis' and 'Nationalism, Populism and Democracy in Europe') provided a topical insight into contemporary debates affecting European politics.

I am extremely grateful to the Regional Studies Association for providing the Travel Grant which enabled me to attend and present my research at this conference.