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International Workshop on Urban Regeneration

Recycling Urban Voids in Post-Socialist Cities – Methods and Actions to Achieve Urban Regeneration

Time: 31st May – 2nd June, 2018

Place: Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA (locations to be announced later)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Depending on viewpoint, a city is the sum of its buildings, its people or the activities therein, but, in reality, it is all that and much more. With more than 50% of the world population living in cities, the way we (re)build and (re)think our cities is ever more important. Former ways of interpreting cities need to be upgraded to fit the current context. Nevertheless, since cities are original creations and quintessential factors of national cultures, there are no universal prescriptions to interpret them. However, there are repetitive urban realities such as urban blight, brown-fields or informal settlements, underused or mismanaged land areas that impact the overall quality of urban life.

In Romania, as well as in former communist countries, top down urban policies as well as bottom up urban practices joining the efforts of local communities and of the private sector have been used in the process of urban regeneration lately with some success, although sometimes the vision of the public administration might have clashed around sensitive issues like public space, modernizing intervention priorities and quality of life.

Strategies to commodify the urban space sometimes fail, producing devalorised, crisis-driven urban and regional landscapes. In many cases, the municipality is overstrained with the long-term recovery of disused, un-built, unplanned left-over spaces. Some stakeholders actively pursue the reintegration of such spaces in the city, either for limited duration or long-range. They operate on former industrial sites, on commercial and residential properties waiting for development and on disused public service facilities to employ them in an innovative way. Through sustainable and viable strategies, they spur on social, organisational and technical innovations at the local and regional level, at once providing solutions for socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and inducing improvement of the general well-being, even if initially they act for their own personal development.

The stakeholders can be various, ranging from entrepreneurs, individuals, artists to freelancers, political actors, who considered urban residual areas as attractive vacant sites for emerging cultures, economies and communities. Through their actions and initiatives, these actors have reproduced

these underused urban spaces into essential resources for urban regeneration, spaces of great expectations, places with cultural, social and empowering functions – important elements for the small-scale renewal of districts. The focus of this workshop is on this recycling of urban voids in post-socialist cities.

Workshop aims

The workshop aims at:

- exploring the challenges and issues of urban regeneration in shrinking cities world-wide (setting the scene for the following debate on post-socialist cities)
- sharing critical views and research results (theoretical and empirical) of current issues on urban regeneration in post-socialist cities, theoretical discussions and developments among researchers coming from different countries and scientific background, who demonstrate a critical engagement with urban regeneration policies;
- creating a network among participants with common research and urban development interests and, thus, enabling the submission of research projects with national and EU funding;
- facilitating know-how and experience transmission to public administration;
- connecting the academic ideas to the practitioners' area in a joint experience of collaboration;
- engaging the associations and practitioners involved in sustainable urban projects, that have innovative ideas and want to share their experience (chances and challenges) and methods, and to come with ideas and support for their colleagues;
- bringing in public institutions, sharing and exchanging experiences, because the public administration (first of all the local government) has strategic relevance for development at diverse territorial levels (local, regional, national) and it is crucial for the sustainability of regeneration initiatives, based on culture, new welfare services, economic activities, and ways of providing housing for low-income and vulnerable families and so on;
- covering a range of issues on “urban mainstreaming”, such as: urban design, territorial and environmental development, community participation, local/strategic planning, smart cities, urban renewal and resilient cities, urban gardening, community action in the regeneration process, urban development, and management strategies.

Topics of interest in the context of post-socialist cities (may include, but are not limited to, the following):

- Urban regeneration and community development;
- Urban regeneration processes and regional development;
- Research methodology for the study of urban regeneration;
- Social inclusion and cultural innovation;
- Sustainable urban regeneration through multicultural heritage;
- (Re)inventing urban (re)generation: building the present by (re)constructing the past;
- Urban renewal and resilience: A comparative perspective;
- Fragmented cities: Governance and urban renewal;
- Urban regeneration as displacement;
- Innovative approaches to urban regeneration in the EU;
- Urban regeneration and territorial planning;
- Urban regeneration and public policy.

Type of public to engage: researchers, practitioners, activists, public authorities, senior planning officials, community leaders, academics, university students, private stakeholders interested in city development, policy makers, investors/entrepreneurs, urban planners, professional organisations, cultural associations, political party representatives, etc.

Place. The workshop will take place in the city of Cluj, Romania, a large university centre, as in this urban area and in its surroundings, there are plenty of opportunities to experience urban regeneration first hand.

Deadline for submitting abstracts (250 words, no figures or tables): 31 March 2018

Workshop fee: 10 Euros (it covers the workshop materials and the coffee breaks)

Dissemination of results. Attendees have the possibility to publish their papers in the online internationally indexed journal, which supports this event: **Territorial Identity and Development (TID)**. <http://territorial-identity.ro/>

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