

## Closing Plenary

### City and regional policy futures

In these turbulent times, regional research is once again spearheading major efforts to provide the type of reliable, robust knowledge necessary to correct the opening of gaps between people and places which are emerging as winners and losers. The aim of this panel is to facilitate discussion and stimulate debate around whether existing policies and frameworks help (or hinder) cities and regions, or are there alternatives that we should be promoting.

A series of invited panellists will each deliver a short opening position statement. The panellists will approach this from their respective roles on the UK2070 Commission into city and regional inequalities (Gillian Bristow, Cecilia Wong), working for the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy in the European Commission (Lewis Dijkstra), and researching the circular economy and its implications for people and places (Marcin Dąbrowski). This will then be followed by open discussion among the panellists, prompted by questions from the audience.

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*Professor Cecilia Wong, The University of Manchester, UK*



**Cecilia Wong** is Professor of Spatial Planning, Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences and Fellow of the Royal Town Planning Institute. She is currently the Director of Spatial Policy and Analysis Lab of the Manchester Urban Institute. She has research expertise in strategic spatial planning, policy monitoring and analysis, urban and regional development, and housing and infrastructure planning. She is a commissioner of the UK 2070 Commission on Regional Inequalities and was a commissioner of the Labour Party's Lyons Independent Housing Review; a member of Department for

Communities and Local Government's expert panel on housing and planning; an expert panel member of the European Commission's Urban Audit II; and an expert group member of the UN-Habitat City Prosperity Index. She has recently completed a three-year project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council under the Newton Fund on examining China's urbanisation approaches and their impact on the suburban neighbourhoods.

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*Professor Gillian Bristow, Cardiff University, UK*

*Dr Lewis Dijkstra, European Commission, Belgium*



**Lewis Dijkstra** is the Head of the Economic Analysis Sector of the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy in the European Commission. He is the editor the Cohesion Report, which analyses economic, social and environmental issues in EU regions and cities. He is also a visiting professor at the London School of Economics.

He works closely with the OECD, the UN, the World Bank, the European Environmental Agency, the Joint Research Centre and Eurostat. His recent work covers topics such as a global definition of cities and rural areas, measuring transport performance, the geography of EU discontent, quality of government and gender equality. He holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning from Rutgers University, New Jersey, an MSc in Urban and Regional Planning from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a BA in Political Science from the University of Ghent, Belgium.

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*Dr. Marcin Dąbrowski, TU Delft, The Netherlands*



**Marcin Dąbrowski** is an assistant professor at the Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology. In the past he worked as a researcher at the University of Strathclyde (EPRC), the University of Vienna and as a consultant for the OECD. His research interest span across many topics related to governance of territory, from regional strategies for circular economy (H2020 REPAiR), to governance of urban climate change adaptation policies and Europeanisation of spatial planning (ESPON COMPASS). He has also published extensively on EU Cohesion Policy (e.g. H2020 COHESIFY). He is the lead editor of the Early Career Section of *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science* journal and co-organiser of the Regional Studies Association's

Research Network on EU Cohesion Policy. His academic achievements brought him several personal grants and awards (e.g. Urban Studies Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, Urban Knowledge Network Asia fellowship, RSA Early Career Excellence Award).