

# *The European Context and the Tendencies of Residing in Romania*

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## **Introduction**

In all ages, the authorities from all the country have pursue a certain inhabitation policy which objectives advanced in a period of time. Inhabitation represents a subject that is always topical, so for the decidents and for the administrators in charged with the administration of those processes for this subject, as for the professionals involved in the attempt to resolve the specific problems. For this, the permanent study for various aspects of living appears to be absolutely necessary for understanding the general context of social-economic development, inhabitation envying a mirror of a society dynamism.

## **1. European Context**

### *1.1 European Documents Relevant for Residing Perspective*

The general residing tendencies in Romania can be better understood in the European context. Political visions regarding the future economic and social evolution of Europe have been formulated in total correlation with a series of strategies regarding territory spatial development.

The premises of territorial arrangement approach in the spirit of Durable Development objectives are available in a document from the European Council, dated 1983. The European Charter for Territory Arrangement (The Charter of Torremolinos) is one of the first steps regarding the European dimension of the activities oriented towards an improved spatial management in Europe, fighting for solving the problems which outcome the national framework and tend in this way to creating the commune identity feeling.

In the new European context, territory arrangement needs, at the same time, local action and global thinking.

Another significant document is represented by the appearance of the Commune Space Development Scheme (CSDS) – towards a spatial equitable and lasting development of the UE territory, document made by the European Committee, Postdam 1999. This document settles clearly the reports between development policies and their spatial dimension.

The spatial development policies aim a lasting and equilibrate development for the UE territory. These policies are being approached within the context of the three fundamental objectives of the communion policy, that is:

- Economic and social cohesion;
- Conservation and administration of life's and cultural patrimony's natural basis
- The more equilibrate competition of the European territory.

Inside this document there have been identified the principal spatial development direction of the European continent: the development of a polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship, guarantee of access to information and knowledge and lasting development, attentively

administration and environment and cultural inheritance protection. The territory arrangement issues regarding residing shall be, therefore, subordinated to these principal directions of spatial development.

The long term tendencies of the spatial development in EU are under the influence of the following factors, in principal:

- a progressive economic integration, which leads towards better cooperation between the member states;
- Increasing importance of local and regional collectivities and of their role in the spatial development.
- Predictable enlargement of EU and the evolution of its relationship with the neighbors.

A third important document as regards the statement of some objectives from the prospective of territory arrangement with relevance over the residing issue is constituted by the European Conference of The Accountant Ministers for Territory Arrangement, organized by the Committee of the Officials in Europe Council (CEMAT, Hanovra, 2000), where there have been formulated the directing principles for territorial lasting development of the European continent. This document identifies the most important objectives in the spatial development field, contributing at the elaboration of a social cohesion strategy. The central objective for applying these principles is identifying the territory arrangement measures which allow Europe Council member states residents to be able to reach an acceptable standard of living. This is a fundamental preferable condition in order to stabilize the democratic structures in places and regions of Europe.

The ten principles are the following:

- Promoting territorial cohesion by a socio-economic equilibrate and competitive improvement development
- Promoting encouragement of development generated by urban functions and improvement of relationships between cities and villages;
- Promoting more equilibrate accessibility conditions
- Facilitate access to information and knowledge
- Reduce environment degradation
- Turning account and protecting the natural resources and natural patrimony;
- Turning account on to the cultural patrimony, as development factor;
- Development of the energetic resources, while maintaining the security
- Promoting a quality-based and lasting tourism
- Preventive limitation of natural disaster effects.

These strategic principles represent flexible, oriented support towards the future, which action all the way to local authorities' level, based on the spatial support given by territory arrangement for continent lasting development. These principles shall materialize in a series of continent territory arrangement measures, which must take in consideration the huge development potential which is represented by natural and cultural diversity of this geographic area.

### ***1.2 European Continent Residing Issues***

The technical objective for social cohesion in Europe is represented by a synthetic parameter which characterizes the quality of life in Europe, named Human Development Index, elaborated for all

United Nations member stated, through United Nations Development Program. This index is a comparative means of the life expectancy, education standards and income per inhabitant (standard of living).

