

H2020 PROGRAMME - SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019

TITLE OF THE PROJECT:

Cities as mobility hubs: tackling social exclusion through 'smart' citizen engagement – SMARTDEST

KEYWORDS:

Urban areas, social exclusion, mobilities, tourism, destinations, externalities, smart cities, urban governance

SUMMARY:

The SMARTDEST project tackles the societal challenge of social inclusion and sustainability in European cities by developing innovative solutions in the face of the conflicts and externalities that are emerging as a result of new forms of 'mobile dwelling'. These encompass the rising cost of living, housing shortages, congestion of public services, the dislocation and marginalisation of low-income workers, and the transformation of place identities; all factors that point at avenues of exclusion of resident communities, and of the most vulnerable groups therein in particular.

Faced with this, SMARTDEST's overarching aim is to advance towards a European urban policy agenda which takes tourism and its social effects seriously. Its ambition is to fill a knowledge gap about the effects of tourism mobilities on urban inclusion and cohesion, and about the contextual, political and technological factors that determine fundamental variations in such effects; and to explore, design and test the validity of potential innovative pathways to mitigate social exclusion. The project thus includes four research packages that respectively (1) analyse the role of tourism mobilities, mobile dwelling and 'smart' systems as transformative force-fields for places; (2) excavate social exclusion issues and coping practices through the engagement with affected communities in case study cities; (3) develop *CityLabs* as sites for the participatory design of human-centred solutions (both in the digital and non-digital realm) which demonstrate value for the broad 'destination ecosystem' of case study cities and scale up as innovative systems of governance; (4) transfer the insights gained by the project at local level and extend its impacts through a dialogue with policy entities, concern communities, innovators and scientists throughout the EU policy space.

The project has a total budget of 3.1 M Euro and will run from January 2020 to December 2022. It also receives support from 4 case study cities preselected as 'test cases' (Barcelona, Venice, Jerusalem and Amsterdam), showcasing a broad range of issues for social inclusion related to tourism development and experimenting with 'smart solutions', while other 4 case study cities will be selected at later stages of the project.

SMARTDEST will be implemented by a consortium of 12 academic partners from 7 EU countries and 1 associated country, under the leadership of University Rovira i Virgili. The researchers involved across the consortium cover a broad range of academic specialities (geography, tourism, planning, sociology, economics, communication, anthropology) and have a long experience in collaborative research on related topics at international level.