



## Cities as mobility hubs: tackling social exclusion through ‘smart’ citizen engagement

### A new research project funded by the Horizon 2020 Program, tackling the production of social exclusion in tourist cities, and seeking for solutions

In the last few years, **the increasing penetration of tourism in the everyday life of cities** has started to produce all sorts of conflicts, tensions, and paradoxes, like the rising cost of living and housing shortages, the congestion of public services and spaces, the increasing casualisation of work, the transformation of place identities ... What resident communities in the most visited cities in Europe once considered a welcome source of wealth and employment, and a point of pride, **is today considered a threat**.

SMARTDEST’s ambition is to contribute to the definition of **a policy agenda for cities that takes tourism mobilities seriously**, at all levels of government, and that brings out the potential of social innovation from citizen engagement for more resilient communities. It will thus set on **to study how urban inequalities and exclusion are produced, lived, and coped with** in cities that are the hub of tourism and other related mobilities. The current **COVID-19 crisis**, which has 'immobilised' societies and cities all over the world and cast great concerns on the future of tourism, presents a further intellectual challenge for this project: is the ‘slower’ and more regulated world of mobilities we are heading to, a more inclusive place? Or a more democratic one? Our researchers will be in the front line of this debate, and will be able to **track, inform and accompany the process of recovery**.

Our research will proceed from the European scale, seeking for patterns of places facing similar problems in a wide range of different geopolitical and sociocultural contexts; to the finer scale of eight case study cities, where it will engage with local communities as informants, as well as policy and industry stakeholders as participants in the **codesign of smart solutions**. The results will be shared with European stakeholders and concern communities, through an ambitious program of knowledge transfer events and constructive dialogues.

The project –running from January 2020 to December 2022– will be implemented by a consortium of 12 academic partners from 7 EU countries and 1 associated country, under the leadership of Rovira i Virgili University, and has a total budget of € 3.1 M.

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