CITIES of TOMORROW
Reconversion & Revitalisation
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It is forbidden not to think about urban planning!

Hans Jürgen Best, City Manager of Essen
Cities. Since 2013

Cities of Tomorrow is already at its sixth edition and has proven itself as Romania’s top forum for business, architecture and administration. The experience and know-how of the organizers, gathered during years of activity on and with relation to the Romanian and the German markets, are the foundation of the event structure, the chosen topics and the promoted projects. Encouraging the sustainable development of the country, promoting measures for it to become more attractive for new and smart investments and stimulating its competitiveness are paramount factors for us.

Why cities

Romania and its cities are in transition. We are looking to the future and taking significant steps for the improvement of our living, yet regions in Romania need help to grow and develop into modern, sustainable, strong 21st century communities. Not only regular citizens, but also stakeholders are interested in this process – Cities of Tomorrow is the embodiment of their desire and offers a platform for exchange of ideas, concepts and know-how between the public and private sectors, with the ambition of creating the proper context for concrete action leading to tangible results.

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Round tables
B2B platform

6 Editions
1500 Participants
38 Topics
39 Exhibitors
125 Speakers
26 Round Tables
More Than 4000 Social Media Interactions
More Than 450 Media Appearances
KEY SPEAKERS

Prof. Jörn Walter
Chief Urban Planner of the City of Hamburg

Prof. Peter Zlonicky
Head of the Office of Urban Studies Munich; University Professor (em.) for Urban Planning and Design at the Technical University in Dortmund; Consultant to the Policy Board on National Urban Development Policy in Berlin

Dr. Marcel Heroiu
Senior Urban Development Specialist World Bank

Ing. Dipl. Hans-Jürgen Best
City Director of the City of Essen and Divisional Management Board Planning

Arh. Dorothee Dubrau
Deputy Mayor, Responsible for Urban Development and Constructions of the City of Leipzig

Dr. Georg Pammer
General Manager Aspern Smart City (Winner of Best Smart Project 2016 @ Smart City Expo Barcelona)

Tilman Buchholz
Deputy Head of the Urban Development Department of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
OVERVIEW

CITIES of TOMORROW
Reconversion & Revitalisation

#6

300 PARTICIPANTS
23 SPEAKERS & MODERATORS
8 ROUND TABLES
7 EXHIBITORS
CENTRAL PANEL: “URBAN REGENERATION BY MEANS OF INDUSTRY AND TOURISM”

Ioan Popa
Mayor of Reșița

Arch. Eugen Pănescu,
Founding Partner Planwerk

Arch. Tamina Lolev
Partner
nod makerspace

Arch. Hildegard Brandl
Partner
UnitH2B

Dr. Christian von Albrichsfeld
CEO Continental Automotive Romania

Tatian Diaconu
CEO Immochan Romania

The central theme of last edition was focused on the competitiveness of cities/regions in which we live and work. This year we want to shift the discussion towards making cities/regions more attractive through urban revitalization & reconversion of existing assets. We strongly believe that even one single well thought-out revitalized element of an abandoned area contributes to the attractiveness and has the potential of becoming an economic magnet. Therefore, the panel dealt with approaches to industrial areas and to regions with touristic and cultural potential.
Quality of life is an important parameter for retaining and attracting people to a city; a city cannot develop without quality partners and without close collaboration between investors, local public authorities and the community. Resita was chosen as a best practice example for urban regeneration in Romania. Other successful stories, such as Cluj or Coresi in Brasov, were achieved through the active contribution of the community, by identifying the spaces with potential in the city and by carefully defining the end purpose of the project, firstly asking of all the inhabitants, who are the beneficiaries and the end users of the urban project. Tatian Diaconu, CEO of Immochan Romania underlined the importance of the urbanistic vision for investors: "You can pour as much concrete and asphalt in a city as you like. If you do not manage to connect with the community, you will not be able to do sustainable business." Also, every project is unique, having to respect the specificity of the site, uniqueness being a relevant factor in sustainable urban development.
The 8 round tables were a good opportunity to discuss practical and applied different topics/projects depending on the relevance and necessity of the topic. Moderators came both from the private and public sectors, depending on the chosen project or theme. Afterwards, the conclusions and identified solutions were briefly presented by the moderators of the 8 round tables in a final wrap-up panel.
Energy efficiency is an important aspect of the life quality in urban areas. Nonetheless, in Romania the need for an updated legal framework, corresponding to the current situation in the energy field, is high and there are still energy automation works which have to be done for the improvement of the energy management. Clearly, an efficient energy management would reduce energy consumption and therefore costs. However, public opinion fears that intelligent energy metering and monitoring is connected to higher costs and citizens do not have an energy efficient and responsible behavior yet.

