



EUROPEAN WEEK OF REGIONS AND CITIES University

Master Class

Proceedings













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Introduction

Held in 2016 as part of the EWRC University, the aim of this fourth Master Class is to foster greater understanding of EU Cohesion Policy and its research potential among selected PhD students and early-career researchers.

The Master Class is organised and led by the European Commission, DG for Regional and Urban Policy, the EU Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Regional Studies Association (RSA) in cooperation with the European Regional Science Association (ERSA), and the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP). A selection panel drawn from these organisations was responsible for reviewing the applications and selecting participants.

28 participants from 17 EU Member States attended the class following a call for papers. They discussed three subjects in particular:

- Promoting inclusive growth and social cohesion, including the territorial dimension and the integration of urban and rural development
- The significance of the network economy: policy learning; transfers between regions and cities; knowledge spill-overs
- Improving the Cohesion Policy delivery system: performance, simplification and accountability

35 speakers and moderators from the partner institutions were involved and participants took part in a range of modules: lectures, presentations of participants' papers, networking sessions, the European Week of Regions and Cities' opening session, interactive debates, a role-play session, social events (RegioStars Awards) and city tour walks with specialists in urban planning.



The most important aspect of the Master Class is its impact on the research trajectories of participants. It is clear from alumni feedback that the Master Class is very influential for many of its students. It gives students and ECRs the chance to come to Brussels, to visit the institutions, engage with senior officials and experts and to network with peers. In this way, it facilitates pooling of knowledge and learning, thus building both capacity and an international community of experts.

Former Master Class students have reported that their attendance has led to successful applications for funding, joint projects or publication outputs, new contacts and networks both within the student body and into the institutions, additional knowledge about the work of policy makers in the Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, increased skills and employability, promotion or a new job.

This experience has also encouraged them to stay in the regional development field and to work on Cohesion Policy. Many keep in touch with one other and work or publish together. This is critical to the EU institutions – especially now, since much of the expertise in this area is currently British. Last but not least, a further bonus of the Master Class is that it enables institutions to pinpoint gaps in current PhD research.

This report presents short accounts of the sessions followed by the students in chronological order, together with the results of a feedback exercise and an online evaluation.

The organisers would like to thank all the participants and speakers for their involvement.

Brussels, November 2016



Welcome

After brief presentations by participants of their research areas on the afternoon of Sunday 9 October, the Master Class started the following morning with a two-hour city walk. Acting as guides were **Stefan De Corte**, academic coordinator of the Master's Programme on Urban and Spatial Planning and associate director of Cosmopolis, the centre for urban research at the Free University of Brussels, and **Dr Nicola Francesco Dotti**, from the Catholic University of Louvain and the RSA research network on EU Cohesion Policy. Participants were able to view some of the main sights in the centre of Brussels and to get an understanding of them from a spatial and urban development perspective, taking the city's history into account.

The tour ended at the CoR building, where the participants were welcomed by the organisers. **Jiří Buriánek**, the CoR's secretary-general, highlighted the crucial need to build and consolidate bridges between research, policy-making and public institutions at all levels and to evaluate the impact of EU Cohesion Policy in order to gain a better understanding. **Ronald Hall**, DG REGIO, also highlighted the importance of forging a close link with researchers in order to get a better grasp of the policy's impact. Finally, **Sally Hardy** from the RSA explained the very selective process governing attendance at the Master Class and explained that the programme did benefit skills and employability, as a survey of previous Master Class participants had shown.

Discussion 1

- **Milad Abbasiharofteh**, Leibniz University of Hanover, Institute of Economics and Cultural Geography, Germany, presented a paper on the *Dynamics of Knowledge Sourcing and Development Policy: Creating a Conceptual Framework*;
- Lorena Felicia Axinte, Cardiff University, Sustainable Places Research Institute, Geography and Planning, United Kingdom, explored the connection between *collaborative* governance and regenerative development at city-region level;
- **Mariachiara Barzotto**, Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, Department of Business and Labour Economics, United Kingdom, discussed *what occupational mix should an EU region aim to create in order to promote a smart and inclusive economic growth*.
- Sorin Cebotari, Babes-Bolyai University, Department of Geography, Romania, presented a paper about Solar power projects' influence on peripheralisation and development in North-West Romania.
- Brice Lamenie, Université Paris 7 Denis Diderot, UMR 8504 CNRS Géographie-Cités, France, concluded the session with a paper on *implementing the tools of EU cohesion* policy in a global city context, focusing on the ITI in the IIe de France Region.



