

**1<sup>st</sup> International Scientific Conference on Sustainable Regional Development**  
**“Demographic Transition in 2050 and Regional Policies”**  
**Prishtina, Kosovo, 10-11 Oct 2024**

**Event Overview**

On 11 October 2024, the 1<sup>st</sup> Scientific Conference on Sustainable Regional Development was held, at the National University Library of Kosovo “Pjeter Bogdani”, Prishtina (Kosovo). The conference was organized by the Institute for Scientific Research on Sustainable Development (IKSZQ) and the University “Haxhi Zeka”, Peja (Kosovo), under the aegis of the Ministry of Regional Development of Kosovo. The thematic area of the conference was “Demographic Transition in 2050 and Regional Policies”, aiming to explore the challenges and opportunities for sustainable regional development due to demographic change.



The conference opened with a welcome speech by Dr. Filip Ruxho, Assistant Professor and Director of the IKSZQ Institute (Kosovo). Dr. Filip Ruxho stressed the need to consider spatial dimension and spatial variables in Kosovo’s regional policies more deeply. In this direction, he underlined, Kosovo needs to draw on all the potential tools provided by current scientific research in Regional Science, such as artificial intelligence, multi-sectoral development, strengthening key sectors of the economy, and utilizing successful models and examples that international experience has to offer. Next, a welcome speech was delivered by Prof. Dr. Armand Krasniqi, Chair of the Conference’s Scientific Committee and Rector of “Haxhi Zeka” University, which was a co-organizer of the conference, who commented, among other things, on the importance of education and research in the pursuit of sustainable regional development. Dr. Refike Sulcevs, Director of the Department of European Integration and Policy Cooperation of the Ministry of Regional Development in Kosovo, among other things, highlighted the importance of cooperation between public and private actors, underlining cooperation as a key driver of progress and sustainable development.

The conference proceedings included a series of lectures by keynote speakers, who highlighted different dimensions of the demographic transition issue toward the future of sustainable regional development. Dr. Tuzin Baycan, Professor of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, at Istanbul Technical University, and President of the Turkish National Committee of Regional Science (Turkey), highlighted the importance of the digital transition by presenting indicators and related methods for the case study of Turkey. Dr. Dimitrios Tsiotas, Assistant Professor at the Department of Regional and Economic Development, School of Applied Economics and Social Sciences, Agricultural University of Athens (Greece), highlighted the importance of reading the map of inter-regional flows in the European Union

and of the emerging challenges through the detection of spatial patterns by presenting an empirical study in the EU.

Dr. Ana VINUELA, Professor at the University of Oviedo (Spain), and Future Executive Director of the Regional Science Association International - RSAI (from Jan 1, 2025), through her online participation, highlighted the importance of social inclusion as a key pillar for harnessing social capital towards sustainable regional development. Dr. Petraq Papajorgji, Professor (Emeritus) at the European University of Tirana, (Albania), highlighted the opportunities emerging through the selective use of AI, presenting an empirical study comparing AI and human-based responses on the same set of inputs. Finally, Dr. Marinela Krstinic Nizic, Prof. and Vice-Dean for Development, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija, University of Rijeka (Croatia), pointed out the crucial role of the comparative advantage of regions with an economic basis in tourism as a factor of sustainable regional development, presenting data from Croatia.

During the conference, a cooperation agreement was signed between the University “Haxhi Zeka”, under its representative, Rector Prof. Dr. Armand Krasniqi, and the University of Rijeka, under its representative Marinela Krstinic Nizic, Vice-Dean for Development, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija, University of Rijeka (Croatia). The cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening international relations and cooperation in the field of research and education.



The conference participants expressed their optimism that, through the common goals of addressing demographic challenges and adopting the imperatives of sustainable regional development for a better future, scientific research and politics will find their common ground for convergence. They committed to continue efforts to ensure that their research contributes to the promotion of innovative and sustainable approaches toward a better, equitable, inclusive, and prosperous society. This conference was not only an opportunity to exchange scientific ideas but also an opportunity to forge further partnerships towards the common goal of sustainable regional development.



**Event overview edited by Filipos Ruxho,  
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