

## IGU COMMISSION ON THE DYNAMICS OF ECONOMIC SPACES

### 2023 REPORT

#### A. Membership

##### 1. *Steering Committee:*

The Steering Committee of the IGU Commission on the Dynamics of Economic Spaces (CDES) consists of eleven members from different countries. The Steering Committee has three female and eight male members, who represent mostly European, North American and Asian countries. From 2023 Prof. Eva Kiss, who was previously vice-chair, became the chair of the Commission for four years. At the same time, Prof. Nuri Yavan will continue the work as vice-chair in the 2022/2024 period. The current members of the Steering Committee are listed as follows:

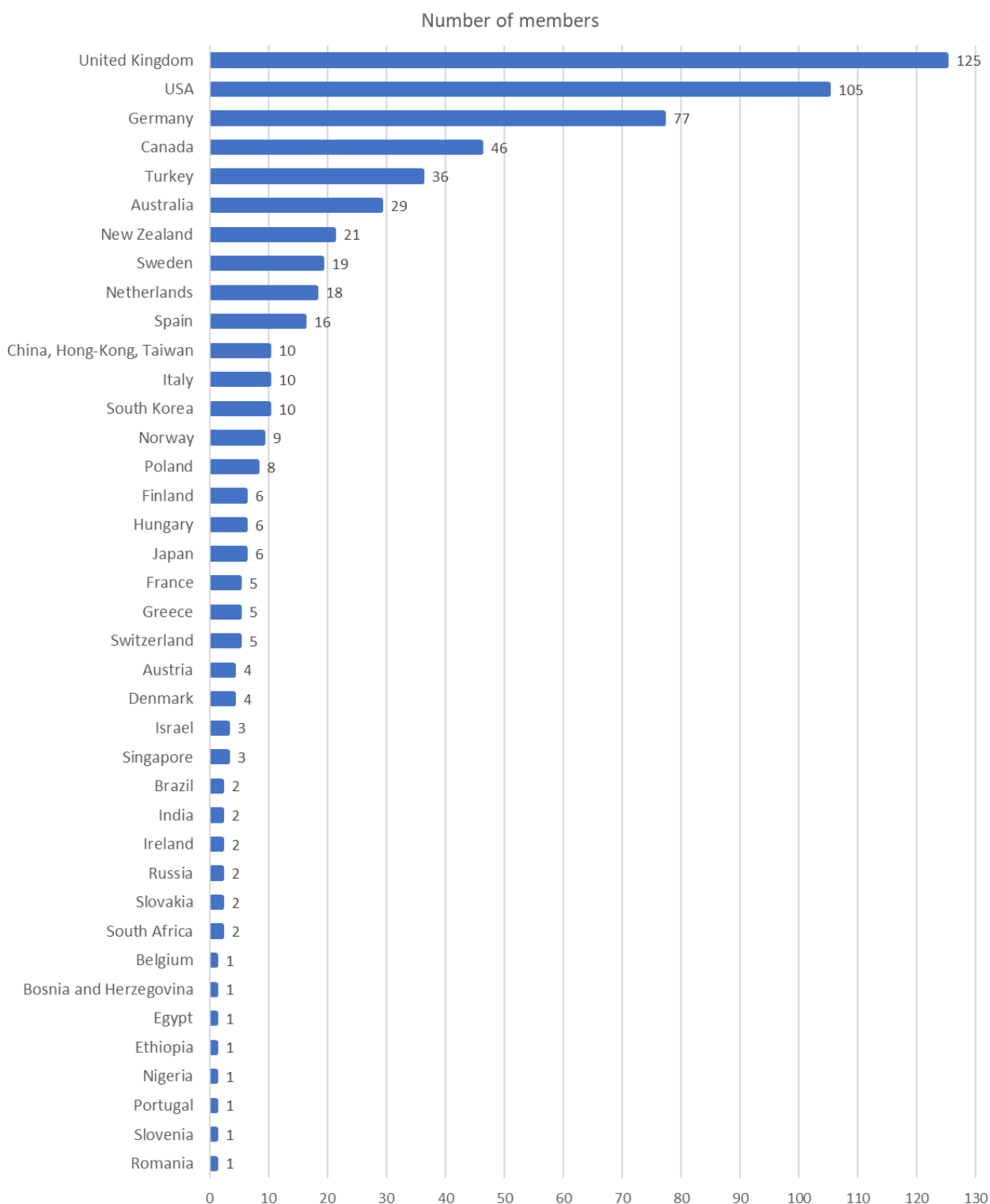
1. **Chair:** Eva Kiss, HUN-REN RCAES Geographical Institute, Budapest, HUNGARY. Email: kiss.eva@csfk.org, kisse@mail.iif.hu
2. **Vice Chair:** Nuri Yavan, Faculty of Language, History and Geography, Department of Geography, Ankara University, Ankara, TURKEY. Email: nuri.yavan@ankara.edu.tr.
3. Harald Bathelt, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto, Toronto, CANADA. Email: harald.bathelt@utoronto.ca
4. Robert Hassink, Department of Geography, Kiel University, Kiel, GERMANY. Email: hassink@geographie.uni-kiel.de
5. Canfei He, College of Urban and Environmental Sciences, Peking University, Beijing, CHINA. E-mail: hecanfei@urban.pku.edu.cn
6. Patrick Heidkamp, Department of the Environment, Geography & Marine Sciences, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven CT, USA. Email: heidkampc1@southernct.edu
7. Yangmi Koo, Department of Geography, Seoul National University, Seoul, SOUTH KOREA. Email: yangmi@snu.ac.kr
8. Armin Kratzer, Platform for climate change, energy and circular economy, Standortagentur Tirol GmbH, Innsbruck, AUSTRIA. Email: armin.kratzer@standort-tirol.at
9. Rene Matlovic, Institute of Geography, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, SLOVAKIA. Email: rene.matlovic@saavs.sk
10. Özge Öner, Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UNITED KINGDOM. Email: oo263@cam.ac.uk
11. Piotr Pachura, Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Czestochowa University of Technology, Czestochowa, POLAND. Email: piotr.t.pachura@wz.pcz.pl

