

Planning the Romanian Urban System: from City to City-Region

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ABSTRACT

Cities are increasingly being seen as critical to the economic success or failure of regions, states and nations. Despite increasing globalization, many experts see economic growth being driven by these 'global city regions', which have strong concentrations of emerging and traditional industries, supportive infrastructure and a highly educated population. Despite globalization the local clusters are even more critical to national competitiveness than ever before. As a result of their economic success, the scale and growth of some cities is unprecedented. It is creating challenges to urban planners and the urban infrastructure never seen before. In this rapidly urbanizing world, cities are not just important for achieving sustainable economic growth but also achieving sustainable development.

The last EU's enlargement of 1 January 2007 put Romania and its regions in the middle of these general problems presented. This paper will try to expose the general context of this problem in Romania, with comparative examples, but especially to point the effects of regional economic development on urban social issues, important point for the sustainability. Is Romania following an example in its regional policy or is creating its own model of sustainable region? In the same time, another critical problem is: how to avoid the creation of another "French desert" model, seeing that Bucharest, by creation its metropolitan area, seems to rewrite the story of Ile-de-France region.

There are two essential questions that I would like to highlight in my paper:

1. What city form is creating this Romanian regional urban development? Are the functions changing?
2. Did all the Romanian cities undergo a similar transformation as Bucharest, the capital?

This paper will contribute to the understanding of planning the urban system in a former soviet state.

Key Words: Romanian urban system, cities, urban development