

Guest Editorial

Geographic Space Organisation from an Environmental Point of View. Why Bukovina?

The IXth Edition of The Environmental Quality and Land Use (EnQa_Land Use 2013) Symposium, Stefan cel Mare University

Viorel CHIRIȚĂ^{1*}

¹ Chairman of the *EnQa_Land Use 2013*, Department of Geography, Stefan cel Mare University Suceava

* Correspondence to: Viorel CHIRIȚĂ, Department of Geography, Stefan cel Mare University, 13 Universitatii st., 720225 Suceava. E-mail: chirita@usv.ro.

©2013 University of Suceava and GEOREVIEW. All rights reserved.
doi: 10.4316/GEOREVIEW.2013.23.2.156



Article history

Received: April 2013

Received in revised form: July 2013

Accepted: August 2013

Available online: Oct. 2013

ABSTRACT: For geographers and other actors involved in geographical space organization and as well in territorial planning, the Bukovina area represents an entity marked by the contradiction between the rich and varied natural and cultural potential on the one hand and the recent negative impact brought about by the aggressive actions upon the forestry fund or by the territorial spreading of new types of buildings on the other hand. In this context, specialists in different fields of activity were invited to an open debate meant to identify the territorial tensions and to propose solutions for the present situation. Last but not least, we intended to find a way to try to avoid such contrasting realities in the future.

KEY WORDS: International Symposium, space planning, land use

The Bukovina region is an area of social and economic interplays. Manifested in complex ways during different eras, they have been matched by economic cycles shaped by the territory involved, generating in time successive re-configurations in the organisation of geographical space, natural or anthropic.

Romanian Bukovina is a geographical area that boasts great tourism attractiveness, which entails particular concern for the environment, which is difficult to achieve in a the geographic area affected directly or indirectly by mining and industrial activities that generate desolate, abandoned (barren) landscapes and by the areas converted functionally or structurally in both the urban and the rural areas.

These were among the featured topics of the 9th Edition of the International Symposium "Environmental Quality and Land Use". The Symposium was held on 30 – 31 May 2013 at Ștefan cel Mare University in Suceava, being an established scholarly event of academic geographical science in Suceava, which brought together specialists in the organisation of geographical space, regional geography and the environment.



Figure 1. Dornean cultural rural landscape on Poiana Negrii, Suceava county (photo by V. Chiriță).

From the outset we must mention the institutions and organizations involved in the organisation and the delivery of the specific activities of this academic event: SC EGGER România; the Environmental Protection Agency of Suceava county; the NGO EUDEMOS; the Romanian Geographical Society, Suceava branch; and the Forestry Directorate of Suceava county.

The symposium had a double focus and scope: as an international scientific event dedicated to the 50th anniversary of geographical education Suceava, and as host for highly topical debates occasioned by the complex process of regionalisation and administrative-territorial reorganisation at national level.



Figure 2. Pattern of cultural landscape on Sadova valley, Bucovina Region (photo V. Chiriță).

The proposed theme - the organisation of geographic areas from the environmental perspective - drew considerable interest, for Romanian and foreign specialists alike, with scientific, university or academic backgrounds, from the Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava along with representatives of the universities of Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj, the Romanian Academy, Slovakia and the Republic of Moldova.

All of this ensured that, for two days, the symposium EnQa_LandUse2013 was the place for encounters and interdisciplinary debate among geographers, economists, ecologists, environmental and territorial planners or urban planners.

The symposium was organised by the Department of Geography, being coordinated by Assoc. Prof. PhD Viorel Chiriță, and was overseen by a scientific committee which included, among others: Prof. PhD Ioan IANUȘ, University of Bucharest, Prof. Irina Ungureanu and Prof. PhD Liviu

Apostol of Al. I. Cuza University of Iasi, Dr. Zita Izakovicova, Director of the Institute of Landscape Ecology, Academy of Sciences, Slovakia, Prof. PhD Bruno Lecoquierre, Université Du Havre, France, and other specialists who gave their scientific endorsement in selecting the submitted papers.

The symposium proceedings began with the presentation of papers in plenary. Great interest was shown in the paper presented by Ioan Ianoş, professor at the University of Bucharest and member of CONREG (the Advisory Council on the Regionalisation of Romania – a body established by the Romanian Government), the author presenting the geographical, methodological and practical tools used in tackling the academically endorsed research on the Regionalisation of the national territory.