##### 2. *Commission Members:*

The IGU Commission on the Dynamics of Economic Spaces (CDES) does not have a formal membership base. Anyone who agrees with the Commission's aims and is interested in economic geography issues can join the Commission. At the beginning of 2023, the email addresses were updated, according to which the number of active members, including new members, is 606. The members come from 39 countries. The range of countries has been

expanded to include Slovenia. The majority of members come from the UK and the USA (Fig.1).

Figure 1: Members of the IGU Commission on the Dynamics of Economic Spaces by country, as of 1 December 2023



## B. Meetings

### Annual Conference of CDES

a. Between 13-15 September 2023, the Commission held its traditional annual mini conference. To some extent, we made history because the Commission held its annual conference in Switzerland for the first time. The conference venue was the University of Bern. The topic of the conference was: 'RETHINKING THE ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY OF SMALLER URBAN PLACES: TRANSFORMATION AND WELL-BEING IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS'. The local organizer was the Institute of Geography and Center for Regional Economic Development of University of Bern in co-operation with the Anton Melik Geographical Institute, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana (Slovenia). There was an extremely high interest in the topic of the conference from all over the world. The more than 40 participants came from 17 countries (Brazil, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Hungary, Turkey, Slovenia, Slovakia, USA, Poland, Vietnam, China, Austria, Spain, Italy, Switzerland) (Photo 1).



Photo 1. Participants of the Bern Conference.

b. The conference focused on small and medium-sized towns, which undergo major socioeconomic transformations in these uncertain times (COVID-19 pandemic, fourth industrial revolution, migration, ageing population, climate change etc.), because we still know little about them. There is also little knowledge about the ways in which firms, communities, local actors in smaller urban places experience socioeconomic transformation and how they position themselves against larger centres of power in times of crises.

The 18 presentations examined the economic transformation and development of small and medium-sized towns from different aspects (regional economic development, industrial transformation, employment, entrepreneurship, green economy, craft breweries, strategies and policy making, etc.) and how they meet the new challenges. The range of presentations that examined the role of small towns in regional development was also very interesting, whether they can be considered 'regional engines or rather sponges'? The aims of the conference were

to draw attention to the changes taking place in the economy of small and medium-sized towns and to demonstrate the innovation models in the responses to the multiple crises, as well as the social, cultural and political consequences of all of this.

In addition to the presentations of the seven sessions, three key notes were also delivered, the titles of which were as follows: 1. Carlotta Fioretti: Small urban areas in the spotlight. Navigating policy challenges and opportunities for sustainable urban development in the EU. 2. Jörn Harsft: Transformations of what and how? Research perspectives on small and medium-sized towns in Europe. 3. Monika Litscher: Successful transformations in small and medium-sized cities: challenges and scope for action (Photo 2).



Photo 2. Discussion after presentation

On the first day, the conference participants also took part in a short city tour. On the last day of the conference, the theoretical knowledge was supplemented with a practical program. The participants visited the bilingual town located in the northwest of the Swiss capital. Biel/Bielle is a multicultural and innovative Swiss medium-sized town, where the participants learned about the transformation trends of the local industry and the renewal possibilities of old industrial areas, and also visited the local Innovation Park (Photo 3).

