

Changing small towns

Guest editors:

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Different professions have varying definitions of small towns, and even geographical literature offers diverse perspectives on them. Adding spatial and geographical dimensions to this diversity, what seems to be a simple phenomenon becomes quite complex and colourful. Small towns are prevalent worldwide, with a special significance in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Some boast rich cultural heritage and a strong identity as historic places, while others, once more prominent, have now been relegated to the small-town category. A certain type of small towns was established during the Soviet era and continues to maintain an outdated post-industrial atmosphere. Many small towns have only recently seen urbanisation (in the past three decades) through urban sprawl or tourism-based developments. Additionally, some small towns have acquired urban status through formal reclassification by the central government, despite their rural character. Aside from the wide variety of small towns stemming from different origins, local demographic, social, and political processes, influenced by globalization, deindustrialization and reindustrialization trends, have led to diverse developmental trajectories for small towns.

Our objective is to reveal the distinctive routes of small towns in Europe, with a specific focus on the CEE region. As Europeans we consider the small-town phenomenon to be characteristic of our continent, we are aware that in many parts of the world, from Patagonia to Siberia, from Lapland to the Cape, we find spaces and communities that have followed rather similar paths or are in a comparable situation, influenced by local or even global processes.

The Journal for Geography – Revija za geografijo is excited to announce a call for papers for a special thematic issue focusing on "small towns". We are inviting researchers and practitioners from all fields of geography and other spatial sciences to contribute original research articles, reviews, and case studies that explore various dimensions of small towns across the globe. This issue aims to delve into the diverse aspects of small towns as spatial-administrative units, local communities, demographic categories, heritage and built-up areas, or specific development issues.

We encourage submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Defining small towns from various aspects in different geographic locations
- The changing role of small towns in the urban networks
- Global vs local processes
- Local communities, common interests and conflicts
- Changing urban character of small towns
- Development routes of small towns
- Shrinking and restructuring
- The resilience of small towns

Submission Guidelines:

- Submissions should be original, scientifically rigorous, and contribute to the field of spatial sciences.
- Manuscripts must conform to the Journal's guidelines.
- All submissions will undergo peer review for their scientific quality and relevance to the issue's theme.
- Manuscripts should be submitted via the journal's online submission platform (accessible at: <https://journals.um.si/index.php/geography/>).

Important Dates:

- Abstract submission deadline: 30 March 2025
- Manuscript submission deadline: 15 April 2025
- Expected publication date (online): 30 June 2025
- Expected publication date (printed): September 2025