Special Session ERSA 2017 CONGRESS "Social Progress for Resilient Regions"
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Mapping urban networks

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Cities of today are embedded into a network society, a rapidly changing environment and strong tensions caused by urban competition. Especially against the background of this increasing (urban/economic) competition it becomes obvious that "geography matters", even in a network society. However, the urban hierarchy and the position of a city within the network is not stable, e.g. the flexibility of urban networks (internal and external) is made obvious by the emerging of new regional centres.

This session aims at discussing and mapping the contemporary (global) urban development (increasing urban competition, innovation and transition processes, implications of geopolitical changes, etc.) and focuses on the understanding of complex socio-spatial interrelations. Cities on various spatial scales react differently to the above mentioned challenges in terms of urban strategies and policies. Thereby, the call for new governance instruments is intensified by a decline of established hierarchies and a simultaneous rise of complex and interconnected networks on various spatial and social scales. Which characteristics are inherent in city networks and what does that implicate for the positioning of cities, for urban planning as well as for governance and policy instruments? Furthermore, the session is also inviting presentations on new innovative methods of visualizing cities and urban networks (also addressing data issues), with focus on their implications for current policy debates.