About regions with top performers

The annual conference of the European Regional Science Association (ERSA) was hosted by the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pécs in 2022, between 23-26th August. The focus of the event was mainly on the exploration of spatial disparities caused by digitalization, but also focused on the impact of the coronavirus epidemic. The theme approaches this issue from three main perspectives: networks, businesses and regional development - we spoke to two of the organizers, Dr László Szerb and Dr Zoltán Gál (Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pécs) about the conference and its potential impact.

How often is a conference of this importance held at the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pécs?

László Szerb:

We strive to organize an international conference at least every two years, but there has never been a conference of this importance in the history of our Faculty.

Zoltán Gál: This is the 61st conference of ERSA, which is being organized in Hungary for the fourth time, but the last time was in 1985, and all of them have been held in the capital city - this is the first one in the countryside. Before COVID, the last conference was held in Lyon, and after a two-year absence, we were able to meet the cream of the profession in person again. 400 speakers attended in person over the three days of the conference, but we had an extra 310 participants in the online session. We have separated the sessions so that there were purely traditional sessions as well as purely online sessions over the five days.

Why did Pécs get the opportunity?

L.Sz. It is a professional recognition and the applicants have passed a preliminary screening.

Z.G: In 2017, we spoke to the President of ERSA at a conference in Groningen, and we only presented our intention informally with Attila Varga, who personally supported the idea. Originally we wanted to hold it in 2020, but the event was postponed due to COVID.