Before introducing smart energy systems, a cost-benefit analysis should be done, as well as determining whether the existing infrastructure is compatible with the new systems or not. Moreover, the priority should be the digitalization of the main areas of interest, such as public lighting, public transportation or energy-efficient renovation of public buildings. Further suggestions are the decentralization of the heating system and the replacement of complex systems with medium or small ones, micro-cogeneration or innovative instruments, which can determine the citizen to develop a more efficient and responsible consumer-behavior. The latter aspect is strongly related to the consumer education and to the importance of awareness raising campaigns on energy efficiency, since most of the population is still hesitant in this regard. Apart from these challenges, efforts of increasing energy efficiency levels/standards in Romania are also burdened by the ambiguous understanding of ESCO contracts, which are currently only happening among private actors.

**Solutions:**

- Implementation of distributed heating systems
- Policies of encouraging of urban heating systems
- Intelligent metering and monitoring systems
- Clarification of the legal regime of ESCO contracts (especially at governmental level, among interested parties and within the Ministry of Public Finance)
FINANCING & EU FUNDS

Conclusions:

At this roundtable the moderators were helped by specialists of the EIB, who presented some interesting financing instruments. It is a well-known fact that Romania has difficulties in accessing EU funds. One of the reasons is that calendars for the launch of programs are unreliable and evaluation of the applications can take a lot longer than expected, making it difficult for potential beneficiaries to calculate the start of their projects. Moreover, there are insufficient funds allocated to priority programs – especially to programs accessible to private companies –, while other programs with huge amounts of available funds – mostly for public beneficiaries – do not attract enough interest. Generally, the absorption rate of EU-funds is very low, and the complicated procedures for implementation do not help either.

Solutions:

• A correct reallocation of EU-Funds
• Timely publishing and respecting the calendar for the launch of programs

Targeting also other funds as there are a lot of other possibilities in Romania: Norwegian Funds and also financing by banks.

Debate:
Conclusions:

Romanian cities and to what extent they can be evaluated as smart cities are controversial aspects. A few measures have been implemented throughout the country, which contribute to the development of smart cities. In terms of digitalization and city governance, there are some apps available to citizens, which ensure transparency in administrative processes, for example in Bucharest, districts 1 and 4, in Iasi, in Sibiu or in Satu Mare (ongoing). Apart from this, there are initiatives in intelligent public lighting, integrated software solutions, electric transportation etc. The private sector is open to providing public authorities with products, solutions and know-how for their smart city projects, whereas the public sector is showing its willingness to improve their knowledge on intelligent urbanization and to receive suggestions and support for the implementation of these projects as they are aware of the fact that they still have to learn a lot in regard to the concept of a smart city.

One of the barriers may be that available EU funds for smart city are either insufficient or difficult to access due to the lack of personnel for the project elaboration. Moreover, public administration employees need to be educated and trained in the field and private actors have to understand the needs of the authorities, in order to be able to contribute to the realization of smart city projects. Public-private partnerships would significantly improve smart city processes, as well as a centralized system on national level.

Solutions:

- Finding the way of a good and fructuous cooperation between public and private authorities.
- Awareness raising among public authorities concerning the smart city concept
- Specialized courses on smart city for public authorities (in terms of custom-made solutions and applicability)
- Restructuring the legal framework in favor of digitalization
MOBILITY:
CASE STUDY – CLUJ-NAPOCA

Conclusions:
The focus of the roundtable was the city of Cluj-Napoca as a best practice example in terms of improvements of the mobility in the city (acquisition of new public transportation vehicles, modernization of transport infrastructure and tram systems, new parking policies, bike lanes and bike-sharing systems). Apart from this, two other significant aspects were signalized: the development of the integrated public transportation on metropolitan level and the fact that the beltway was taken over by the local administration. Further topics addressed future project proposals in Brasov (construction of a new tram-network and an automated parking system downtown) and the development of electric transportation (public and individual) in Romania.

