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URBAN AND URBAN SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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The report is based on an international investigation which enclosed more than 50 partners from 14 countries. It contains Central and Eastern Europe: east of Germany between St.Petersburg in the North and the Black Sea and Danube in the South.

As the main trends of the future development of centres, traffic axis and urban systems may be emphasized:

an increasing polarization in favour of the already most important metropolcities such as Budapest, St.Petersburg, Warsaw and Prague;

a more moderate trend in favour of the capitals of the smaller new states such as Riga (Latvia), Vilnius, Ljubljana (Slovenia);

good chances for all the centres of preferred Western orientation, that is of cities in the most Western regions, cities at the East-West traffic axis, ports at the Baltic Sea and Black Sea;

increasing difficulties for cities and regions with a monostructural economic base such as M.Ostrava (mining, Czech Republic), Hunedoara (mining and steelworks, Rumania), Upper Silesia (Poland), most of them have serious environmental problems (extreme situation at Tschernobyl, Ukraine);

remaining uncertainties in regions of foreign stationed forces (e.g. Eastern Moldavia) and in some cases of ethnical differences and tensions.

I. Introduction: goal and representation of a study project

The socio-economic and political collapse in Central and Eastern Europe initiated rapid and radical changes in the urban and urban system development. While the former German Democratic Republic applied for integration into the Federal Republic of Germany many other countries separated from their former political organization to move into political independence. Most of these countries, however, depended extremely on international socio-economic integration to start their own network of nation wide infrastructure and to have access to international development.

Planners and politicians meanwhile designed many rough plans while basic research is needed not only because of missing information but also because of quite different conditions as to traditional theoretical experiences.

The Institute of Regional Geography examined in this respect the urban and urban system development in Central and Eastern Europe acting on the financial support of the German Federal Ministry of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development. The project has been assisted by more than fifty experts from 14 different countries (Table 1). The study in the whole covers two main parts:

- international structures and tendencies of urban system development and
- the urban systems of the individual states and regions.

Table 1 Population and Capitals

Country	Population (mill. inhabitants)	Population-density (inh./km ²)	Capital (official language)
Byelorussia	10.3	50.1	Minsk
Czech Rep.	10.4	131.4	Praha
Estonia	1.6	35.2	Tallinn
Hungary	10.3	110.7	Budapest
Latvia	2.7	41.9	Riga
Lithuania	3.8	58.3	Vilnius
Moldavia	4.4	130.6	Chisinau
Poland	38.3	122.5	Warszawa
Rumania	23.3	98.1	Bucuresti
Slovakia	5.3	107.9	Bratislava
Slovenia	2.0	98.9	Ljubljana
Ukraine	52.0	86.1	Kyiw
Germany (in comparsion)	79.4	223.0	Bonn/Berlin

Remarks: Data about the western border region of Russia are not calculated.

From Ukraine only the western parts are researched.

The first part consequently deals with a classification of the important centers based on the prevailing political, administrative and high-ranking central functions as well as on traffic functions and population potentials (Figure 1). A combination of all these criteria results in a five categories urban center classification.

In the second part regional conditions of the present and future urban system development, structures of the historical background, the structure of population and economy, the transportation network and traffic flows, the environmental situation are examined in detail for all countries investigated in the project. In relation to that regional development tendencies and political planning concepts are evaluated.

The second part additionally describes the development paths of the capital and of its subordinate centers and highlights the advantages and disadvantages of development under changing political, economic and social conditions. All cities under investigation have been classified as 1st order, 2nd order etc., centers (e.g. Figure 2: Byelorussia).

