



Alicante, Spain & Virtual event

Urban Challenges and Sustainable Technological Revolution



Special Session Proposal

Transition towards climate neutrality and energy transition: regional development driver or challenge?

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Abstract

Regions and local communities are challenged to achieve the goal of climate neutrality. The targets for this process are outlined by the European Green Deal and legally enshrined in the European Climate Law. The EU should achieve a reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels (Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 Article 2). There are also further milestones on the way to neutrality in Europe by 2050 considering energy, transport, buildings, farming, and circular economy sectors. Development and implementation of strategies for climate neutrality contribute also to the implementation of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ways to achieve the goals are still being developed. Transformation towards climate neutrality is a very complex and challenging process. Achieving climate neutrality requires profound change and new ways of economic activity, creating opportunities for innovation, technology development, investment, and jobs. In this respect, the successful green transition should be fair, competitive, provide opportunities for regional and local companies to create future oriented jobs and establish a supportive framework to ensure that no one is left behind. It is again a chance to reduce spatial disparities and strengthen regional cooperation. At the same time, it is also a risk that despite all efforts, new forces will emerge that may exacerbate existing difficulties, causing new challenges and leading to further inequalities in regional development.

The main goal of this special session is to share and discuss the experiences and research results on regional development strategies for the transformation towards climate neutrality and especially in energy transition. Possible topics and questions to be considered during the sessions are:

- Strategies and plans which strengthen the regional economy.
- Planning approaches and policy solutions to foster the transition on different levels of governance and in different sectors.
- Experiences and lessons learnt from the process of developing and/or implementing different strategies to achieve climate neutrality.
- Effectiveness of the different energy transition and economic transformation measures.
- Social and ecological aspects of the transition.