

## 8 Urban Network in the Carpathian area

### 8.1 The situation and problems

Urban Network and Urbanisation in the Carpathian area were determined by history and geography:

One of the main factors was the peripheral situation of the Carpathians. The Carpathians constituted the borders of the old Hungarian Kingdom and therefore the Carpathians were per definitionem the peripheries of the kingdom. But they were per definitionem the borders and therefore the peripheries of the neighbouring countries, of Poland and of the Romanian principalities as well.

Now, the Carpathians constitute the border between Poland and Slovakia, between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, partly between Romania and Ukraine. The Ukrainian Carpathians constitute not any more the border line to Hungary and Slovakia, but they are in an absolutely peripheral situation within Ukraine. In Romania, The Carpathians are now in the centre of the country, but some features of peripherality have been retained. They constitute everywhere the borders of the countries (judets) and of the NUTS2 regions. Furthermore, they represent until now a dividing line in the country both historically, sociologically, politically and even in administrative systems.<sup>3</sup>

The peripheral situation was reflected in the urban system. All the big urban centres, from where the Carpathian area was governed and controlled (Vienna, Budapest, Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest) were outside of the proper Carpathian area. The largest cities in the wider Carpathian region, Cracow and Lviv had a population of 154 thousand and 176 thousand respectively in 1900. At the same time Vienna had 2 million, Budapest 1 million inhabitants. The other cities in the Carpathian region were even smaller: Bratislava had 62 thousand, Timisoara 72 thousand, Uzhgorod 14 thousand inhabitants (*Figure 10*).

#### 8.1.1 Small towns

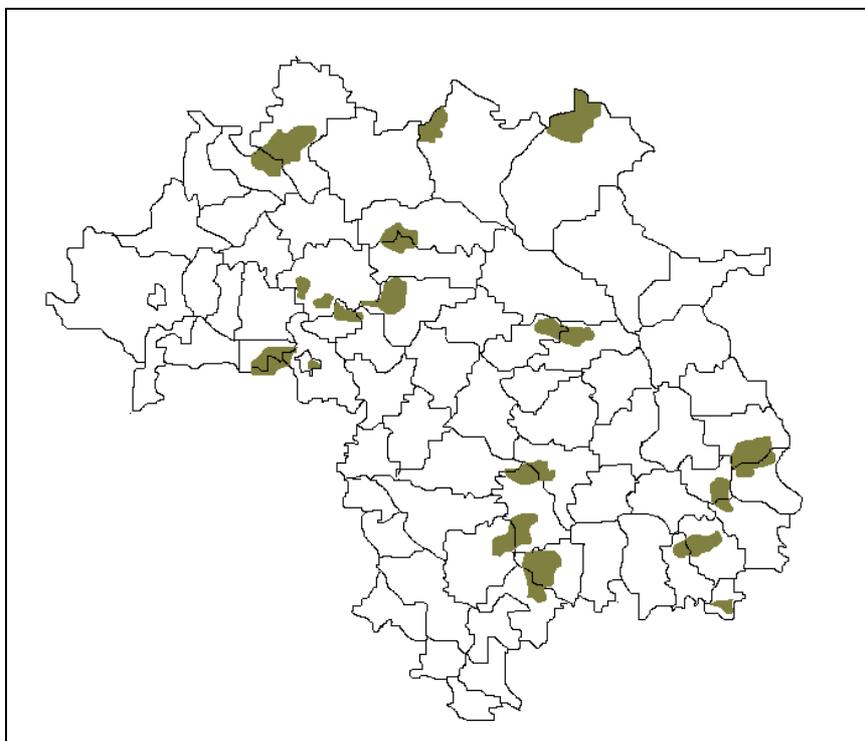
In the same period, there was a dense and lively small town network in the Carpathian area. These small towns were rather poor and there was much room for improvement of the infrastructure, but they had their self government, cultural and town embellishment societies and other active civilian organisations. Their economic base was trade, small-scale industry and agriculture. The large majority of the population lived, however, in villages, rural areas.

