

Social Research Call

Title:

Taxation and high-income Mobility



Acronym: TAXMOB2026

Project leader: Dirk Foremny

Host organisation: FUNDACIÓN PRIVADA INSTITUT D'ECONOMIA DE BARCELONA

Main purpose of the project: This project examines Spain's special tax regime for displaced workers, known as the "Beckham Law," to understand who benefits from its fiscal advantage. It studies whether the regime attracts high-income foreign workers, how the tax benefit is shared between workers and employers, and whether it creates spillovers to the local population. across various dimensions.

Design/methodology/approach: The project uses rich administrative microdata from the Spanish Tax Agency and Social Security records. It applies quasi-experimental econometric methods and exploits variation created by the introduction of the regime, regional PIT differences after tax decentralization, and the optional nature of the scheme.

Potential results: The project is expected to estimate how strongly high-income foreign workers and which type of workers respond to the tax advantage offered by the Beckham Law. It may show whether employers capture part of the fiscal benefit through lower gross wages. The project may also identify wage effects on non-eligible coworkers within the same firms and possible upward pressure on housing prices in areas with high exposure to beneficiaries.

Social relevance of the research: The project addresses a central policy question: whether preferential tax regimes for high-income mobile workers are efficient and socially fair. By providing rigorous evidence, it will support a more informed public debate on tax justice, inequality, and international tax competition.

Originality/value of the project: The project offers novel evidence on the incidence of a preferential personal income tax regime, and goes beyond migration responses by analyzing how the tax advantage is divided between workers and firms and how this varies with bargaining power and labor-market conditions. It is also among the first projects to study spillover effects on the local population.