Figure 1

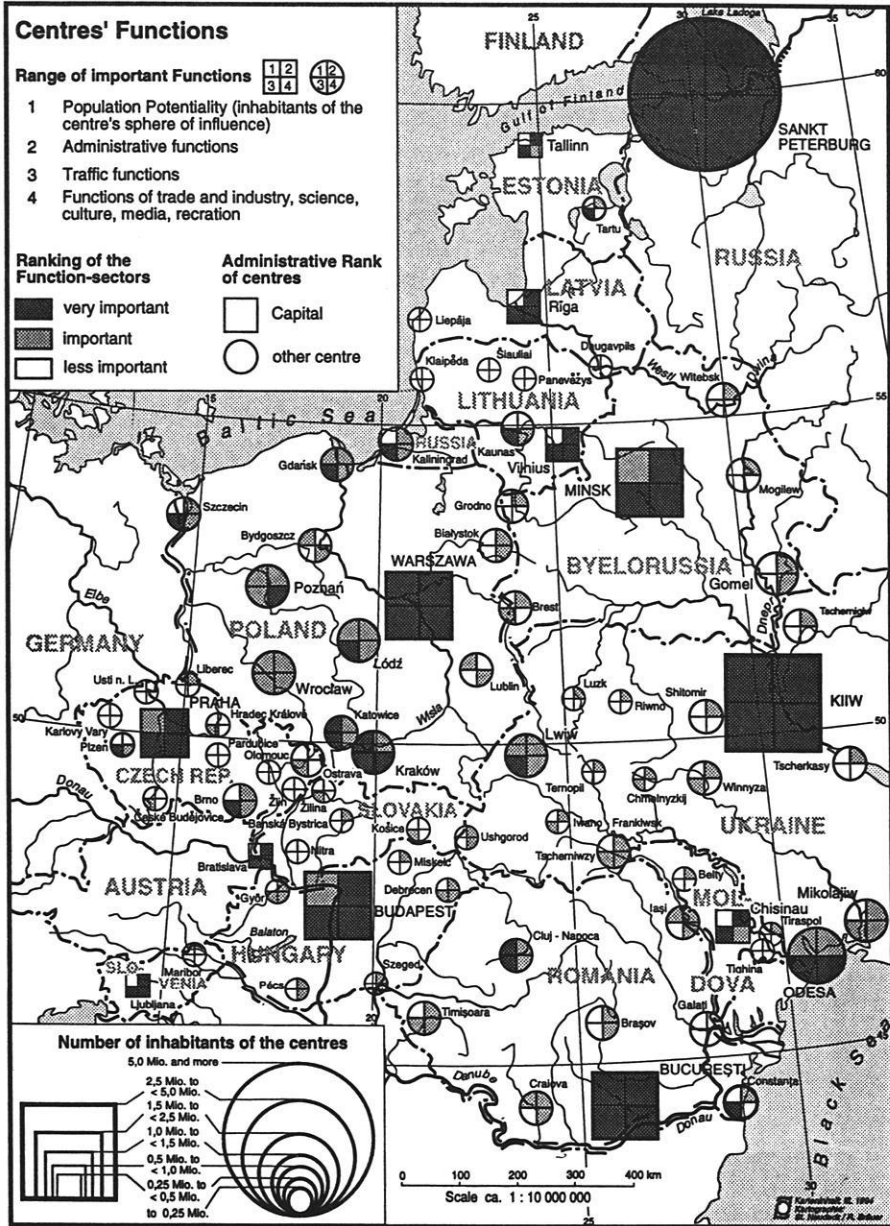
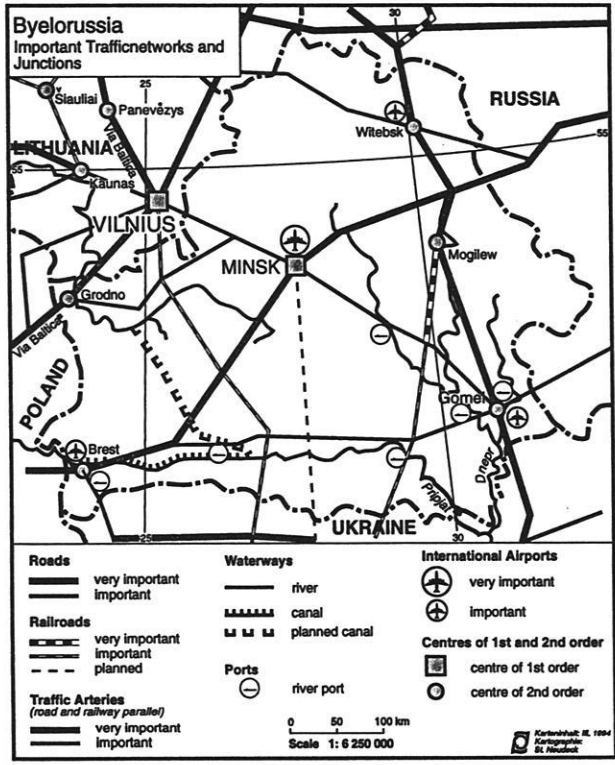


Figure 2



II. The present state of the urban centers and urban systems under transformation

The present period of changes in Central and Eastern Europe is characterized by many thorough transformations in the fields of politics and socio-economic conditions since the end of the 80's.

