



Special Session Proposal

Regional inequalities and digitalization in less developed European regions

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Abstract

Digitalization has strongly enhanced economic and social development in the past decades. It catalyzes competitive growth, transforms industrial sectors, creates new jobs, changes the nature of markets and products. Digitalization enables regions to go under rapid transformation; however, regions, which cannot be fully engaged in the digital economy, are unable to optimize its benefits. Less developed regions differ greatly from the developed on how they can take advantage of and adapt to the opportunities offered by digitalization.

New dynamics in the digital economy have induced regional digital inequalities. This new form of inequality is associated, on the one hand, with divides in the technological infrastructure required to support digital connectivity; on the other hand, with differences in digital skills. The widening digital divide poses a number of challenges, especially in less developed regions.

The session aims at discussing the relationship between digitalization and economic development in less developed European regions and exploring the causes of regional digital inequalities. The session welcomes papers answering the following questions: how digital growth is driving regional inequality, what are the causes and barriers to digital transformation in less developed regions, to what extent does the lack of digital technologies and skills affect different sectors and economies, and how to close the digital gap.