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<sup>3</sup>For example, until 1999, when the Act on Cadastre and Real Estate Publicity became effective, Romania had a dual land registration system: the land book system in Transylvania, and the land inscription/transcription system in the other parts of the country.

Figure 10

*Urban network in the Carpathian area (2004)*



Source: Maciej Borsa, Urbanproject (Romania).

One important feature of the urbanisation of the Carpathian area was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the ethnic composition of urban and rural population was rather different. In the Polish Carpathian region, a substantial part of urban population, especially in smaller towns (the so called “shtetls”) was Jewish, while the rural population was Polish and Ukrainian. In the Ukrainian Carpathian region, a large part of urban population was Jewish and Polish and of rural was Ukrainian. In Slovakia, urban population was German, Jewish and Hungarian, rural population Slovak in majority. In the Transylvanian area, urban population was mostly Hungarian, German and Jewish and of rural was Romanian and Hungarian.

During and after World War II huge and dramatic changes occurred in the number and composition of urban population of the Carpathian area. The Holocaust resulted in the disappearance of the vast majority of the Jewish population from Carpathian towns, through both extermination and mass exodus. German population also disappeared from Polish, Czech, Slovak and Romanian towns through

expulsion and emigration. The Polish population emigrated from the Ukrainian towns, a part of the Hungarian population emigrated from the Transylvanian cities and towns. Several towns have lost more than half of their population. Large cities have recovered (in terms of population numbers) rather soon. Some small towns however did not recover (at least not until the present time).

Small towns have been disadvantaged also through other measures in the “socialist” period:

- These small (or larger) towns were formerly the scenes of the exchange of mountain products and plain products. They represented the markets of both types of agricultural products. At the same time, farmers have spent their money, received for their products, in the shops of these towns. It was the main function of these cities along the “market Chain (line)”. After the collectivisation of agriculture, they lost their agricultural market function, especially cities in the foreland of the Carpathians. The products of collectivised agriculture were sold straight through the central procurement system of the state, while avoiding the markets of small towns.
- Industrialisation started in the larger cities. Until the large cities could absorb industrial investment and their labour resources were not exhausted, most large industrial investments were allocated to larger cities. Only when these resources were fully exhausted, central ministries were forced to allocate investments also to smaller towns. These investments most frequently created “one-factory towns” or they belonged to the armament industry, and small towns served as the “hiding place” of these industries.
- The administrative role and function of cities and towns was extremely important in the socialist period. In a highly hierarchical society, where all directives and all resources are coming from up to down, it is a critical question, where a person or a local government, a city is situated within the hierarchy. Those on the upper levels, dispose of the development resources and they allocate them among the lower level organisations rather arbitrarily, frequently following self-interest. Cities which had some regional administrative function, could distribute the resources, received from the higher level, so, that their own share was disproportionately high. Towns without this administrative position were defenceless against such acts.
- After 1945, Carpathian countries had to take over the Soviet territorial administrative system. It had 4 levels: national level, regional level, district level, local level. District level was immediately over the level of villages, the seats of the districts were in the smaller towns. District level was represented in Poland by the “powiats”, in Czechoslovakia by the “okres”, in Ukraine and Romania by the “rayons”, in Hungary by the “járás”. Obviously, it can be discussed whether this Soviet type administrative system was suit-

able for the smaller Carpathian countries. Nevertheless, the “district seat” role ensured for smaller towns a central function and the associated jobs and resources.