Most important as to urban centers and urban systems development may be the following:

- the fall of the Iron Curtain which brings the divisions and separate development of Eastern and Western Europe to an end;
- the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the Comecon organization (Council for mutual economic assistance, CMEA) which made possible of a new kind of partnership between the former socialist states in Europe;
- the reunification of Germany which renders the former divided urban systems of Western and Eastern Germany to integrate and restructure as well as to develop the capital of Berlin as a metropolis of European importance;
- the growing together of national markets inside the European Union which causes new imbalances between the increased economic and political power in Western Europe and the weaker but still existing economic and military potential of the East (especially Russia, Ukraine);
- the foundation of new states in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia;
- the transformation of former socialist states towards pluralism and democracy;
- the transformation of former centralized socialist planning economy into capitalist market economy.

For a realistic geographical assessment of the following centers' systems and regional development attention must be given to the fact that

- the Central and Eastern regions have to a large extent a related structure and are characterized by large areas and considerable distances;
- the surface is widely poor in reliefs and consequently does only seldom set imperative guidelines (with the exemption of South-Eastern Europe);
- the population density is considerably less compact than in Western Europe;
- the cities/population clusters are often surrounded by regions with a less compact population density so that the whole trade centers' system mostly turns out to be a network composed of island-like centers linked by traffic arteries.

1. One focal point of the investigation is the determination of centers' categories ranging from **A** to **E** (Figure 3).

The **A** category covers the 7 largest capitals, inclusive of St. Petersburg. These centers are characterized by their historical continuity as important political cores, by

their capital function for one of the bigger Central and Eastern European states as well as by the dominating position within their state territory. They, additionally, are going to take over international functions. They possess a great population potential within their spheres of influence. Those cities are Budapest, Bucharest, Kiev, Minsk, Prague, St. Petersburg and Warsaw which clearly differ from the other Central and Eastern European centers.

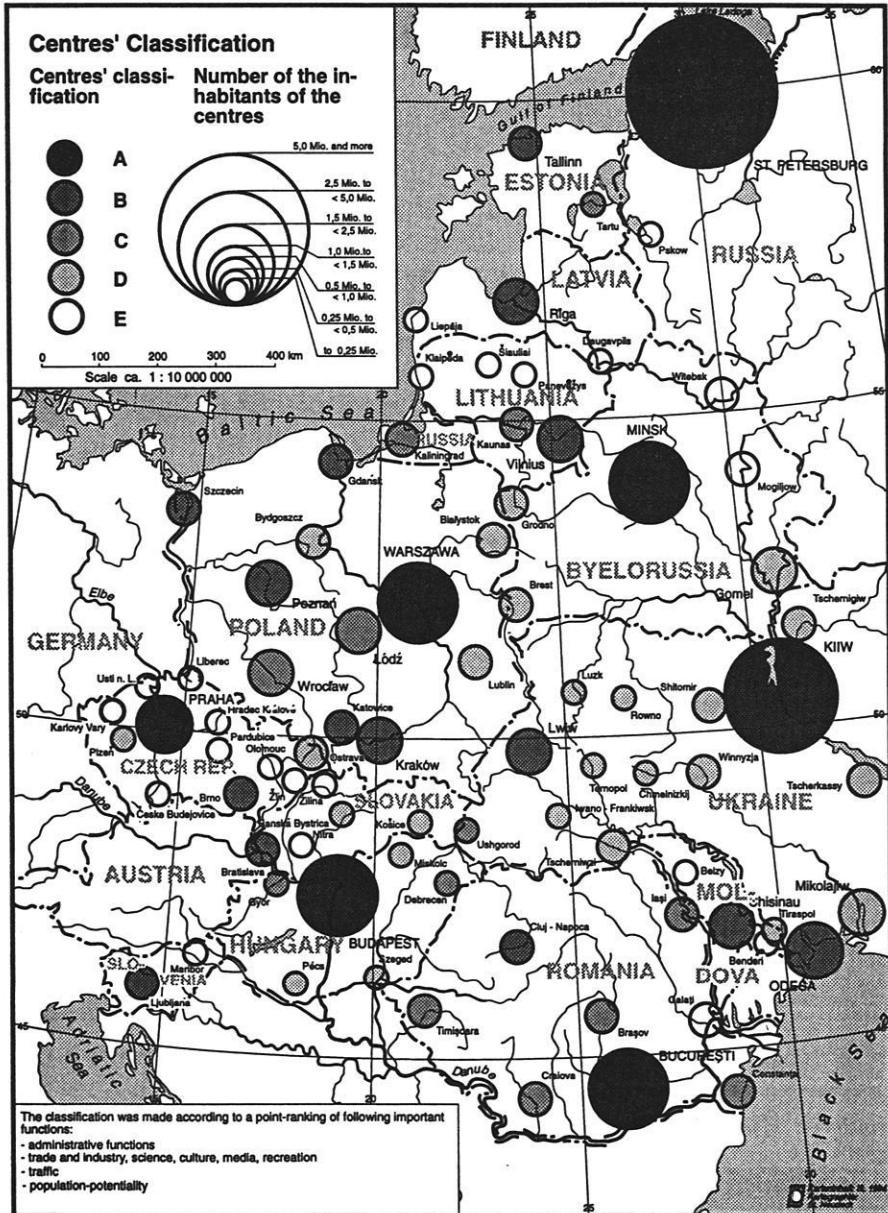
The **B** center/category is composed of 17 Central and Eastern European centers; among these range all other state capitals. Both the capitals, e.g. Riga, Vilnius, Ljubljana, Chisinau (Kishinev), and other B centers, e.g. Krakow, Odessa or Brno are the dominating centers within their respective regions and are characterized by an advantageous position within the national and partly even within international traffic network. Aside a few **A** centers, these historically grown centers are strong enough to take over international functions going beyond their previously mentioned national functions, such as the port of Gdąnsk or the trade fair city of Poznan.