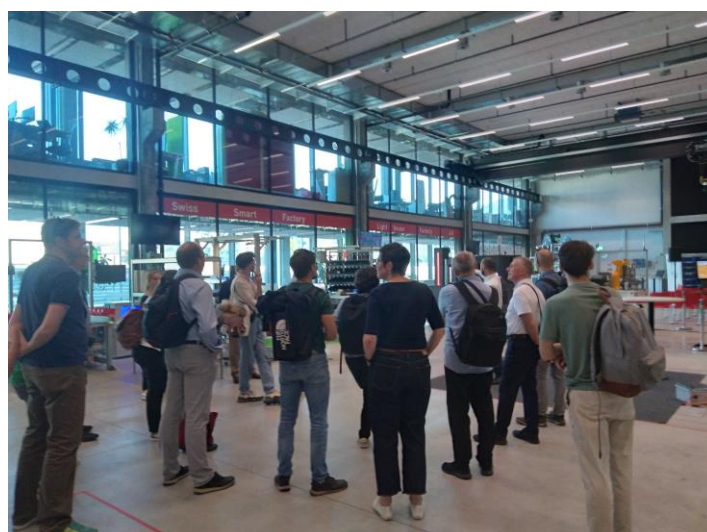


Photo 3. Visit in the Innovation Park in Biel

### Conference with CDES cooperation

a. The third Coastal Transitions conference ‘RE-IMAGINING COASTAL TRANSITIONS: DIVERSE BLUE ECONOMIES’ was held at the University of Connecticut’s Avery Point (UConn-Avery Point) campus in Groton, Connecticut November 8 – 10, 2023. The conference was organized by CDES in cooperation with the Commission of Coastal Systems. The local organisers were the Southern Connecticut State University and University of Limerick. The conference had 57 attendees representing 8 countries. Over the three-day conference, there were 9 academic paper sessions comprised of 27 papers and one transdisciplinary panel session (Photo 4).



Photo 4. Prof. Patrick Heidkamp - Opening Remarks

b. Sessions of academic papers focusing on ocean space, spatial conflict, justice in the Blue Economy, aquaculture, fisheries, and tourism etc. There was also an evening session, which was open to the public and staying true to the conference’s transdisciplinary focus included speakers from industry, the public sector and academia. Michaela Garland spoke about the Long Island Sound Ocean Cluster; Vincent Breslin, professor and chair of the Department of Environment, Geography and Marine Sciences announced the department’s new Coastal Resilience Master’s Program, and Connecticut State Representative André Bumgardner addressed the Blue Economy from a policymaking perspective, emphasizing the importance for Connecticut to consider issues of sustainability and social justice in the Blue Economy. Dr. Celine Germond-Duret presented her thought provoking and engaging keynote lecture titled *Diverse Blue Economies: The Case for Post-Technicality*. A transdisciplinary panel of experts discussed the importance of fostering Ocean Literacy for the Blue Economy.

Taken as a whole, the conference highlighted three key issues concerning the Blue Economy that emerged from the many papers and discussions over the three-day conference: spatial conflict, justice, and uncertainty—uncertainty about the many implications of an emerging Blue Economy and even still uncertainty in the definition of the Blue Economy itself. The conference also offered field trips, social and cultural programs for the attendees (Photo 5).



Photo 5. Coastal Transitions III- Field trip participants

**c. Further meetings planned:**

35<sup>th</sup> IGU International Geographical Congress 2024, 24-30 August 2024, Dublin, Ireland, where several sessions are organized under the umbrella of the Commission.

IGU CDES 2024 Mini-Conference, Italy (under organization).

IGU CDES 2025 Regional Conference, Fortaleza University, Fortaleza, Brazil, May 2025. (This is the first attempt to organize a conference focused on one region.)

IGU CDES 2025 Mini-Conference, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland. September 2025.

7th Global Conference on Economic Geography, Worcester, MA, USA. 2025.

**C. Networking**

**a.** In 2023, CDES collaborated with the Commission on Coastal Systems to organize the third conference on Coastal Transitions, which was held at the University of Connecticut in November.

**b.** There were no other collaborations with international, intergovernmental, and inter- and multi-disciplinary bodies.

**c.** There were no cooperative efforts with the International Science Council (ISC) and International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH) programs, etc.

**D. Publications**

**1. Regular Publications:**

Preparations for the special issue planned of the 2023 conference materials are in progress.

It is also important to note that it is a long tradition at CDES that a book and/or a special issue of an international peer-reviewed journal edited from the material of the annual conference is published. Recently, however, the demand from the participants that the manuscripts of the presentations be published only in journals has become more and more decisive. In fact, this also contributed to the fact that the previously renewed contract with Routledge Publishers was placed on a new basis from 2019. This means that since then the cooperation operates on an ad hoc basis, as needed.

## 2. Commission website:

The address of the Commission's website also changed in 2023. The new address is:

<http://igu-cdes.mtafki.hu/>

The Commission has also created websites in social media, their addresses are as follows:

<https://linkedin.com/company/igu-cdes>

[https://twitter.com/igu\\_cdes](https://twitter.com/igu_cdes)

<https://www.instagram.com/igu.cdes/>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61553866137765>

## E. Archival Contributions

Some photographs from the conferences organised by the CDES.

### Economic geography of smaller urban places conference (Bern, Switzerland):



The sessions of the third day were held in Biel



Conference dinner at Rosengarten Restaurant in Bern



Field trip in Biel: urban redevelopment

### Coastal Transitions III. Conference (Groton, USA):



2023 Coastal Transitions Panel Session



Conference Banquet & Banquet Speaker DJ King.