

EUROPEAN LECTURE SERIES**BEYOND METROPOLIS.****TERRITORIAL COHESION, TRANSITIONS AND PLANNING
IN SMALL TOWNS ACROSS EUROPE**

organized by the

AESOP Thematic Group Small Towns**with the contribution of 15 European universities**

Beyond metropolitan centres, small towns are confronted with a wide range of challenges and opportunities linked to demographic change, social inequalities, ecological transitions, changing patterns of housing and mobility, and evolving forms of territorial governance. At the same time, their size, the communities and their environments can provide specific resources and capacities for transition, adaptation and innovation.

This lecture series explores how small towns across Europe are responding to these transformations, and how planning can contribute to shaping their future. The contributions address small towns from different disciplinary, geographical and methodological perspectives, bringing together questions of territorial cohesion, social and spatial inequalities, education and local knowledge, climate resilience, ecological transition, attractiveness and identity. They also examine more specific challenges, including seasonality, depopulation, demographic ageing, housing, mobility, and the effects of crisis and wars.

Beyond the diversity of these situations, the presentations share a common interest in understanding how small towns can navigate complex transitions while maintaining their capacities to provide opportunities and quality of life for their inhabitants and contributing to territorial cohesion in Europe. They also question the ways in which planning policies, professional expertise and local actors can support — or sometimes constrain — these processes of change. By bringing together experiences from different European contexts, the contributions invite us to consider small towns as active places of transition and experimentation.

This European lecture series is organized by the Thematic Group Small Towns of the Association of European Schools of Planning for the second year. It brings together scholars and experts from a variety of disciplines across Europe. It addresses researchers, students and practitioners alike.



PROGRAMM - Mondays 16:30 - 18:00 p.m. (Central European Time)

Participation is online (Teams) via the following link: [AESOP Small Towns Lecture Series | Teams](#)

Date	Presentations	Moderation
02.11.2026	Common introduction by Prof. Dr. Mina di Marino and other representatives of the AESOP Thematic Group Small Towns Valeria Francioli, University of Florence (Italy) Small schools, big opportunities. How situated education to local knowledge regenerates Italian fragile territories Hanna Obracht-Prondzyńska, University of Gdansk (Poland) Measuring mitigation potential and climate vulnerability of small towns	Prof. Dr. Hélène Mainet, Dr. hab. Hélène Roth , University Clermont Auvergne (France)
09.11.2026	Prof. Marco Ladu, Università degli Studi e-Campus (Italy) Equal Rights, Unequal Places? A Constitutional Perspective on Territorial Cohesion in Small Towns Dr. hab. Christophe Quéva, Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University (France), Dr. Julien Puech, UMR Géographie-cités (France) Precarity and solidarity in small French towns (ANR PREcare): an approach based on mobility	Prof. Dr. Mina di Marino , Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), (Norway)
16.11.2026	Prof. Dr. Mina di Marino, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (Norway) Navigating and Co-creating Climate-Resilient Development in Small Towns around the Oslo Fjord Prof. Dr. Hélène Mainet, University Clermont Auvergne (France), Prof. Dr. Christophe Demazière, University of Lille (France) Are small town regeneration policies conducive to ecological transition?	Dr. Madeleine Wagner , Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany)
23.11.2026	Dr. Arturo Gallia, Università Roma Tre (Italy) Seasonality effects on societies living in small towns on Italian Small Islands Prof. Dr. Gro Marit Grimsrud, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Norway) Attractiveness, Identity and Sustainability: Dilemmas of Norwegian Small Town Development	Prof. Dr. Hélène Mainet , University Clermont Auvergne (France)
30.11.2026	Christoph Wessling, BTU Cottbus (Germany) Integrated and resilient urban development planning in times of war. The example of Ukrainian small towns Dr. Julie Chouraqui, University of Lille (France) From public to private expertise? Understanding the changes in expertise provision in French smaller cities' planning policies	Prof. UKEN, dr. hab. Agnieszka Kwiatek-Sołtys (Poland)
07.12.2026	Dr. Eleonora Guadagno, Università degli Studi e-Campus (Italy) Depopulation and unsustainability: the case of Campania Region (Italy) Prof. UKEN, dr. hab. Agnieszka Kwiatek-Sołtys & Dr. Agnieszka Brzosko-Sermak, University of the National Education Commission (Poland) Planning for the development of small towns in times of the demographic crisis	Dr. hab. Hélène Roth , University Clermont Auvergne (France)
14.12.2026	Dr. Madeleine Wagner, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany), Dr. Hab. Hélène Roth, University Clermont Auvergne (France) Housing structures in small towns in France & Germany: methodological challenges and geographical patterns Dr. Elisabeth Gruber, University of Innsbruck (Austria) Affordable Housing: Do Small Towns Matter? Perspectives from Austria Roundtable Discussion Representatives of the AESOP TG Small Towns and participants	Prof. Dr. Agnes Förster , RWTH Aachen (Germany), Christoph Wessling , BTU Cottbus (Germany)

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