C centers are smaller but never the less important large cities which, as a rule, form the political and administrative center of a district (komitat, judetz, oblast etc. as those districts are called) and which present a dominating influence reaching into adjoining regions. The position within their regions is historically grown, e.g. with Iasi, the historical capital, or with Timisoara, the Banat center. Their current importance is often increased by the allocation of national functions; this is for instance noticeable with the Rumanian port Constanta or the old-established Estonian university town Tartu. The pointed out **C** centers constitute, just as the **B** centers, interesting site alternatives to the **A** category centers which are often automatically preferred by foreign investors.

The **D** center category is composed of 25 centers within the Central and Eastern European territory under study. To this group belong towns of a predominantly regional importance: their activity is mainly concentrated on their own district or on an analogous political and administrative territory. The number of inhabitants of those towns and of their influence spheres are clearly in comparison with the **C** centers. However, their position inside the transportation network is less advantageous. The smaller low population density and the considerably long distances to other equally-ranked or higher-ranked centers implicate nevertheless that the **D** centers assume an important and uncontestedly dominating position within their respective regions, as for instance Szeged and Pecs in the south of Hungary as well as, a notable extreme, the Moldavian city of Tiraspol striving for a separate „Dniester Republic“.

The towns registered as **E** centers are mainly centers of their assigned districts (the so-called „komitat“ etc.), and, by German standards, satisfy the criteria of a superior center (Oberzentrum) or of a partially superior center. Examples are the Czech city of Liberec or the Slovenian city of Maribor.

Figure 3



2. The political and economic modifications in Central and Eastern Europe will substantially take place within the frame formed by the centers and the traffic arteries where the following changes become apparent:

- distinctive polarization tendencies in favour of large metropolises (**A** centers);
- moderate polarization tendencies in favour of the capitals of the new smaller states;
- development advantages for the especially West-orientated centers (western regions, ports, towns situated on the West-traffic arteries);
- development difficulties for most of the other towns and regions, above all for mono-structured sites as for instance those of the integrated iron and armament industry plants;
- uncertainties with the foreign military garrisons.