- In the 1970s, however, several Carpathian countries transformed their territorial-administrative system. They established smaller regions, and – simultaneously – they abolished the district level (in Poland the powiats, in Romania the rayons, in Hungary the járás). It meant that small towns have lost their administrative centre function and with it the jobs, and other associated institutions. They have lost the function of resource allocation and could not favour their seat town in this allocation process. Small towns preserved this function only in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In the latter countries small towns did not decline so dramatically than in the other Carpathian countries.
- The 1999 administrative reform in Poland re-established the powiats. But in the 25–30 years meantime, since the abolishing the powiats, local governments (Gminas) have been consolidated, strengthened and upgraded in function. So, powiats could not regain all the functions and power what they had enjoyed before.

### 8.1.2 *Large and medium cities*

Larger towns, with administrative centre function – in contrast to small towns – grew and developed very rapidly. The main driving force of this growth was industrialisation and all other development aspects (housing construction, infrastructure development) were the concomitants of industrialisation and administrative function.

According to Table the most dynamic was the growth in the Romanian cities. If we disregard the specific development of Suceava,<sup>4</sup> the 2000 population of the big provincial cities was 3–4–5 times higher than 50 years ago. Similar high rate of urbanisation did not take place in other parts of Europe. It was related also to the collectivization of agriculture, which urged many farmers, peasants for leaving rural areas and fleeing into cities (*Table 4*).

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<sup>4</sup>The capital city of Bukovina was Chernivtsi. After World War II Bukovina was divided between Ukraine and Romania and Chernivtsi was in the Ukrainian half. Suceava became the capital of the Romanian Bukovina and this administrative change accelerated the growth of the city tremendously.

Table 4

*Carpathian cities with the most dynamic population growth 1950–2000*

City	Population 1950	Population 2000	Growth, %
	in thousands		
Suceava (RO)	10.1	117.6	1064
Baia Mare (RO)	28.0	150.0	436
Bacau (RO)	39.0	197.2	433
Pitesti (RO)	38.3	186.0	386
Kosice (SK)	60.7	242.0	299
Brasov (RO)	84.0	310.0	269
Piatra Neamt	34.9.0	124.0	255
Uzhgorod (UA)	35.0	118.0	237
Ivano-Frankivsk (UA)	65.0	218.0	235
Timisoara (RO)	112.0	330.0	194
Cluj-Napoca (RO)	117.9	329.0	179

*Source:* National statistical yearbooks.

This high rate of urbanisation, compounded by socialist ideology, economic policy and urban planning, resulted in the total transformation of urban structure:

- City centres were totally neglected: urban dwellings were nationalised and neither the state authorities nor the dweller cared for their maintenance; commercial banking was abolished, trade was the “for the time being necessary evil”, tourism was strictly restricted. So the traditional functions of downtown areas disappeared and it led to a dramatic decline and deterioration of most city centres;
- For the new immigrants huge multi-storey housing estates were built on the periphery of cities. These housing estates, provided with the basic comfort, meant a huge social rise for the masses, coming from the rural areas. In some cities, there was a strange segregation: new immigrants lived in new flats outside the original housing assets, while the – surviving and remaining – original urban population lived in the deteriorating dwellings of the central city, frequently without comfort.
- State housing construction was restricted to large cities. The applied technology – the prefabricated panel construction system – could be economically applied only in mass production. So, most small towns were saved from this technology and preserved their traditional image. But there were some exceptions. In Slovakia, for example, panel technology was applied for housing construction also in smaller cities as well. Some of these towns now look, as if they were surrounded by a high city wall made of 10-storey panel houses.

After the political and economic change in 1990–91, the functions and internal structure of Carpathian cities changed fundamentally:

- Downtown streets and squares have been appreciated. New banks built their headquarters or moved to old valuable but deteriorated buildings after reconstructing them. Business firms occupied the flats in the renewed buildings. Residential use was crowded out by business utilisation because for the owners of dwellings it was more profitable to let their buildings to business firms and move to the green areas. Shops and shopping streets were also renewed and now they offer the international selection of goods.
- At the same time, large housing estates started to deteriorate and lose their former social prestige. They started to deteriorate, because they were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Now they are nearing the time when they need to be renovated and neither the technologies, nor the financial resources are available for the renovation. Furthermore, the original problems of the technology come now to the surface: poor isolation, rigid, unchangeable structures, etc. The original dwellers became old or they left these houses. The new dwellers are of lower social status. This situation calls a vicious circle into action which leads to the decline of the social prestige of these estates and accelerates the exchange of the inhabitants. (In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, this downgrading of large housing estates did not happen or only to a much lesser extent.)
- In contrast to the previous period, the population of most Carpathian cities started to decline in the last decade. Practically, population numbers declined in all cities, but the largest cities suffered the largest losses of population: the number of inhabitants of Budapest decreased from 2 million to 1,7 million in 15 years. The population loss of Bucharest is similar. The population decline has several reasons: first, the natural increase is smallest or even negative in the large cities. Equally important is the migration. Suburbanisation accelerated in these countries in the last decades. Well-to-do and middle class people moved to the surrounding suburban area into more agreeable, quieter and healthier environment. On the other hand, many recent unskilled city dwellers, who have lost their jobs in the cities and hoped to earn their living in privatised agriculture, returned to their rural home. Other poorer people, or old pensioners, who could not afford the increasing housing-rents and the charges for urban services, moved also to rural areas. Finally, in the last decade, there was a huge emigration from some Carpathian countries and city inhabitants were mostly affected by this movement. More than 1 million Polish and more than two million Romanian citizens are working in Western European countries and it is also one reason for the decline of urban population. Overly large decline in population may cause serious problems. The per

capita costs of urban communal services may increase on the one hand. On the other hand, incomes of the city from local taxes and fees might decrease. These two tendencies might result in the worsening budgetary balance of cities.

Finally national capitals, metropolitan centres might be the main beneficiaries of system change. During “socialism” they were hermetically isolated from Western metropolises, cut off from the international trends of innovation, fashion, culture and thinking. They were the main losers of the centrally directed socialist system and gradually sank to the level of a grey, provincial city. After the system change, they renewed their European and worldwide connections, they were the main location of international business, banking, commercial firms, FDI was directed mostly to these cities and to their surroundings.

For the whole of the Central European space and for the countries these were good news. For the Carpathian region and for other peripheral regions it was blessing and evil at the same time. The extreme centralisation of the most international and most profitable developments meant that peripheral regions were totally excluded from these developments and they did not enjoy the advantages of the systemic change, they felt, however, its drawbacks. For example, in the 1990s, economic growth was restricted in Romania and Hungary only to the capital regions, all other regions had negative growth rates. All banks in Hungary have their headquarters in the capital city Budapest. For a long time, FDI stopped at the capital cities and did not move further into the peripheral regions. Now that the absorption capacity of capital cities is nearly exhausted, capital looks for other location for investment, but this 15–17 years delay had serious negative consequences in most Carpathian regions.