European Week of Regions and Cities: opening session

The second module of the Master Class involved attending the European Week of Regions and Cities' opening session at the European Parliament in the afternoon and was followed by the RegioStars 2016 Finalists Exhibition and a networking cocktail at the Committee of the Regions.

Implementing EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: state of play

The Master Class continued on Tuesday morning (11 October) with module 3, which offered insights into the state of implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in the 2014-2020 period, with two high-level officials of the European Commission, **Normunds Popens**, Deputy Director-General, DG REGIO, and **Zoltan Kazatsay**, Deputy Director-General, DG EMPL.

Normunds Popens highlighted the need for sustainable policy delivery focused on results. He explained the concept of 'smart specialisation', which is valued highly by the Member States and regions because it is place-based and can be considered future-focused. He also pointed out that the question of results, outputs and impact was essential in the evaluation of Cohesion Policy, but that there was a challenge in identifying the best indicators for different policy fields. Mr Popens also stressed the importance of financial instruments and referred to the 'FI Compass' platform supporting their implementation. He concluded by highlighting the need to increase administrative capacity at all levels of government, including through peer-to-peer exchanges.

Zoltan Kazatsay explained the European Semester exercise to review the state of play regarding Member States' employment, social, financial and economic situations, which involved an assessment followed by Country Specific Recommendations. Generally speaking, the four DGs involved in managing the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds were coordinated by DG REGIO under common legislation. This is a complex exercise, involving exchange of information and knowledge on fund management. Various bodies and groups have been setup to facilitate this exchange, such as the Expert Group on ESI Funds (European Commission and Member States) and the Monitoring Committees (Managing Authorities and social partners). Mr Kazatsay took the example of the refugee crisis, for which the combined use of structural and other funds was made possible despite the very politically sensitive nature of the issue.



In the course of the debate a number of questions and remarks were made about financial instruments and how they help to simplify the policy and the mechanisms by which regional authorities can seek to persuade the European Commission of their needs and to work directly with it. Other aspects of the debate touched on the political consequences of empowering regions, the selection of projects by Managing Authorities and the place of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) in the new programming period.

Discussion 2

This session involved a discussion between the students and panellists **Ronald Hall**, DG REGIO, **Florian Hauser**, DG EMPL, **Andrea Forti**, CoR, and **Dr Nicola Dotti**, Catholic University of Louvain.

The following five papers were presented, under the heading **Inclusive growth and social** cohesion, including the territorial dimension and the integration of urban and rural development:

- Lucia Máliková, Comenius University, Bratislava, Department of Human Geography and Demography, Slovakia, spoke about *Differentiated approaches to research on marginality and peripherality in rural environment*;
- **Anastasia Panori**, Panteion University of Athens, Economic and Regional Development, Greece, presented her paper on *Assessing urban social inclusion in times of crisis*;
- Ana Pego, FCSH Nova University Geography and Regional Planning, Portugal, gave an Overview on Offshore Energy Sector in Portugal;
- Hugo Pinto de Abreu, University of Porto, Management and Business Studies, School of Economics and Management, Portugal, was unable to attend but gave his paper on *The Quest for Growth, Innovation and Jobs: Financial Instruments for SME Support in Cohesion Policy 2007–2013* via video link;
- **Marcin Tomasz**, Chruściel University of Wroclaw, Institute of International Studies, Section of European Union Studies, Poland, discussed *EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: Promoting Social Inclusion in the Realities of the Refugee Crisis*.