Large towns with millions of inhabitants and a capital function, which we assigned to the **A** center category, seem to be especially development-prone. An increasing polarization in favour of these centers is foreseeable. **A** similar prognosis, but in a slightly lower degree, is true for the **B** centers which became only independent states' capitals during the recent years, such as Ljubljana and Vilnius. Favourable development prospects also exist for the large ports on the Baltic sea and on the Black sea, for the Polish ports in addition to St. Peterburg, for Odessa, for Cherson (Ukraine) and for the Rumanian Constanta. A stronger dependence on the actual political developments in Central and Eastern Europe exists for the port centres Riga, Tallinn, Ventspils, Klaipeda and Kaliningrad since their future is decisively determined by the relationships with the Russian hinterland. Positive growth impulses become apparent or are in the offing in the western centres of Central and Eastern Europe, for instance in Poznan (Poland) and Győr (Hungary). In contrast to that, considerable difficulties become apparent for the large heavy industry sites, for the mining industry sites and for the energy management sites such as Nowa Huta (Poland), Kosice (Slovakia), Galati (Rumania) and Tshernobyl (Ukraine).

Among the Central and Eastern European traffic arteries (Figure 4 and Table 2) the European capital artery Berlin-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow is of prime importance. It is characterized by the succession of big population clusters and by intermediate great areas of low population density. In contrast to that artery the at present internationally much-discussed links towards the European North-East (Via Baltica, Via Hanseatica) are hardly more than intention statements for the moment. Those future visions are far advanced to the realities. Another traditional traffic and settlement artery runs in a westerly-easterly direction along the north foot of the uplands: Leipzig-Dresden-Wroclaw (Breslau)-Upper Silesian industrial region-Krakow-Lviv (Lvov); the economic importance of that artery speaks in favour of its further development. Within the boundaries of the former Czechoslovakia and parallel to that artery the Bohemian-Carpathian artery came into being during the 20th century; its future will especially depend on the developing relations between

