



Regional Economic Policy in Europe

New Challenges for Theory, Empirics
and Normative Interventions

Edited by

ULRIKE STIERLE-VON SCHÜTZ,
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Preface*

Regional policy in Europe is entering a new phase. After the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, the programming period 2007 to 2013 is the first in which these new economic challenges are being addressed by European regional policy. With the corresponding new regulation, more responsibility is being granted to national authorities to implement policy in many regions via substantially increased funding. At the same time, funding levels allocated to some regions are shrinking as a result of these regions' successful convergence and/or due to the new economic landscape in a newly enlarged European Union. For both types of regions, this change brings some substantial challenges concerning three main questions: How can national policy best support the effectiveness of the European funds? What is the best possible strategy to achieve a maximum impact on growth and employment? How should regional policy be implemented on all governmental administrative levels?

Against such a background, this collection presents a selection of policy, empirical and theoretical perspectives on contemporary dimensions of regional economic policy in the European Union. It concentrates on three areas: (a) the dissimilarities and resulting convergence of disparate regions within the European Union; (b) the localisation of economic activities and how regions can understand and manage them; and finally, (c) the experiences and lessons from European regional policy.

While exploring EU cohesion and regional development more generally, the book presents a variety of perspectives on their effects and examines some Spanish, Belgian and Eastern European experiences on growth, human capital, foreign investment and technological spillover. In this edition, we have included substantive contributions from renowned government and research institutes based in numerous European countries and the US, which offer a diverse array of vantages on the challenges for theory, empirics and normative interventions.

This collection will be of particular interest to policy makers, planners and researchers seeking to understand regional economic development issues, existing policies and their implementation, along with various Member State experiences in the European Union.

This book is a compilation from the 7th Annual Conference of the International Network for Economic Research (INFER), in London during

the month of October 2005. Where appropriate, the papers have been updated before publication of this volume. We are indebted to all authors for their insightful contributions and for adhering to our tight deadlines in making this collection possible, as well as to Theresia van Reimersdahl for formatting this volume. We gratefully acknowledge the generous and important sponsorship from Carillion plc. Finally, we would like to thank all the participants in the conference for their fruitful contributions to intense discussions in a friendly and helpful atmosphere.

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NOTE

- * Opinions expressed here are exclusively those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the corresponding institutions where the authors are employed.