Solutions:
• Encouraging the dialogue between institutions, organizations and citizens of urban/metropolitan areas, in order to experiment with mobility improvement solutions
• Encouraging public transportation and space sharing combined with traffic restrictions in specific areas. Vehicles with an occupancy degree lower than three persons should have restrained access in these areas or should pay a congestion charge (e.g. London)
• Vertical parking spaces in order to avoid exhaustive use of terrain.
• Encouraging the use of electric vehicles by increasing the number of electric charging stations and solving legislative impediments
• Promoting electric trams as a high capacity transportation method and reintroducing them in Romanian cities (e.g. Brasov, Cluj)
Dezbateri:
Participants at this roundtable debated the urbanization issues of local administration during the approval procedure of zonal urban plans, including the environmental procedure, as well as the hurdles in obtaining a construction permit. Among other aspects, they tackled the lack of databases with utilities suppliers and the draft bill amending Law no. 50/1991.

Concluzii:
There is a need to connect Law no. 50/1991 (for construction permitting) with Law no. 350/2001 (regarding urban planning), since such have a lot of common components, but have not been synchronized yet. Moreover, the construction permitting procedure must be rethought, in order to simplify the process and to set apart (permits for) complex/high-impact construction works from low-impact ones. Furthermore, a centralized database (e.g. with utilities suppliers) should be created and integrated into the land book. In a nutshell, focusing on tools and strategies to increase the speed of the permitting procedures would basically enhance all other aspects of this field.

Solutions:
• Urbanization problems of the local public administration when approving a Zonal Urban Plan (PUZ) in particular related to land allotments/ re-allotments - approval of the PUZ by the City Hall’s initiative, providing the creation of an access road over private lands (as such, the access road becoming of public interest) followed by the expropriation of the private land needed for the road.
• Problems related to the environmental procedure for the approval of PUZ/ obtaining of a construction permit (AC) - a proposal for lege ferenda to be able to use the approvals obtained at the PUZ phase also at the AC stage; the environmental procedure, which is expressly distinctly regulated in the PUZ phase and the AC phase, is exempted.
• Databases within City Halls containing information from utilities providers – it is already regulated as a legal obligation in Law no. 50/1990, the beneficial consequence being that no location approvals would any longer be required from utilities suppliers for lands not affected by such networks according to the database.
• Draft for amending Law no. 50/1991 – discussion:
  a. Codification of building and urban planning legislation by 2020;
  b. Re-establishment of the one-stop shop (counter) and commission of single approval, sufficient staffing in the organigram of the authorities and approval of the operating procedure of said counter/ commission.
  c. Utilities providers should be made responsible for accuracy of information supplied and information on existing networks should be entered in the Land Book (CF) (the database of information on utilities to be managed either by the City Halls or by ANCPI).
• Clear and unified definition of the terms used in the normative acts in the field.
Conclusions:

For the success of such initiatives, dialogue is key. Without a constant exchange between all the stakeholders nothing can evolve successfully. There has to be a national strategy, which is also a requirement of the European Law. On micro-level, local entrepreneurial actions have to back-up the national system. Moreover, increased support of public authorities and their engagement, especially a proper transition from one mandate to another, would result in a higher number of materialized projects.

Realistic reciprocal expectations and setting up a private Public Committee at AHK level, that is, to start a better dialogue in this sense, inviting experienced speakers not only punctual at the AHK conferences, but constantly as an Advisory Board and to be at the AHK level first to do so accessible for the public authorities as AHK Members. If we talk about the necessity of a constant and professional dialogue: Let’s do it: Let’s create a constant meeting platform between business and public authorities that serves as a permanent link and catalysator.

Solutions:

• Collaboration between experts/private and public actors, on a common trusted platform.
• Training and expertise for public administration as a regional motor (each with its assets) to implement long-term strategies based on asset analysis and a proper, well-designed and carried out presentation online and offline based on a promotion strategy for the respective cities & regions.
• Mapping industrial sites with potential.
• Analyzing best practices that fit the actual conditions and necessities of the cities and using them as stepping stones to develop their own set of best practices.
• Exchange of experiences through working groups, best practice examples.
• Updated legal framework.
• Trainings for future employees in public administration.
Conclusions:

Romania has to improve compliance with EU waste legislations in order to meet the EU targets as the final deadlines set out in the Accession Treaty are drawing near. Improving coordination and enhancing the administrative capacity of the authorities and agencies involved in the implementation of EU legislation on the environmental protection are top priorities to be considered by decision makers. The national waste management system needs improvements, especially in terms of properly assessing the needs of the Romanian population, the waste flow and the performance indicators, and by updating the processes accordingly. Moreover, a lot of effort has to be put into preventing waste generation and informing/awareness raising among citizens. Similar to other fields, a better collaboration between involved actors would lead to improved results.