Human Development Index calculated for Romania shows the objective level per country, but an increased importance in the context of residing issue is the determination of a synthetic index of residing, based on analysis within area studies.

Residing is the most important element within the necessities of human life and social development. It has a radical role in the social economic aspect of evolution. The residing area importance for territorial development is outlined by a series of reasons, which lie in the below mentioned document. The function of residing area within the society is to outline the quantitative importance and major impact which it has over economy and labor force.

The effects amount between economic growth and demographic evolution, on one side, and dwelling demand change, on the other side, implies, from qualitative, quantitative and locative point of view, an activation process for dwelling construction, but also the development of all aspects related to residing.

Building dwellings requires important capital recourses mobilization, especially private capital, which means, finally, the activation of economy. Within this meaning, identifying the financing and subsidize tendencies of this activity proves to be highly important for residing studies.

The private investment is part of social development driving force, and equally part of territorial development. One of the territory arrangement tasks consists of supplying for the private investors a perspective of prospective development and a security in terms of arrangement. Moreover, territory arrangement policy will have to contribute, together with the adequate spatial policies, to the municipality and regions appeal growth, for private local and regional investments.

The principles of a lasting arrangement policy refer to human settlement structuring network. At this level of territorial residing approach, the most important principle is constituted promoting development generated by urban functions and improving relationships between towns and villages. This can be realized by structuring the urban systems and functions, paying a special attention to developing the medium and small urban centers in the rural area, which will facilitate access of these regions at urban functions. The complementary side between human settlements of different scale shall be made by constituting an equilibrate structure of urban reinforcement, in the conditions of territorial inter – collectivities partnerships.

The European preoccupations regarding the reach of the above mentioned objectives, based on the announced principles, are sustained by a series of specific measures for each of Europe's regions.

This way, the new member stated specific problems regarding dwellings are tight to houses' construction financing, maintaining the real estate stock, as well as issues generated by the different potential for residential property accessibility, which can be reduced by increasing the land offer for dwelling building.

The residing issue within the rural area is tight to populations' access to services provided by small and medium towns in the territory, accessibility and appeal increase for living in the rural are.

### ***1.3 Characteristics of Urban Activation in European Territory and in Romania***

Within the European continent, there exists a dens structure of human settlements, which covers the central part of Europe, beginning with Great Britain, continuing with Holland, Belgium, Western Germany, up to the East and West of the Alps, respectively Italy, Czechs Republic, Southern Poland and Slovakia towards Hungary.

The Northern and Southern countries, unlike these areas, are less populated and have a less dense urban system. This thing applies for Ireland, Northern parts of Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but also for areas in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania.

One of the urban activation characteristics in the European field is constituted by the different activations in western areas, reported with Eastern Europe. After high increases in the 80s, these countries know activation mitigation. An Eastern European area characteristic is the higher degree of rural space, over the urban one. The analysis of urban population density shows a decreased density for residents of the urban area. These characteristics are also supported by the fact that the Eastern area of Europe is encumbered by a series of non even issues regarding the rural/ urban report, situation even more aggravated by the urbanization rhythm decrease.

Correlative analysis between towns' accessibility or PIB in Romania and the number, respectively their size, lead to the conclusion that the majority of town, of II rank of lower, in general (towns with II rank are municipalities with inter county, county importance or with a role of equilibrant in the settlements networks) have a reduced economic force, which, in present conditions, suggests the growth of I rank cities role ( municipalities of national importance with European level potential importance).

This tendency can become contrary to the economic and social cohesion's evolution, with the conditions in which small or even middle towns raft across a stagnation period. At the same time, the reduced accessibility of small towns reduces even more their odds to develop their own territorial role.

The recent analysis show differences regarding the area equilibrate development of the towns' network, between the Central European area and Romania and show the distance between elements which define residing between the two parties. Besides this, in comparison with continent territory, Romania appears, mostly, as a region with high demographic decline, except Moldavia. These elements increase the differences regarding the structural potential of a powerful polycentric system in our country.