Figure 4

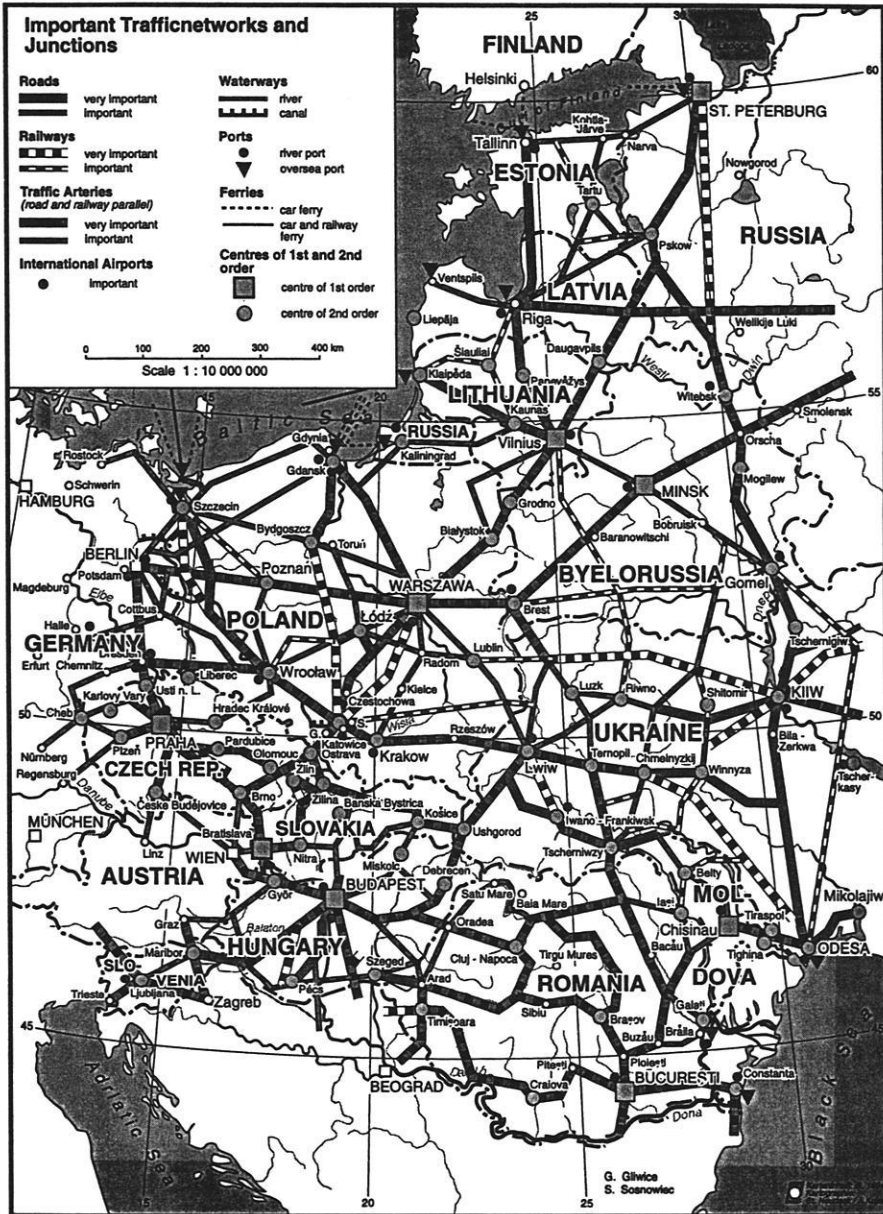


Table 2 International Main Traffic-arteries within Eastern Europe.

Preliminary remarks:

- Sequence of traffic-arteries irrelevant
 - Cities outside the research-field in brackets
 - Oblique points at branching of traffic-arteries
-

- (1) Berlin-Warsaw-St. Peterburg/Kiev-Moscow
(„Capitals-Artery“)
- (2) Dresden-Wroclaw-Katowice/Krakow-Lviv-Kiev
(„Artery along the north foot of the uplands“)
- (3) Nürnberg/München-Praha-Wroclaw/Ostrava-Poznan/Warsaw-Gdansk
(„Bavaria-Bohemia-Poland-Artery“)
- (4) Hamburg/Berlin-Dresden-Prague-Vienna-Bratislava
(continued by artery 6)
- (5) Southern Baltic region-Eastern Baltic region-St. Peterburg
(„Baltic Artery“ oder „Via Hanseatica“ and „Via Baltica“)
- (6) (Vienna)/Bratislava-Budapest (-Belgrade-Sofia)-Craiova/Brasov-
Bucharest-(Sofia)/Danube-mouth
(„Danube-Artery“)
(compare with artery 4)
- (7) Prague-Olomouc-Kosice-Uzhgorod/Ukraine-Lviv/Ukraine
(„Bohemia-Carpathian-Artery“)
- (8) Gdansk-Warsaw/Lodz-Katowice/Kraków-Brno-Vienna/Bratislava (-Trieste)
(„Vistula-Adriatic-Artery“)
- (9) St.Peterburg-Kiev-Odessa
(„Baltic Sea-Black Sea-Artery“)
- (10) Riga-Rezekne-Moscow
(compare with artery 11)
- (11) Riga/Klaipeda-Vilnius-Baranovichi/Minsk-Moscow/Kiev
(compare with artery 10)
- (12) Ukraine/Lviv-Uzhgorod-Budapest-(Zagreb)/Maribor-Ljubljana (-Trieste)
(„Ukraine-Italy-Artery“)
- (13) Ukraine-Tscherniwzi-Bucharest (-Sofia)
(„Ukraine-Moldavia-Artery“)

the two Czechoslovakian successor states. During the Iron-Curtain period, the Danube artery running south-east was split into a western branch (Austria-Yugoslavia-Greece) and into an eastern branch (Czechoslovakia-Hungary-Romania-Bulgaria) whose reunification is now under way. Their traffic links are at present being crippled due to the Yugoslav civil war. An integrating effect might emerge from the Danube-Main-Rhine-Waterway which was completed some years ago.

3. The current urban and regional policy of the Central and Eastern European states under investigation presently contents itself with shadowing the reported processes. The newly structured Central and Eastern European states are mainly still concerned with the elementary problems of political stabilization and economic restructuring. They are not able to deal with the requirements of a long-term urban and a regional development before their previously cited problems are solved. Their current regionally relevant tasks are the installation of the capital functions, the organization and the safeguarding of the new frontiers and the limitation of the most serious environmental damages. Elements of a wider ranging and further reaching urban and regional policy become at the earliest apparent in the traffic development programs initiated from the western leadership. An important and urgent task would be to record and to safeguard the serviceable knowledge pool of the former urban and regional planning institutions.