Solutions:

- Performance indicators for all involved actors
- Pay-as-you-throw pricing principle/updating fees and also including processing costs
- National information/awareness raising campaigns and promotion of best practice examples
- Improved certification and authorization procedures and enforcement on the field.
The discussion approached the topic of reconversion/revitalization from a practical point of view, focusing on best practice examples in Romania: a nod makerspace (former cotton factory in Bucharest), Reșița, Moldova Nouă, Brasov former factory “Tractorul” or Măgurele ELI-NP, and the challenges they faced. These projects are in different implementation stages and did benefit from different financing methods— nonetheless, they all see the importance of a sharp strategy and the support of public authorities. The fact that industrial areas with high potential are not mapped properly and do not have an urban regeneration policy, nor a legal or land policy framework, is part of the problem. Furthermore, public administration sometimes lacks the expertise and continuity because of personnel fluctuation, which affects any long-term plans and strategies. The use of good practices is beneficial: starting with the practices from a book, continuing with the good practices presented in a specialized conference; and concluding with good practices which can be gathered through international and constant trainings. Local administrations need to identify their own assets; they are looking for investors without having a proper development strategy. They often do not understand the touristic asset. Highlighting the real values of small and large towns is the key to success. How does a city present itself and how does the business environment present itself in front of an audience? If you want to attract an investor you have 20 seconds to get his attention. The business card for mayors is very relevant, so is a crisp, well-designed short city brochure containing the key assets an investor would be interested in. The business environment, trying to have a dialogue with the mayoralties, has to think also about how to approach them, because reciprocity is important.

TOURISM: CASE STUDY – REVITALIZATION OF VALEA JIULUI

Conclusions:
The conclusions of the discussion mainly focused on two dimensions: the strategical aspect and the implementation. On the one hand, a starting point could be using substantiation/clarifying notes to develop laws which hinder action and to rethink the resource management (both human and financial) in a correct manner. On the other hand, a suggestion was the establishment of a DMO (Destination Management Organization), which promotes and deals with the touristic aspects of the region and works as a collaborative entity between the public and private sector, putting together all implied stakeholders. A fist slogan of this DMO should be “Adopt a momarlan” (locals from Valea Jiului), which means that everyone who visits Valea Jiului should stay with a local, in order to find out more about the region, its traditions and its culture.

Solutions:
- Creation of a DMO (Destination Management Organization) to provide touristic management in different regions (e.g. Valea Jiului)
- Investments in education/dual learning system
- Local and national collaboration among institutions
- Prioritization of EU funds
AHK Romania is the largest bilateral Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Romania and the official representative of the German economy in our country. AHK is actively supporting German companies to enter the Romanian market and, on the other hand, works as a partner for Romanian companies who are interested in the German market, through the services it provides and the events it organizes. Moreover, it is an important platform for networking, exchange of information and experiences, not only for its members, but also for other interested companies. AHK is engaged in fields like green energy, environment and constructions by means of its GreenTech initiative, econet romania.
Especially during the last years, the Chamber has focused its efforts on sustainable development and is permanently engaged in drawing the attention of the local and national Romanian authorities to this topic. The experience and global market knowledge of the personnel represent a solid basis for gaining new competences and abilities. Therefore, topics such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, environment and sustainable buildings are now easy to handle in a professional manner. The close relationship with the mentioned sectors in Romania, cultivated over the years through participation at fairs, the creation of market studies and organization of own econet events, conferences, workshops, business trips to Romania and Germany, but also the working groups the Chamber hosts convey a better market understanding and position us as a serious business partner. For more than seven years, AHK Romania is the main starting point in the field of energy, constructions and environment, offering a bilateral platform for know-how and experience exchange by means of its GreenTech initiative „econet Romania“. Furthermore, the Chamber is involved in implementing the dual learning system in Romania according to the German model and has created the Permanent Arbitration Court.
For further information on sponsorship or participation at Cities of Tomorrow # 7:

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