The panellists and students then discussed eight other papers selected under the heading **The** significance of the network economy: policy learning; transfers between regions and cities; knowledge spill-overs:

- Júlia A. Nagy, Babes-Bolyai University, Geography Regional Studies, Faculty of Geography, Romania, gave a presentation on *Metropolitan sustainability in the Cohesion Policy-analysing capacity for integrated governance in Cluj Metropolitan Area*;
- Sergio Botelho Junior, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Centre for Enterprise Development and Regional Economy (CEDRE), School of Business, Ireland, spoke about *Knowledge spill-over: increasing the innovative capacity of European regions*;
- Wojciech Dyba, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Department of Regional Policy and European Integration, Poland, presented a paper on *Spill-overs in Furniture Clusters: Effects of the Position in Inter-Organisational Knowledge Networks on Firms' Innovativeness*;
- Anastasiia Konstantynova, Orkestra, Basque Institute of Competitiveness, Territorial Development, Innovation and Clusters, Spain, spoke about Blending cluster policies into smart specialisation strategies through a comparative learning framework for coherent regional development in the European Union;
- **Bradley Loewen**, University of Economics, Institutional, Environmental and Experimental Economics, Prague, Czech Republic, presented a paper On the path dependence of regional policy in Central and Eastern Europe;
- Jaan Looga, University of Tartu, School of Economics and Business Administration, Estonia explored Actions for innovation: how can local government intervene?;
- **Syed Omer Husain**, Wageningen University, Rural Sociology Group, Department of Social Sciences, the Netherlands, spoke about *Cohesion Policy Research and the place-based approach*;
- Chiara Rinaldi, University of Gothenburg, School of Business, Economics and Law, Sweden, presented a paper on *Participatory approaches, sustainability and innovation in food and gastronomy: multi-stakeholder networks for regional development.*



Discussion 3

The afternoon of 11 October was devoted to the topic of **Improving the cohesion policy delivery system: performance, simplification and accountability**, with the presentation of ten papers and discussion involving **Ann-Kerstin Myleus**, DG REGIO, **Dr Magdalena Sapala**, European Parliament Research Service (EPRS), and **Dr Nicola Dotti**, Catholic University of Louvain.

- **Sylwia Borkowska-Waszak**, University of Strathclyde, European Policies Research Centre, spoke on *The purple zone of EU Cohesion Policy implementation in Central Eastern Europe: The case of Poland*;
- **Mattia Casula**, LUISS University, Italy, looked at Cohesion Policy Implementation in Southern Europe: Italy and Spain Compared;
- Margaret Coughtrie, University of Strathclyde, Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship/ European Policies Research Centre, United Kingdom, presented a paper on *The use of financial instruments in EU Cohesion Policy: the Scottish Co-Investment Fund, a glimpse at a veteran early stage equity supplier*
- **Maaike Damen-Koedijk**, University of Twente, Department of Public Administration, the Netherlands, delivered a paper entitled *Accountability of Cohesion Policy in the Netherlands: an ideal situation?*;
- **Migle Dziugyte**, University of Malta, Institute for European Studies, Malta, presented a paper on *Evaluating the impact of regional funding on Malta's sectoral production values, labour market, household income and value added using input-output analysis;*
- Christopher Huggins, Keele University School of Politics, Philosophy, International Relations and Environment, United Kingdom looked at *Financial pressures and effective engagement with EU cohesion policy: examining the local level factors determining success;*
- Nino Javakhishvili Larsen, University of Southern Denmark, Department of Business, Denmark, spoke about *Developing methods to empirically study 'Institutional thickness' framework in cross-border regions*;
- Antonella Rita Ferrara, University of Calabria, Department of Economics, Statistics and Finance, Italy, gave a presentation on Assessing Cohesion Policy effects on EU regional well-being: a dose-response function to the transfers' intensities;
- **Pavel Zdrazil**, University of Pardubice, Institute of Regional and Security Sciences, Czech Republic, analysed the *Role and importance of European Cohesion Policy and its main challenges: evidence of disparities in the 'new' member countries*;
- Joanna Zielińska-Szczepkowska, University of Warmia and Mazury, Department of Economic and Regional Policy, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Olsztyn, Poland, asked Can European Cohesion Policy support development of the Tourism Economy? Evidence from Structural Funds Implementation in selected Polish Region.