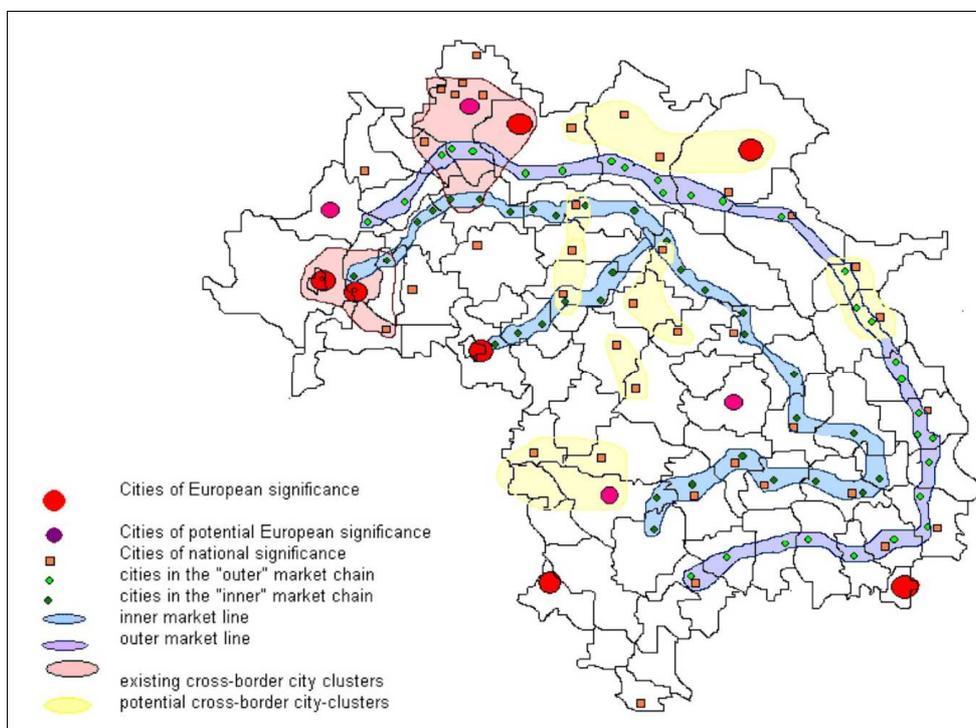
## **8.2 Policy recommendations concerning the urban network of the Carpathian area**

### *8.2.1 Establishing a new urban-rural relationship*

The establishing of a new urban-rural relationship is one of the main policy aims of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) approved in 1999, in Potsdam by the ministers of EU member countries responsible for spatial planning and development. But for the Carpathian regions this aim has a special significance and interpretation. This special aspect could not be included into the ESDP, since the Carpathian countries were not EU members in 1999, at the time of the preparation and approval of the ESDP (*Figure 11*).

Table 11

*Urban network in the Carpathian area (2004)*



Source: Maciej Borsa, Urbanproject (Romania).

The nearly 50 years of “socialist planned economy” created a specific hostile relationship between urban and rural areas. The first reason for it was the absolute priority of industrialisation which was implemented partly through the large scale transfer of resources from rural areas and agriculture to urban areas and industry. The second reason was the extreme centralisation and central distribution and re-distribution of financial and other resources of development. Under these circumstances and given the amount of resources, urban areas could receive more only at the expense of rural areas and rural areas could receive more only at the expense of urban areas. This distributional controversy existed at national level, at regional level and at district level as well. The losers of this controversy were mostly – but not always – the rural areas. But in any case, both parties were always convinced that something had been taken from them, which they had a rightful claim for.

Not only financial resources, but the right to govern them was also taken from several rural settlements. Several villages were organised into one larger adminis-

trative unit. School, administration, and the management of agricultural cooperatives were located in the central settlement and taxes paid by the other villages were mostly used in the central settlement. In many cases, financial support to urban settlements was distributed on a per capita basis. Therefore, many cities, in order to increase their population and through their financial support quota, incorporated several rural settlements in their administrative area. The incremental financial support, gained in that way was utilised and spent, of course, not in the incorporated villages, but in the central city. In Romania, for example, more than 3000 rural settlements have lost their name, identity and independence in this way in 40 years. Some of these mergers were justified, others were not.

After the change of the political and economic system in 1990, a part of these centralising measures were undone. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, all rural settlements (not yet having been incorporated into urban settlements) regained their local government and independence. Each rural settlement has its local government, though these settlements are rather small, more than half of them have less than 500 inhabitants, especially those in the mountains. Financial quotas became the same for urban and rural settlements.

But simultaneously, a new problem emerged. Remembering the bad experience of the past, rural settlements and rural governments were rather unwilling to cooperate with each other, but mainly with the urban centre, to which they formerly belonged and by which they felt themselves formerly "exploited". At the same time, more and more urban centres regarded themselves also as being "exploited". Their service facilities (schools, boarding-schools, hostels, urban transport, waste disposal, cultural, health and social facilities) were used not only by city dwellers, but also by people and pupil from the neighbouring villages. Some of them (boarding-schools, hostels) were used exclusively by rural inhabitants.

