

# URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Green and Just Transition in the Western Balkans

<b>Funded By</b>	Dipartimento DIST FONDAZIONE CRT CASSA DI RISPARMIO DI TORINO [Piva/CF:06655250014]
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<b>Contact</b>	
<b>Context of the research activity</b>	<p>The proposed doctoral fellowship aims at financing quali-quantitative research focusing on how climate change may impact on urban and regional development patterns in the Western Balkan Region and on the socioeconomic inequalities that already characterise the area. The results of the research will contribute to the theoretical consolidation of the just transition research field, and set the ground for the development of a green and just transition agenda for the Western Balkan Region.</p>
	<p>Climate change is expected to raise the Western Balkans temperature up to 4°C by the end of the century, followed by extreme weather events, increasing natural disasters, lower energy and water availability, biodiversity loss. This will have dramatic social and economic consequences for communities, contributing to worsen existing inequalities. These consequences are expected to be aggravated by poor institutional capacity, as in the countries of the Western Balkan Region the use of scientific knowledge in policy is low, leading to a widening gap between the EU and WB in the implementation of the EU Green Deal.</p> <p>Acknowledging the above, the proposed doctoral fellowship finances the development of quali-quantitative research aiming at the defining the boundaries of a green and just transition agenda for the Western Balkan Region. The selected doctoral student will engage in exploratory research on</p>

## Objectives

the possible impacts and costs of a just and green transition in the Western Balkans, and test and validate the results of the work through surveys, focus groups and participatory mapping exercise that directly engages policy and decision makers and practitioners. Moreover, the researcher will frame the analysis within a systematic comparative study of green transition processes and policies and how the latter positions vis-à-vis spatial planning and regional policies in selected EU countries.

The innovative potential of the research lies in the conjugation of the 'just' dimension into the EU Green transition strategy, as it has recently occurred through the launch of the Just Transition Mechanisms as a part of the European Green Deal, aiming to leave no person and no region behind in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy. The JTM Regulation entered into force on 1 July 2021 and most EU countries are currently preparing their territorial just transition plans and relating them to the EU cohesion policy programming period 2021-2027. By adopting a similar approach to the candidate countries of the Western Balkan Region, the research aims at contributing to the overall EU Green Deal goal to make Europe the first climate neutral continent in the world. Moreover, due to its timely and innovative nature, the results of the proposed doctoral research aims at positioning at the forefront of the international scientific debate on the matter, a result that will be achieved through their presentations to relevant international conferences (among others: AESOP, ERSA, RSA) and their publication in highly rated scientific journals (among others: European Planning Studies, Environment International, Regional Studies, Climate Policy, European Urban and Regional Studies). Finally, due to the active interaction with policy and decision makers in the Western Balkan Region, the research is expected to have a direct impact on policymaking and, in turn, on the Western Balkans' socioeconomic dynamics at large.

The research is fully in line with the objectives of DIST Excellence department programme, as its objectives clearly position within the scope of the SDG 11 – and in particular of the target 11.b, i.e. increasing the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters. At the same time, it is coherent with the mission indicated in DIST Strategic Plan 2020-2023, favouring not only the comprehensive study of urban and regional development dynamics, but also the development of innovative policy responses that approach the latter from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The development of the proposed doctoral research will be fully integrated within the activities of the research project GreenFORCE – Forcing Research Excellence for Green Transition in the Westrn Balkans, and pursued in close connection with the other research partners participating to the project (Co-Plan and POLIS University in Tirana – Albania, the University of Belgrade – Serbia, Centre for Economic Analysis in Skopje – North Macedonia, Nordregio in Stockholm – Sweden). As a consequence, the selected candidate is expected to develop at least 12 months of its doctoral work at the premises of one or more of the mentioned institutions. The selected

candidate will be involved in the activities run by the R3C – Responsible Risk Resilience Centre, that is active part in the GreenFORCE project, bringing an added value in terms of the multidisciplinary understanding of urban and regional resilience and climate adaptation and mitigation. In addition, the doctoral researcher will count on the support of DIST SDG1 Lab (also directly involved in the GreenFORCE project), dedicated to data collection, management, and spatial visualisation.

**Skills and  
competencies  
for the  
development of  
the activity**

The candidate possesses preliminary knowledge in the field of sustainability, energy transition and climate change studies, as well as in relation to the EU agenda and policies aiming at sustainability and green and just transition.

The candidate is fluent in written and spoken English.

Any knowledge of the spatial development dynamics that characterise the Western Balkan Region will constitute an asset, as will the knowledge of one or more languages spoken in the region.