



Foreword

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The second international convention “**The Rural Space and Regional Development**” comes as an enlightenment of the changes that have occurred regionally and locally inside the rural space and different other parts of the planet and the particular ways in which they sustain or cancel the regional development processes. Recognized as a peripheral space, the rural presents itself in various shapes. In the developed world, demographically at least, its relevance is drastically diminished; while in the former East-European communist block, it still has a significant demographic potential, capable to strongly influence the political and administrative decisions. Thus, in this last case, the territorial development, in general, and the regional one, in particular, can't be accomplished in conditions of normality, without taking into consideration the sustaining capacity and the participation of the rural population. In addition, in some states of the former East-European block, including Romania, we observe an obvious process of ruralization, as a result of industrial collapse of the major urban centers. That's why the rural space, besides its prime role as a food source, must be looked upon in a multifunctional context as:

- buffer space for urban development;
- ecological and leisure support;
- residential space with ever-improving conditions;
- location for various industries and services that no longer “fit” in urban space;
- activities related to agro-tourism;
- cradle to traditions and national heritage

The historic experience of the modern world facilitates the choice and embracement of the proper ways of development, financially supported by the European Union.

My true wish is that the papers you have prepared will meet this challenge. Your work will also serve as homage to the efforts of our colleagues in the U.I.G committee, who thoroughly and devotedly have organized the 30th International Congress of Geography that will take place in Glasgow, on August 2004.

These being said, I hereby declare open the proceedings of the 2nd International Convention “The rural space and regional development”, Cluj-Napoca – Micesti – Baia-Mare – Vadul Izei open.

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