

**International Conference Economic development in Southern European
Regions: Policies and higher education
25th and 26th May 2017, Porto, Portugal**



Conference Overview²

The regions of the four southern countries of Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) share a significant number of socio-economic characteristics. In particular, these are regions which have been heavily assisted by European cohesion policies and yet were unable to catch up to the income and productivity levels of the rest of the EU, despite the relatively good performance of the most advanced areas of their respective countries. Many reasons exist for this lack of convergence, which can be found in poor human capital, institutions, accessibility, lack of private investments, bad policy implementation, etc.

The conference adopted a normative perspective, and started from the problems of the lagging regions of Southern European countries in order to develop the policy prescriptions that should be implemented in order to achieve sustainable development. In addition, the problems of these regions are not short-run, and will need to be tackled with effective policies in the medium-long run.

The papers analyzed a wide range of themes such as: The success or lack of success of policies implemented in the lagging regions of the four countries, Theory-based evaluations or quantitative counterfactual evaluations, Theories behind the success or failure of policy efforts in this type of regions, New policy perspectives or objectives, which should be implemented, The interrelation between national and European regional policies and how they can be coordinated and made more complementary, Prospective and policy components on the link between human capital, higher education (innovation) and regional development will be particularly welcome and Reports from on-going projects on Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that the conference supported by Belmiro de Azevedo Foundation, University of Porto, RSAI, CCDRN and Portuguese Association of Geographers.

² Conference overview by Christos Genitsaropoulos, RSI Journal