Regions, cities, rural areas: evidence-based policy-making, evaluation and research

The second afternoon session on 11 October focused on current research trends and recent regional and urban policy developments at EU level. **Peter Berkowitz,** DG REGIO, explained the links between the other ESI Fund Directorates General in the European Commission and research. He referred to recently issued work on the ex-post evaluation of the 2007-2013 period and to on-going studies in preparation for the 7th Cohesion Report, which was due to be delivered

in the second half of 2017. He gave a general run-down of how the European Commission worked with the academic world and other ways DG REGIO would be collaborating with the research community. On this latter aspect, a publication resulting from an <u>academic conference</u> in Riga in spring 2015 had recently been made available online.

European Week of Regions and Cities: official reception

On the evening of 11 October, Master Class participants and lecturers were invited, along with about 1 500 participants of the European Week of Regions and Cities, to attend the official reception at BOZAR, Brussels' centre for fine arts, which was the venue for the RegioStars Award Ceremony. These awards are aimed at celebrating the most inspiring and innovative projects supported by European Cohesion Policy funds.

Research for policy makers: the European Parliament

On the Wednesday morning (12 October), participants were free to attend other European Week of Regions and Cities seminars and/or attend meetings. In the afternoon, they attended a workshop organised by the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS). Moderated by **Agnieszka Widuto**, **Vasilis Margaras** and **Christiaan van Lierop** from the EPRS, the workshop looked into how the European Parliament incorporates research on cohesion and regional policy into its work. The session had three distinct parts: an introduction explaining how the Parliament conducts research (via both the EPRS and the Policy Departments) and how this knowledge feeds into the work of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs); a personal experience session in which EPRS and Policy Department colleagues formerly employed in the academic world discussed how parliamentary differs from academic research and what the Parliament needs from researchers; and an interactive section that gave Master Class students the chance to share their views through discussions in three groups. These addressed online communities, future trends in Cohesion Policy and bridging the gap between parliamentary and academic research. Taking part were **Sarah Sheil**, **Laura Tilindyte** and **Magdalena Sapała**



from the EPRS, **lain Watt**, **Diana Haase** and **Markus Prutsch** from the European Parliament Policy Department, and **Monika Jagiello**, Parliamentary assistant to an MEP. Major points discussed were:

- The need to engage local/regional authorities in the decision-making process;
- Envisaging measures other than GDP that reflect necessary well-being and social metrics¹;
- The need to address disparities within Member States between urban and rural wellbeing and prosperity;
- The need to compute intra-urban social indicators at a low spatial level of analysis. Data is already available, such as the EU-SILC (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) database containing samples of individual data based on NUTS 1. Only the implementation of new methodological/computational techniques is required to enable the calculation and comparison of those kinds of indicators at a low spatial level.
- The need for a NUTS 3 data level. However, although the participants understood the importance of this type of data, there was uncertainty as to whether it should be gathered at national level or centrally at European level. Nevertheless, harmonised and realistic data was considered crucial.
- Meetings between the academic community and the EU were being held to discuss data;
- The requirement for a data methodology which will accommodate our future need for data;
- The need to improve communication to the local level;
- Developing an open platform for communication;
- Developing a European public space;
- The effectiveness of programmes often takes more time to emerge and should be followed over a couple of programming periods to truly evaluate their results: however, evaluations needed to be simplified and harmonised in terms of quality and the procedures and forms used to carry them out.
- Lack of understanding on the part of EU officials of how difficult the actual implementation of the programme is. More understanding was needed.
- Auditing should be focused on results, not process. This would result in greater speed and less unnecessary bureaucracy.

¹ Some may be found here: Fasolo, L., Galetto, M. & Turina, E. (2013): A pragmatic approach to evaluate alternative indicators to GDP. Quality and Quantity, 47: 633. doi:10.1007/s11135-011-9537-7.



