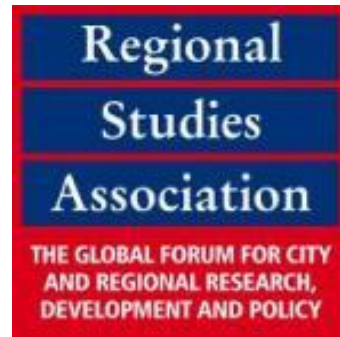




# TRAVEL GRANT

# EVENT REPORT



FULL NAME	Johanna Vogel
DATE AND PLACE OF EVENT COVERED BY THE RSA TRAVEL GRANT	9th World Congress of the RSAI (Regional Science Association International), Timisoara, Romania, 9 - 12 May 2012
TITLE OF PRESENTATION	The relationship between agglomeration and economic growth in the regions of the ten Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union between 2004 and 2007.
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## **I. Please write the event report below (300 words minimum)**

I was awarded an RSA travel grant to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the RSAI (Regional Science Association International), which took place in Timisoara, Romania, from 9 to 12 May 2012. The RSAI is the world organisation for regional scientists from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from urban planning and geography to economics.

Over 200 delegates from around the world attended the conference. By nationalities, attendance was especially high from Japan and Romania, followed by Brazil and Italy, among others. Many senior members of the RSAI attended the meeting, among them the current president, Yoshiro Higano, the immediate past-president, Roberta Capello, and the incoming president Jean-Claude Thill. Arthur Getis, winner of the 2012 RSAI Founder's Medal, held the keynote speech at the opening ceremony.

The conference was organised by the Romanian section of the RSAI and held in the Regional Business Centre of Timisoara. The local organising committee, consisting of staff and students from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the West University of Timisoara, supported the day-to-day running of the conference and tirelessly provided assistance, held city tours and supervised the technical excursions. Particular highlights included the opening ceremony at the city council accompanied by musical performances by students of the Timisoara conservatory of music; a tour to a local vineyard complete with wine tasting; and a gala dinner with traditional Romanian song and dance.

The theme of the conference was "Changing Spatial Patterns in a Globalising World", and the congress programme was filled with interesting and stimulating sessions on this topic. At the opening plenary session, Peter Nijkamp from the Free University Amsterdam first outlined his research programme on international migration, which aims to provide evidence-based policy advice on the economic costs and benefits of

migration between today's increasingly borderless economies. Grzegorz Gorzelak from the University of Warsaw then gave an informative overview of regional development patterns in Central and Eastern Europe since economic transition in the early 1990s, focusing in particular on the post-crisis period since 2008. Finally, Antoine Bailly from the University of Geneva spoke about "rurbanisation" (working in the city and living in the countryside) as a new way to manage urban growth, quality of life and sustainable development.

The session I presented in was concerned with "agglomeration, clusters, congestion and policy". Besides my own work on agglomeration and growth in the regions of Central and Eastern Europe, it contained talks on a theoretical model of agglomeration economies in a multi-country framework and on node specialisation in the metropolitan region of Miami, Florida.

Other recurring session themes at the congress were "innovation, knowledge economy and regional development", where several contributions analysed spatial patterns of knowledge and innovation in the European Union, China or the US; "globalisation and regional competitiveness", looking at regions from Central Asia to South America; as well as "emerging challenges for regional development", "accessibility, infrastructure and regional economic growth" and "migration, cultural networks and regional development". Manfred Fischer held a keynote lecture on spatial econometrics, and a special session on "the new urban world: a place 4 all" provided an interactive and engaging approach to debating different scholars' views on the economic role of cities.

Overall, the RSAI 2012 world congress was a great success, bringing together the creative and friendly regional science community in the pretty town of Timisoara. The local organising committee, the RSAI and all participants deserve a big thank you for their efforts.