Furthermore, most small local governments were unable to provide their population with all the necessary services, but they were unwilling to cooperate with other settlements, and especially with towns. According to the new democratic principles, central governments are not entitled to force them to cooperate, to establish common services or to consolidate. New instruments are to be found to establish urban-rural cooperation which fit to the new conditions. These might be:

- to introduce incentives to cooperate (e.g. to offer higher support conditional upon common action);
- to establish the legal regulations for inter-communal facilities as legal entities or juristic persons;
- differentiated support quotas for facilities used by the non-resident population.
- Promotion of contracts between cities and neighbouring settlements on mutual payments for services, offered by the other local government;

- Promotion of common planning and policy for education, health, local transport, labour market and environment.

### 8.2.2 *The role of the chain of “market cities” in the external and internal forelands of the Carpathians and the task of ‘revitalisation of the “market line”*

The role of cities in trading goods is essential from the very beginning of the history of urban development. For centuries towns and cities developed around market places where various goods were bought and sold. Clearly different environmental conditions between Carpathian Mountains and surrounding plains had been reflected in different raw materials available and different products made in two neighbouring areas. The need for the exchange different goods created a favourable market niche and numerous market cities developed along foothills of Carpathians.

Moreover long-distance trading routes developed for transport and trading more exclusive goods. Many such routes had followed the foothills of Carpathians or crossed the mountain chain using river valleys and low passes. (E.g. wine trail from Hungary through Slovakia to Poland). Points where such routes crossed offered particularly favourable places for city development. As long as inland transport and communications relayed on the power of rivers and horses relatively dense chains of cities developed along these routes and physical links between cities were usually accompanied with economic links between them. Social and cultural links in turn usually developed as the aftermath of economic links.

The development of industry and modern means of transport i.e. railway and cars in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries significantly changed the settlement network. It stimulated the development of mining areas and transport nodes whereas many other cities lost their importance. Moreover many areas mainly in the foothills of the Carpathians were subjects of state-driven development policies in different periods of relatively recent history. E.g. Hungarian “governmental actions” in North-Eastern Carpathians in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Polish Central Industrial Region in northern foreland of the Carpathians in 1930-ies, the industrialisation of Slovakia in the period 1950–1980, the rehabilitation plan of the Jiu Valley Region in Romania in 1990s.

After World War II all Carpathian cities and towns had gone through the period of centrally planned economy where the role of market mechanisms in urban development was neglected for the sake authoritarian developmental decisions. However in spite of the same political regime the socialist period has achieved different results in different parts of Carpathians. In some regions individual farming and private ownership of land was preserved (Poland) as well as private sector of economy reduced to farms, craftsmen workshops and small enterprises survived whereas in other regions farms had been collectivised. Moreover some regions

underwent strong developmental pressure as a result of industrialisation, which often brought about significant environmental damages. Simultaneously other regions not designated for industrial development on central level have preserved their relatively untouched natural environment and traditional urban and rural settlement patterns due to the lack of private developmental initiative.

Currently as a result of the above-described processes the settlement network in the Carpathians and their foreland developed in such a way that two chains of urban centres of various size can be distinguished along the external and internal foothills of Carpathian range.

The following towns and cities roughly mark the “external” line: Uherské Hrádisté, Zlin, Vsetin, Novy Jicin, Tešín-Cieszyn, Bielsko Biała, Novy Targ, Novy Sącz, Krosno, Sanok, Przemyśl, Drohobič, Strij, Ivano-Frankivsk, Cernivtsi, Rădăuți, Suceava, Tirgu-Neamt, Piatra-Neamt, Onesti, Bacau, Focșani, Rimnicu Șarat, Ploesti, Tirgoviste, Rimnicu Valcea, Tirgu Jiu and Orsova.