Implementing ERDF and ESF programmes: a debate with programme managers

On the Wednesday evening (12 October), Master Class students attended an informal conversation chaired by **Prof John Bachtler**, European Policies Research Centre (EPRC), University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. The purpose was to reflect on the strategic and operational challenges of implementing EU Cohesion Policy between 2014 and 2020. The panellists were:

- Louis Vervloet, Director-General of the ESF-Agency, Flanders, Belgium, and Member of the European Commission's High-Level Group on Simplification for Beneficiaries of ESI Funds;
- **Ursula Meyer**, Deputy Head of Unit, Coordination of EU Cohesion and Structural Policy, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany;
- Lucio Caporizzi, ERDF and ESF Managing Authority, Umbria, Italy, and
- Eva Srnová, Regional, Urban and Cohesion Policy Attaché, Financial and Cohesion Policy Unit, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union, Brussels.

After opening statements, participants and panellists discussed the overall national and regional contexts in which EU Cohesion Policy programmes are implemented, the influence of the Managing Authority on the negotiations of the 2014-2020 regulatory framework and the subsequent programming, and the key drivers and obstacles in implementing the programmes. The discussion concluded with observations on the future of EU Cohesion Policy post-2020.

Negotiating Europe

In this simulation chaired by **Wolfgang Petzold**, CoR, and **Prof John Bachtler**, EPRC, Master Class participants learnt to anticipate a typical negotiating situation in the EU – agreement on the "multiannual financial framework" (MFF) for 2021-2027 – and to identify the interests of the EU institutions and the Member States. The overall objective was to become familiar with typical bargaining situations in the Council of the EU, to analyse different positions, and to achieve a result by the end of the simulation. For the purpose of the exercise, rules and figures were fictional and simplified. In the course of the morning, CoR President **Markku Markkula** took the opportunity to meet the Master Class students and spoke of the need for research to build and improve EU policies and to innovate.



Feed-back and evaluation

In a session moderated by **Giulia Amaducci**, DG REGIO, and **Wolfgang Petzold**, CoR, Master Class participants were asked to summarise their first impressions of the event, recalling the best moments and suggesting possible improvements to the format. They highlighted the quality of the debates, appreciated the chance to meet people from the EU institutions, and suggested that the presentations on participants' research be remodelled so as to allow more discussion and interaction with EU officials.

After the Master Class, participants and lecturers were invited to take part in an online evaluation, to which 21 of the participants responded. For 77% of them, the Master Class had been a real opportunity to meet people from the EU institutions and to learn about new trends in regional and urban development research. The participants' main expectation was to network with other students/researchers. This expectation had been met for some 86% of respondents. The session with the EPRS was the most appreciated, with about 82% rating it 'excellent'. The role play session also found favour, with 59% rating it 'excellent' and 36% 'good'. The academic programme was perceived as 'excellent' by 36% and 'good' by almost 55%. Regarding the communication tools, the European Week of Regions and Cities website was the most useful (55% found it so). The sessions in which PhD research was presented will be rethought, since this attracted the main recommendations - for future events to allow more time for reacting to the feedback of the reviewers of papers, to have shorter presentations on policy results, advance requirements that presentations respect a reasonable timeframe, and smaller groups for discussions. Another suggestion was for EU political representatives and local project leaders to be involved. These responses and recommendations will be taken into consideration for future editions of the Master Class. After the 2016 edition, an 'Alumni Network' of all the four Master Classes held so far was set up by the RSA on LinkedIn and has in the meantime attracted more than 60 followers. It will be connected to the RSA's Research Network on Cohesion Policy.



List of Master Class 2016 participants

(in alphabetical order)

Milad Abbasiharofteh

Paper: Dynamics of Knowledge Sourcing and Development Policy: Creating a Conceptual Framework PhD Student Institute of Economic and Cultural Geography Leibniz University Hanover, Germany abbasiharofteh@arl-net.de

Lorena Axinte

Paper: Exploring the connection between collaborative governance and regenerative development at city-region level Early Career Researcher Sustainable Places Research Institute Cardiff University, United Kingdom <u>lorena.axinte@gmail.com</u>

Mariachiara Barzotto

Paper: What occupational mix should an EU region aim to create in order to promote a smart and inclusive economic growth? Early Career Researcher Department of Business and Labour Economics Birmingham Business School - University of Birmingham, United Kingdom <u>m.barzotto@bham.ac.uk</u>