Within this context, it can be stated that Romania does not have in present more Metropolitan Growth Areas, besides Bucharest and Timisoara. This means that one of the priorities is represented by identification of the most favorable urban clusters, capable to maintain such development in the future. The integration with Central Europe spatial relationships can be obtained by meeting with polycentrism at all spatial aggregate levels, within the national territory and by opening towards the Eastern part of the continent, when the conditions shall allow this.

## **2. Residing Tendencies in Romania**

### **2.1 Demographic Aspects**

Romania's number of inhabitants has registered a decrease lately. The massive migration towards larger cities at the beginning of the 90s has been followed by the reversed tendency. The demographic explosion between 1967 and 1980 concludes with the present situation of dwelling crisis, generated by the fact that those generations form families in the present.

The analysis of active population structure shows a strong displacement of the population towards the urban environment and a dramatic decrease of the active one in rural environment (starting with 1992, only 67% of the population in 1966 still worked in villages). This leads us at the conclusion that the following years will bring a growth for urban dwellings. In reality, the spatial distribution of dwelling construction confirms the dynamic of population: therefore, between 1992-2000 the larger number of built dwellings was in Moldavia. Other counties with an important positive dynamic are: Ilfov, Dambovita, Gorj, Ialomita, Constanta, Bistrita-Nasaud.

This tendency must be correlated with other elements that define dwelling quality and the residing act (construction materials, equipation), as well as the environment they have been constructed in (urban/rural).

The living quality is also defined by population access to the town utilities (table 1). The most deficient exist in rural environment, but there is a segment of urban population with no access to utilities.

### **Percentage of Persons with Utility Access**

Table 1

Utilities	% of total population	% of urban population	% of rural population
Water supply	54.29%	88.04%	17.51%
Sewerage	53.23%	87.15%	16.26%
Electric power	97.97%	99.40%	96.42%
Gas	42.86%	74.65%	8.21%
Central Heating	38.55%	71.83%	2.27%

Source: Territorial Statistics 2003

The large demand of dwellings, correlated with social and economic polarization phenomenon, as well as the expel tendencies, arise up the property observe issue.

A study including over 58 european towns show the high percentage of social dwellings and rented ones. (figure 1). The percentage of private property dwelling in the figure below is:  $46.5\% + 31.9\% = 78.4\%$

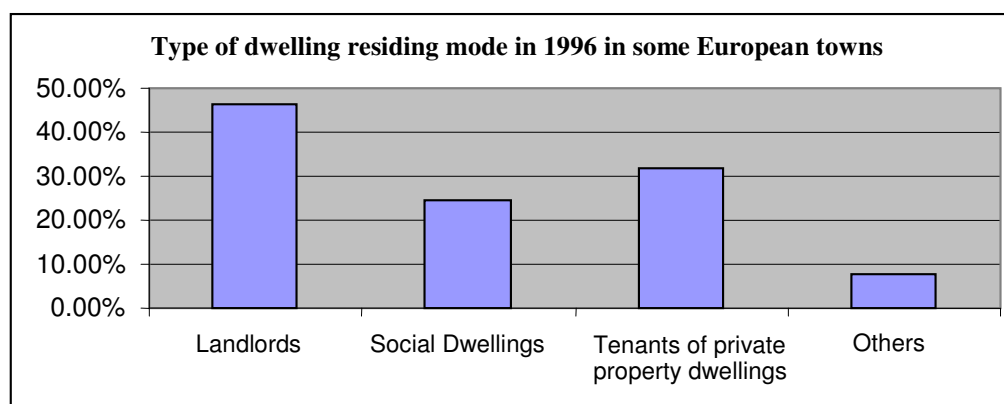


Figure 1

A comparison with the dwelling property situation in other European countries show obvious differences towards Romania's situation, regarding dwelling property, the percentage being smaller by far than in our country, where the percentage is around 97% (table 2).