Dr. Zita Izakovicova from the Slovak Academy, presented the importance of interdisciplinary analyses of the typology of geographical landscapes, as the sense for the identification of regional socio-economic dynamics.

The proceedings in the symposium sections focused on particularly topical themes: *recent and future dynamics of geographical landscapes, the organisation of geographic areas and the EU Strategy for the 2020 horizon or aspects of habitat geography and cultural geography*, with over 40 scientific being presented as part of thematic workshops, shaking up the traditional symposium pattern of conferences into interactive debates and communications which are typical of prestigious international academic events. We must emphasise the acceptance and support for scientific papers by doctoral researchers and students, in mixed groups, alongside tutors, delivering highly valuable papers. We note the presence of two main categories of papers:

- ❑ of current terminological and practical interest (barren mine land, open territorial structures, susceptibility of land to current processes and phenomena, and typologies of geographical landscapes);
- ❑ communications based on geographical studies with practical applications, such as: economic evaluations of protected areas, reassessments of the economic features of rural built-up areas, the geographical relevance of environmental quality and waste etc.



Figure 3. Contrastive landscape in the Calimani National Park, Suceava County (photo by V. Chiriță).

Section focusing on the *Analysis of the dynamics of geographical landscapes*, the papers presented dealt with current issues in different categories of subjects, from rural areas (V. M. Bohateret, Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy), the characteristics of peri-urban landscapes of Moldova (V. Cujbă, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova), specific elements of forest landscape in Bucovina (R. Cenușă, Catalina Barbu, M. Drăgoi of the University of Suceava) or particular elements in environmental education in response to the objective of sustainable regional development in Slovakia (Dr. Zita Izakovicova). A further series of entries in this section aimed to provide methodological perspectives on the identification of structural and functional mutations in the organisation of geographic space through the integrated management of various forms of sedimentary accumulations (Fl. Obreja et al., D. Oprea et al., of the University of Suceava, Romanian Waterways Agency - Bacău Directorate).

The section *Habitat and cultural geography; The new rural economies and the rural space reorganization*, brought to the attention of specialists the interdisciplinary research on barren mine land areas in the county of Suceava, which are the consequences of economic restructuring in recent decades, by means of the analysis of the functional typology in light of the development strategy of the North East Region of Romania, this topic bringing together specialists from the University of Suceava, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch (V. Chiriță, Anca Ionce, Magda Lupchian and Daniela Matei). Along the same lines, papers focusing on the geosystemic consequences and the dynamic environmental impact of mining in Suceava county were presented by Liviu and Dana Popescu, D. Mihăilă, Valeria Dițoiu, P. Bistricean.

An important group of works presented during the sections *Space Organization in the Context of the European Union Strategy 2020 and Conservative harnessing through tourism of the environment potential* aimed to deliver complex syntheses of cultural, social and perceptual geography, and economic or tourism geography, stressing the role of the identified processes at the urban, regional or development region level. Topics included:

- ❑ regional disparities in the NE Region (Magda Lupchian, V. Chiriță and Daniela Matei, M. Eva, Simona Cuciureanu);
- ❑ territorial differences of the tourism phenomenon in the Suceava Basin or in whole territory of Bukovina (V. Efros, C. Cocerhan);
- ❑ the organisation of the urban space as a reflection of the status of Suceava as a student city (Magda Lupchian);
- ❑ modern methodological complementarity regarding: tourism in Bucovina (V. Efros, G. Cheia), the dynamics of land use (Carmen Bădăluță et al., Adina Jurj) or general urban planning and geographical risks (S. Bănică et al.) a.o.

Thanks to its theme, attendees and the interest on the part of county authorities in the topic of the event, and to discussions and debates occasioned by the academic presentations, the International Symposium EnQa - LandUse 2013 outlined, based on academic debates, terminological, methodological and practical clarifications on studies in regional geography, rural, urban and physical geography, a range of innovative approaches to the organisation of space and environmental quality, the continuing need for interdisciplinary focus on the issues facing the territorial entities of different ranks and roles, and the quality of the geosystem versus land use.