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EURO_CITI

EUROpean CITIzenship practice

Political participation of transnational European senior migrants in Southern Spain

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Research activities located at the
Centre of Human and Social Sciences
Spanish Council for Scientific Research





Research in Europe
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PROJECT OUTLINE

The increasing migration of retired northern Europeans to the coastal regions of the Mediterranean, mainly to Spain, is a remarkable phenomenon within the context of European integration. In contrast to traditional labour migrants, the key protagonists of these movements can be characterized as (mostly) affluent senior citizens, who migrate/move in order to fulfil a leisure- and outdoor-oriented lifestyle after retirement. More than 750,000 welfare residents, coming principally from the former EU-15-member states, are currently registered at the coastal municipalities throughout Spain, and more than two thirds of them are in age of retirement. This “amenity migration” of senior EU residents is an important and rapidly increasing practical experience of a borderless Europe.

Many coastal municipalities in Andalusia, Valencia, the Balearics and the Canaries count large numbers and high proportions of foreign residents, in some case exceeding by far the figure for native inhabitants. These villages and towns are prototypes for wider areas of the Mediterranean coast and can be characterized as an important ‘social laboratory’ for both the empirical study of senior migrations and a theoretically focused research approach regarding the outcome of the European political integration on a local and regional sphere. Given the fact that many of these ‘European residents’, as they name themselves, belong to the economic elite and were successful professionals, they count on powerful tools, know-how and resources to integrate themselves and exercise leadership in a variety of areas within local politics, ranging from the formal representation in local parliaments to all kinds of informal participation settings, especially in areas or topics related to urban and regional planning.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

EURO_CITI provides an innovative and interdisciplinary research on the different forms of political participation of European senior migrants within the most important regional setting – the Spanish Mediterranean coast – discussing the practice of European citizenship both from conceptual and empirical frameworks. The general objective of EURO_CITI is to study the conditions and expressions, which lead towards and guide the political participation, involvement and citizenship practice of mainly retired foreign European residents who live in Spain. This responds both to a lack in theoretically inspired research and societal needs to learn about political activation and participation of foreigners, a central issue in European integration policies. Senior migration and political involvement of foreign residents is a matter of discussion and an important aspect of the practical and daily experience of the European Union. The project tackles this highly relevant topic and intends to provide theoretical and practical knowledge about problems and possibilities of handling the phenomenon, involving different disciplines within Social Sciences.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF EURO_CITI

- Contributions to the scientific and theoretical debate about European citizenship practice, with special reference to elderly migrants in ageing societies
- Support of academic and political debates about demographic transformation and political/social involvement of foreign senior residents
- Knowledge transfer to public policies at different geographical scales, including policies at the European level
- Knowledge transfer and extrapolation to other EU regions