#### Dwelling Fund Structured in Property Forms and Development Areas

Table 2

Regions	Total dwellings (no)	Majority Public Property (%)	Majority Private Property (%)	Regions	Majority Public Property (%)	Majority Private Property (%)
ROMANIA	8152374	202027	7950395	ROMANIA	2.48	97.52
1. North - East	1309293	22998	1286295	1. North - East	1.76	98.24
2. South - East	1030782	29187	1001595	2. South - East	2.83	97.17
3. South	1263357	20787	1242570	3. South	1.65	98.35
4. South - West	913373	15038	898335	4. South - West	1.65	98.35
5. West	770203	38265	731938	5. West	4.97	95.03
6. North - West	1027073	18537	1008716	6. North - West	1.8	98.21
7. Centre	956349	31520	924829	7. Centre	3.3	96.7
8. Bucharest	881946	25875	856071	8. Bucharest	2.93	97.7
Bucharest	781121	23896	757225	Bucharest	3.06	96.94

Municipality				Municipality		
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Source: Territorial Statistics 2004

## **2.2 Issues of Residing Areas Expansion in Romania**

The growth of dwelling demand must be verified correlated with the demand for individual dwellings' plots demand, both for urban and rural environment. The growth of inner cities surfaces doesn't always reflect pressure for young population dwelling building, but demand for a second dwelling or main for certain population segments in the big urban clusters.

Beyond the limits of towns and villages, after 1990, people built individual dwelling with a nimble rhythm and private funds, in different areas and different motivations.

We are talking about a certain category of landlords who wish to change their way of living from the collective dwellings, to one more adequate to their confort standards and economic situation. The aimed regions are the ones with landscape potential, but within the dynamic of those, the more important thing is distance and quality of means of transportation between the dwelling and the working place town. The development of these dwelling regions is made by plotting the land, outside from agricultural usage, and assuring that all utilities represent role of individual steps.

The consequence is represented by the great negative impact over the environment factors, especially rivers, forrests and even depth water.

The extinction of urban confort dwellings standard can be realised by building up free prots (often, agricol lands are being complied to plotting), or plots located in the village hearth and are set free, in areas with traditional rural dwellings, but in search of a favorable settlement advantage, in this case considering especially the holiday dwellings, booked up only in weekends or vacations. Therefore, the individual dwellings, although present in a small manner, shall constitute a meaningful presence for dwellings located in big cities or rural area.

The urban concentration degree growth, the uneven distribution of demographic increase, judicial changed, outrunning the service period for a large number of dwellings, moral usage specific for part of the residing fund, the important decrease of building rhythm for new collective dwellings, all lead us at the conclusion that we are in the middle of a strong residing crisis, which will accelerate in the following years.

The growth of urban concentration degree in Romania determines, along with other socio-economic factors, the increase of town-suburb territory system complexity. Therefore, we can state that starting with the 90s, we take part in successive fazes of urban residing expansion in the suburb territory, situation that makes the suburbs of the great cities to become sensitive spots regarding residing.

The residing and dwelling issue represents key elements in the socio-economic development strategy, both at national and local level. It must be correlated with all aspects complementary an necessary for residing, as regards to the services and technical networks development policies, as well as the transport and communication infrastructure, within the national territory.

## **Conclusions**

Behind those former statements, it could be estimate that the inhabitation is considered, analytically spoken, an estate of evaluation life's quality, sharing through its components to the defining some evaluation elements of the quality of human settlement.

The undermentioned aspects can be analyzed and resolved only interrelation with the human settlemet in territory; territory extent of big cities from Romania, pursuance to urban population growth but also with the situation of accomplishment bias to individuals dwells, that became possible legally speaking, do not represent yet a sollution for rezolving dwell criss in our country, because the

accomplishment for the individual dwell in quality backgrounds( conception, material, execution) is approachable in the financial field just to one segment of the inhabitants.

The possible release of the locative space from the rural environment, pursuant to the depopulation tendencies to the villages, do not constitute a substitute for this problem, as long as the oldness and technical amount for an significant part to rural dwell could not assure the premises for an efficient dwell, even in minimal conditions.

Those grounds, like one of the upmentioned issues, lead us to the appraisal that dwelling problem and inhabitation represent a key element in the social-economic development strategy, both at the national and local level. It must be corelated with all the auxiliary and necessary aspects for the dwelling regarding developments politics for the network services and municipal services, as well transport infrastructure and communication from whole national territory.

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