The following cities and towns mark the “internal” line: Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Levice, Lucenec, Rimavská Sobota, Miskolc, Eger, Gyöngyös, Kosice, Uzhgorod, Mukaceve, Hust, Bistrita, Targu Mures, Sighisoara, Sibiu, Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Alba Iulia, Resita.

Many of these cities share now common problems because some of the troublesome heritage of the socialist period i.e. declining industries often environmentally harmful and unable to compete successfully within their own branches in market economy as well as the poor quality of utilities and transport networks.

One should note however that this apparent similarity due to geographical location and common recent political past covers the real variety of environmental, economic and social situations. Moreover easily noticeable on the map linear structures do not necessarily reflect existing economic, cultural, infrastructural links and relations between cities as well as these lines are not the only directions leading towards development. Therefore any actions taken in order to support the development of these settlements should not be limited strictly to those lines.

Currently both chains of cities as well as other cities situated outside the internal and external market lines enjoy democracy and market economy. So the key to the development of local economy remains mainly in the hands of local people their invention creativity and enterprise. Any measures taken on regional, national or international levels can be only supportive measures and cannot replace these indispensable elements of success. The existence in Carpathians of quite well developing areas next to areas of weak economic position without any peculiar natural advantages or deliberate governmental actions confirms this fact. E.g. settlements located in the foothills of Carpathians between Cieszyn and Myślenice in Poland belong to the most prosperous in economic terms in regional or national scale. Moreover in addition to all weak market cities Carpathians have a few brands of products able to compete successfully in the market not due to their traditional

character but due to their high quality and usefulness. It refers not only to Hungarian wine and “Radegast” or “Żywiec” beer but also to such products as “Malachowski” sleeping bags, furniture from Kalwaria Zebrzydowska or hand made glass from Krosno to mention only some Polish examples.

While companies more or less successfully struggle in the market, democratic city authorities are free to join their forces along the above drawn “market lines” as well as across them or in any other configuration in order to enhance the development chances of their cities. Therefore there is no single remedy for all the problems of the Carpathian chains of market cities and only the following general suggestions concerning their potential revitalisation policies can be formulated:

- The development of public utilities with special emphasis on the development of sewerage system proportionally to the development of water supply systems in order to improve the quality of life and in order to reduce the adverse environmental impact of settlements,
- The improvement of accessibility by means of integrated approach to the development of all kinds of public and private transport (roads, railways, plains) and all kinds of movement (by foot, bikes, ski or horse). Priority should be given to cross-Carpathian north-south directions. Special emphasis should be put on places and actions where relatively small investments may bring significant improvement in short- and long- distance mobility (e.g. the reconstruction of the railway between Nowy Targ and Trstena or the co-ordination of bus timetables on opposite sides of border crossings; enabling crossing the Ukrainian border on foot in higher parts of Carpathians.).
- Formal networking of cities using various legal forms in order to promote jointly cities, regions and their products.
- Development of intensive suburban agriculture in the surroundings of cities.
- More attention to Carpathian success stories in the domain of economic development initiative stressing not so much on repeatable but rather inspiring for originality.

Obviously, the original market chain function cannot be reconstructed. The forms of trade and transport have changed. Production technologies and consumption habits have also changed.

Nevertheless, some elements of this function – even if in changed forms – can be re-established:

- New and modernized market places for primary producers with quality controls, near to the centres of the cities (which can serve also as tourist spots, like the Budapest Central Market Hall);
- Improving transport conditions between cities and mountain settlements. Regular public transport on market days to cities and back

- Improving transport between the market-chain cities
- Commercial houses and special shops for protected mountain food products;
- Food processing plants for mountain products;
- Special restaurants with local foods;
- Networking between Carpathian market chain cities. Exchange of information, common actions, fairs and safeguarding of common interests.

