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"No place should be left behind" International ESPON Seminar 5-6 December 2018 in Vienna

Vienna, 06 December 2018

Is territorialism the reaction of the places that do not matter? How can we fight regional inequalities and improve citizens' perception of the EU? These were the main questions raised by Professors Andreas Faludi and Anres Rodriguez Pose, keynote speakers during the opening of a seminar organised by the ESPON Programme and the Austrian Presidency in Vienna

Under the title "New Narratives for Territorial Development" ESPON brings together over 300 policymakers for two days in Vienna to discuss the future of EU development policies, such as the Cohesion Policy, based on the presentation of ESPON's latest findings.

"The future of Europe is in the future of its places and people living in these places. We cannot afford neglecting their needs and perspectives. Places do matter and no place should be left behind", underlined the Director of ESPON, Mrs Ilona Raugze. "We need new narratives for Territorial Development to describe the new reality where administrative borders become less important. Functional areas of different sizes and characters shape territorial development in Europe".

Professor Rodriguez Pose described the "geography of EU discontent", and linked anti-EU vote with the economic and industrial decline of an area. Those that live in regions that "are left behind" are attacking the very factors on which recent prosperity has been based, he said: Open markets, Migration, Membership of the EU, Globalisation.

Places do matter, underlined professor Rodriguez Pose. "If Europe is to combat the rise of a geography of EU discontent, fixing the so-called 'places that don't matter' is possibly one of the best ways to start", concluded professor Rodriguez Pose. We need policies that are place-sensitive and tap the potentials of every region, he added.

For Professor Faludi, the problem is that "Under territorialism the world appears to be a seamless garment of territories. Various authorities, a state administration, region or commune, are responsible for the territory within their borders". However, as demonstrated by the limits of 'meta-geography' thinking about the EU - and European spatial planning - spatial relations cannot be boxed in, hence the poverty of territorialism, he noted.

The very notion of democracy in an interconnected world is a key issue, said Professor Faludi, who advocates a Europe where national borders are questioned, and ultimately transgressed.

The seminar is discussing the future of EU development policies, such as the Cohesion Policy, based on the presentation of ESPON's latest findings on different topics such as Crossborder services, migration, macro-regions, and the environment.

It is a unique opportunity to follow the latest developments on the debate about the post-2020 EU development policies and to understand how interconnections among places create dynamics that influence politics, investments, and people.



Note to the Editors

ESPON is the European Territorial Observatory Network that provides scientific analyses and advice for territorial and sectoral policies in a number of contexts including economy and finance, unemployment, foreign direct investment, circular and low-carbon economy, healthcare, migration, etc. **ESPON** supports the discussions on the future of EU policies, notably the Cohesion Policy, as well as the upcoming preparation for the next generation of strategies and programmes at national, regional and local scales. **ESPON** is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. More at: www.ESPON.eu

The **ESPON 2020** Programme is a pan-European programme managed by the Luxembourgish Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure on behalf of all EU Member States, Island Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland and co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund under Interreg.

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