The winner of the 2017 Hewings Award is Professor Riccardo Crescenzi from the London School of Economics.

Riccardo was appointed as a Full Professor at the London School of Economics at the age of 37 – becoming one of the youngest ever serving Full Professors at the LSE. He is affiliated with the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and he has contributed to the activities of various Harvard Centres (Taubman Centre for State and Local Government under the sponsorship of Professor Ed Glaeser as well as the Centre for International Development). He is the current holder of a European Research Council (ERC) Grant, the most prestigious and competitive funding scheme for scientific research in Europe (this funding scheme is currently supporting 8 Nobel Prize winners and three Field Medal holders). So far he has published 1 book and 37 articles in international peer-reviewed journals that have been cited more than 2,100 times (Google Scholar) and have been extensively featured in the media (including the Financial Times and The Economist Intelligence Unit). His research has attracted the attention of virtually all international organisations in Europe and beyond. He has provided academic advice to, amongst others, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Parliament, the European Commission (DG Regional Policy), the Inter-American Investment Bank (IADB) and various national and regional governments. His work has received numerous prizes and awards and he is the 2016 recipient of the ‘Talented Young Italians Award’ for ‘Research and Innovation’, "in recognition of outstanding research accomplishments".

Riccardo’s research in Regional Science is at the intersection between geography, economics, innovation studies, and public policy, extensively contributing to the cross-fertilisation of these (often disconnected) disciplines. His work is focused on four key themes: the spatial and geographical determinants of innovation; the link between innovation, socio-institutional conditions, and regional economic performance; the formation, structure, and impact of local and regional development policies; and the analysis of both the location decisions and the local impacts of Multinational Firms. All these strands of research are at the very centre of lively scholarly and policy debates that reflect the generalized dissatisfaction with the current understanding of local and regional economic development and with existing policies for less dynamic and deprived areas. His distinctive contribution to this debate has consisted in: a) the re-conceptualisation of fundamental regional development questions: for example on the link between innovation, geography, and economic performance or on the sub-national drivers of the geography of global value chains; b) the translation of fundamentally qualitative concepts into measurable indicators, leading to new empirical evidence on innovation and regional development in Europe, U.S.A., China, India, Russia, and Latin America. This reconceptualization of questions and the expansion of measurable indicators has attracted the attention of several international institutions (e.g. European Commission, European Parliament, European Investment Bank, OECD, UNDP, Inter-American Development Bank), influencing, in some cases, their ‘diagnostic’ and ‘policy’ approach; c) the application of rigorous quantitative methods to the identification of both causal effects and transmission channels of key regional development processes in order to inform evidence-based policies.

In consideration of his truly exceptional achievements, his outstanding and ground-breaking contributions to Regional Science research and his remarkable citizenship in the Regional Science community Riccardo Crescenzi fully deserves the 2017 Geoffrey J.D. Hewings Award.