### *8.2.3 The future of the EU and the Carpathian cities*

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2007 Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary joined the Schengen agreement on abolishing border control on the internal borders of the EU. After a few years, Romania will join the Schengen zone. Between 2010 and 2014 all Carpathian EU member states will introduce the Euro as their own currency. All derogations concerning the application of EU regulations will expire until 2011–14. There will be substantial progress in the field of the harmonisation of taxation and regulations in the EU member states.

These developments, the full accession of the Carpathian countries into the single economic space of the EU will bring about fundamental changes in the situation and functions of Carpathian cities. What happened in the old member states in 50 years will take place in the new member states in 7–10 years. The question is, to what extent these countries are prepared for these changes:

- State borders, as hindrances of the movement of people and of economic relations will totally disappear and cities will have to face a borderless economic and social space in their surroundings. Cities on the borders will be either the winners or the losers of this situation. Winners, if they can extend their attraction area beyond the borders, losers if they have to yield their former attraction area to a competitor city on the other side of the border. The rearrangement of the attraction areas will take place not exclusively on the basis of distances. Accessibility, the quality and price of services will also play a role in this process. Some kind of competition existed already among cities on the two sides of the border, but borders and the difficulties accompanying the crossing of borders gave a protection against rearrangement. This protection will disappear in the near future.
- Winners and losers cannot be defined unambiguously in this process. Maybe, one city is winner in one respect and “loser” in others. For example, it can be seen already in the Banat area, that Timisoara, Romania became the trans-border winner in business attraction, While Szeged, Hungary became the trans-border winner in health and educational services
- Accessibility plays a very important role in the competition of cities. It is a general experience that cities without motorway access have substantially

less chance for FDI investment than cities which have motorway access. But, in recent time, airports play a similarly important role. Cities which can be accessed by regular international flights have a huge advantage compared to cities which have not (the competition between Timisoara and Szeged was, in fact, decided by the international accessibility of Timisoara airport). Furthermore, it is already a general experience that the majority of people of the Carpathian countries do not choose unconditionally their national airports, but the airport being closer to their place of residence: people from the Western regions of Romania and from the Eastern regions of Slovakia choose the Budapest airport, people from the Western regions of Hungary choose the Vienna or Bratislava airport, many Slovaks choose Prague and many Czechs Bratislava airport. Cheap airlines quickly adjust their flight plans to the changing demands in the area.

- Another important feature of trans-border city competition is that its outcome is ever less dependant of national level conditions and regulations but more and more the outcome of local policies and regulations. The EU-wide harmonisation of taxation and support policies allows less and less deviations in national taxation and support policies. Nevertheless, cities are in the position, to offer land, special services, acceptable environment and less bureaucracy to potential investors. In finding the location of future investments the role of national governments will decrease while the role of city governments will increase.
- There are cities in the Carpathian region which were divided by the changing state borders. Examples are Cesky Tesin (CZ) – Cieszin (PL), Komarno (SK) – Komárom (HU), Esztergom (HU) – Sturovo (SK), Sátoraljaújhely (HU) – Slovenské Nové Mesto (SK). With the entrance into the Schengen zone, it became possible to reunite, virtually these cities. They can extend their attraction area and provide more, better and diversified services to their population.

This virtual reunification process – obviously, has its difficulties. For example, the local government leaders of Slovenské Nové Mesto (the Slovakian part of the former city Sátoraljaújhely) decided not to open the street, connecting the two parts of the city for car traffic. The explanation was that car traffic would increase air pollution and noise in the streets which were – in the old border regime – closed for car traffic. It might be true, but on the basis of this argumentation car traffic could be banned from all streets of the World. As a consequence of this decision, car drivers have to make a roundtrip, outside the city to the old border station, to get to the other half of the city. What has been achieved in Schengen, can be reversed by local bureaucrats.

It is not yet clear, how this rearrangement among Carpathian cities will take place in the future. But it is clear, that it will affect the urban network and hierarchy substantially.