4. Relationships between the urban and regional development of Germany and of Central-Eastern Europe become most clearly evident in the large centres of the eastern part of Germany and in the immediate frontier regions. In that respect, Berlin plays a special part since its stabilization and potential development as a German metropolis with a European spillover effect would have decisive influences on the urban system of Poland and of the adjoining Central and Eastern Europe. The future of Berlin as that of the Saxonian centres of Leipzig, Dresden and Chemnitz will further be affected beyond all measure by the duration of the restructuring processes in Central and Eastern Europe which presently are above all perceived as a development obstacle for the economy of the new federal states. Hamburg, Munich (München) and Nuremberg (Nürnberg) could again open up their traditional contact and trading territories after the elimination of the Iron Curtain. The survey on the big centres reveals the close connection between the East German urban developments with the current economic crisis and the anticipated future upturn in Eastern Central Europe.

III. Considerations concerning the perspectives of the urban centres and systems

The political and economic future of the Central and Eastern European region located between Germany and the European Union on one hand, and Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States on the other hand is linked with a bundle of changes in development. Therefore, it seems to be appropriate to draft some

possible political and economic development variants and their conditions in Central and Eastern Europe with in terms of urban and regional development.

1. It is more or less assured that the free-market system turned out to be appropriate and that the economy of all Central and Eastern European states will probably undergo a thereto orientated irreversible development. Therewith, both the rhythm of change and the relationship between free-market development and differently orientated developments vary from country to country while a layering between the immediately adjoining states, the other Eastern-Central European states and the Commonwealth of Independent States becomes apparent. Important repercussions on the urban and regional development arise from the more favourable development of the biggest centres (especially **A** centres), and from the westward orientated regions and towns, from the increasing polarization between the preferential regions and the other regions as well as between large cities and countryside, from the crises of many monostructured industrial and mining regions, from the restructuring of the rural areas especially in agriculture as well as in many frontier regions as a consequence of the there appearing, glaring prosperity gap. This can result in various regional developments for instance for the future importance of the great West-East traffic arteries, for the relationships of the ports to their hinterland, or for the layout development of the frontier regions.

2. The European Union brings its influence to bear upon the Central and Eastern European states with corresponding consequential effects for the urban and regional development by means of its economic association and admission policies. The degree of integration into the hitherto existing West European economy system will decisively determine the future developments of the big centres and of the industrial regions, of the large traffic arteries and of the ports as well as of the various frontier regions in Central and Eastern Europe. The present economic policy of the European Union refuses free access to the European Union's market for the steel, textile, agricultural and some other products of our eastern neighbours and thus complicates the redevelopment and the world market connection of the respective branches of economy and of the Central and Eastern European regions maintained by them. Space-relevant repercussions on the frontier regions additionally arise from the provisions for the external European Union's frontiers which along the EU East borderline, affect for the time being almost only Germany (aside from Italy/Slovenia), but which will also affect in the next future the new EU member-states Austria and possibly Finland. The speed and the intensity of the capital functions' relocation to Berlin might be of great importance to the Eastern-Central European region far beyond the German frontier.

3. The political and economic future of Russia as well as those of the Eastern European states united in the Commonwealth of Independent States is at present difficult to appraise. The development potentials of the Eastern European centres and regions are extensive: continuation of the strictly classified and Moscow-orientated centres' hierarchy, greater independence, self-development and variety of the new capitals as well as of the province and district centres, quicker development

of the west-orientated centres and regions. From the German and Western European view the on-going developments in the western Commonwealth of Independent States' regions are of special interest: new impulses for St. Peterburg, upturn boom of western frontier regions and of the regions situated on the trunk road Berlin-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow; intensive relationships of the Baltic ports to the Eastern European hinterland, the future part played by the district (Russian term: oblast) of Kaliningrad which became a Russian exclave.

4. Since the removal of the Iron Curtain, the civic war in the disintegrated Yugoslavia has become the enemy of a peaceful regional and urban development in South-Eastern Europe. During the period of East-West confrontation the relationships between Central and South-Eastern Europe were split in a eastern and a western axis: GDR-Czechoslovakia-Hungary-Rumania-Bulgaria as well as Austria-Yugoslavia-Greece-Turkey. At present most of the links on land routes with the South East are maintained via Rumania bypassing Yugoslavia. This situation overtaxes Rumania's infrastructure. The reintegration of the Yugoslavian successor states into the European Commonwealth is conceivable in various variants from which correspondingly different urban and regional developments may arise in the European South-East. After a political stabilization we can also count on a navigation revival on the Danube in connection with the transcontinental Danube-Rhine-Waterway.

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