Sylwia Borkowska-Waszak

Paper: The purple zone of EU Cohesion Policy implementation in Central Eastern Europe. The case of Poland PhD Student European Policies Research Centre University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom sylwia.borkowska@strath.ac.uk

Sergio Botelho Junior

Paper: Channels of knowledge spillover: Towards understanding a regional phenomenon PhD Student Centre for Enterprise Development and Regional Economy (CEDRE). Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Ireland <u>sbotelhoj@gmail.com</u>

Mattia Casula

Paper: Cohesion Policy Implementation in Southern Europe: Italy and Spain Compared PhD Student Department of Political Science LUISS University, Italy mcasula@luiss.it

Sorin Cebotari

Paper: Solar power projects' influence on peripheralization and development in North-West Romania PhD Student Department of Geography Babes-Bolyai University, Romania <u>sorin.cebotari@geografie.ubbcluj.ro</u>

Marcin Tomasz Chruściel

Paper: EUCP 2014-2020: Promoting Social Inclusion In the Realities of the Refugee Crisis PhD Student Institute of International Studies University of Wroclaw, Poland <u>marcin.chrusciel@uwr.edu.pl</u>

Margaret Coughtrie

Paper: The use of financial instruments in EU Cohesion Policy: the Scottish Co-Investment Fund, a glimpse at a veteran early stage equity supplier PhD Student Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship/ European Policies Research Centre University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom margaret.coughtrie@strath.ac.uk

Maaike Damen – Koedijk

Paper: Accountability of Cohesion Policy in the Netherlands: an ideal situation? Early Career Researcher Department of Public Administration University of Twente, Netherlands <u>Maaike.koedijk@gmail.com</u> ; <u>m.j.damenkoedijk@utwente.nl</u>

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Paper: Spillovers in Furniture Clusters: Effects of the Position in Inter-Organisational Knowledge Networks on Firm Innovation Early Career Researcher Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland wojtek@amu.edu.pl

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Paper: Evaluating the impact of regional funding on Malta's sectoral production values, labour market, household income and value added using input-output analysis Early Career Researcher Institute for European Studies University of Malta, Malta <u>migle.dziugyte.12@um.edu.mt</u>

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Paper: Assessing Cohesion Policy effects on EU regional well-being: a dose-response function to the transfers' intensities Early Career Researcher Department of Economics, Statistics and Finance University of Calabria, Italy antonellarita.ferrara@unical.it

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Paper: Financial pressures and effective engagement with EU cohesion policy: examining the local level factors determining success Early Career Researcher School of Politics, Philosophy, International Relations and Environment

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Nino Javakhishvili-Larsen

Paper: Developing methods to empirically study 'Institutional thickness' framework in cross-border regions PhD Student Department of Business and Economics University of Southern Denmark, Denmark nino@sam.sdu.dk

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Paper: Metropolitan sustainability in the Cohesion Policy – analysing capacity for integrated governance in Cluj Metropolitan Area PhD Student Faculty of Geography Babes-Bolyai University, Romania julia.nagyy@gmail.com

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Paper: Cohesion Policy Research and the place-based approach Research topics for updating cohesion policy governance PhD Student Rural Sociology Group – Department of Social Sciences Wageningen University, Netherlands syedomer.husain@wur.nl

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Paper: Assessing urban social inclusion in times of crisis PhD Student Economic and Regional Development Panteion University of Athens. Greece an.panori@panteion.gr

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Paper: An Overview on Offshore Energy Sector in Portugal PhD Student Geography and regional planning FCSH - Nova University, Portugal anapego@students.fcsh.unl.pt

Chiara Rinaldi

Participatory Paper: approaches, sustainability and innovation in food and gastronomy: multi-stakeholder networks for regional development Early Career Researcher School of Business, Economics and Law University of Gothenburg, Sweden. chiara.rinaldi@gu.se

Pavel Zdražil

Paper: Role and importance of European Cohesion Policy and its main challenges: an evidence of disparities in the 'new' member countries

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Paper: Can European Cohesion Policy support development of the Tourism Economy? Evidence from Structural Funds Implementation in selected Polish Region Early Career Researcher

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List of Master Class 2016 speakers, moderators and organisers

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