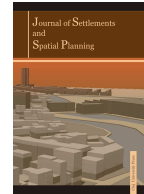




Centre for Research on Settlements and Urbanism

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The Resolution of the Sixth Edition of the
International Conference
Rural Space and Local Development
with the theme
Peripheral Rural Areas
between Certain Existence and Uncertain Development

Between 23rd and 27th of July 2014, Faculty of Geography, Department of Human Geography and Tourism, Centre for Research on Settlements and Urbanism, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca organized the 6th edition of the International Conference Rural Space and Local Development focused on research subjects regarding peripheral rural areas. This year's conference is held in the University centre of Cluj-Napoca, as well as in other three locations represented by the villages of Izvoarele, Jidvei and Cetatea de Baltă in Alba County. These three locations reflect the particular traits of peripheral rural areas in Transylvania region and they were key locations in the conference field trip.

A significant number of specialists in the field registered to lecture their research results in our conference. They represented research institutions from 18 countries in Europe, Asia and Central and South America as follows: Germany, Italy, Hungary, The Netherlands, Spain, Ireland, Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia, Poland, Japan, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, India, Egypt and Iran together with 6 universities and research centres in Romania.

The official opening ceremony consisted in speeches delivered by academics and representatives of the local, county, national and European administrative bodies that supported our initiative: Acad. Prof. Dr. Ioan Aurel POP, the rector of the Babeş-Bolyai University, Prof. dr. Dănuț PETREA, the Dean of the Faculty of Geography, Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA, Prof. Dr. Em. Vasile SURD, President and Founder of the International Conference Rural Space and Local Development, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, and director of the

Centre for Research on Settlements and Spatial Planning, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA, Dr. Ștefan DEZSI, the Head of the Department of Human Geography and Tourism, Faculty of Geography, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA, Mrs. Alina Ștefania UJUPAN, Member of Cabinet of the Commissioner Dacian Cioloș, Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission, Brussels, Dr. Emil BOC, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca Municipality, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA, Dipl. Arch. Claudiu SALANȚĂ, Chief Architect, Cluj County Council, ROMANIA, and Ec. Ioan NEAG, Chief Administrative Officer, General Administrative Directorate of Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA.

The sixth edition of our conference focused on the subject of *Peripheral Rural Areas between Certain Existence and Uncertain Development*.

We chose the debate topic for this year's edition of the conference driven by the increased spatial and economic polarization, phenomenon that becomes more obvious both in Romania and in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, this process triggered the expansion of rural areas with high peripheral level where the development process has either stalled or is almost nonexistent. Therefore, our conference sought to pinpoint this intriguing issue and try to come up with solutions for local development.

The keynote lectures focused on representative approaches and examples of good practices in researching the peripheral rural areas with concluding remarks towards their economic management. It was proved that smart specialization would be one of the most reliable tools for sustainable economic growth in peripheral areas, along with innovation as a strategy for

the socioeconomic development of the isolated rural areas. However, leaving aside the need for development and economic growth, we should also bear in mind that tradition and cultural heritage preservation still remains a milestone of the rural communities inhabiting rural areas.

The eight subjects of the panel sessions were as follows:

Panel session 1. Theoretical and methodological approaches of the concept of peripheral rural areas.

Panel session 2. Local communities in peripheral rural areas. Status, dynamics, tendencies.

Panel session 3. Environmental reconstruction and preservation in peripheral rural areas.

Panel session 4. Economic activities in peripheral rural areas.

Panel session 5. Policies and practices for the development of peripheral rural areas.

Panel session 6. Tourism – alternative economic activity in peripheral rural areas.

Panel session 7. Traditional vs. Modern in Peripheral Rural Areas.

Panel session 8. Management of Settlements and Resources in Peripheral Rural Areas.

The conference and the highly valuable scientific papers lectured demonstrated that peripheral rural areas have everywhere represented a key issue and a key type area that may hold undoubted natural and cultural heritage and specific resources that can be economically employed.

In the panel session papers lectured showed both practical and theoretical studies with illustrative case studies on decentralization, sustainability, landscape and population dynamics, accessibility and spatial transformation, particularities of the rural areas

and their local communities regarding lifestyle, education, economic activities, traditions and cultural heritage.

We thus debated on where peripheral areas start specifically and tried to understand them better, by narrowing down some of their specific traits given by the behaviour of the local communities and territory and see not only their disadvantages of location but also their advantages that could be employed, managed and valorised.

Therefore, peripheral rural areas proved to be a very rich topic to be analysed, and the diversity of studies was high, thus making us believe that this edition of our international conference on Rural Space and Local Development could be a starting point of new studies by sharing our ideas and research results on the evolution and revolution of peripheral rural areas.

Scientific experience and good practices in Romania have to be consistent with the not delayed support for the start up of an optimal management of peripheral rural areas in our country.

If we do not know what should be done, it means that we need to look at the good practices abroad and learn from them in order to better exploit the advantages of peripheral rural areas and minimize the disadvantages for a better economic outcome.

July 27th, 2014

Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA

International Conference
Rural Space and Local Development