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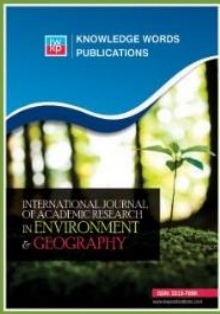
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## Socio-demographic Tendencies in the Romanian Urban Environment Included in the Carpathian Convention

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### Abstract

With its geographical position, spatial and altitude surface, the Romanian Carpathians create changes in the normal order of latitude geographic areas and determine the levelling of the biopedo-climatical conditions that lead to a diversity of the economic activities. A unique geographic aspect is given by the long term inhabiting, distribution and population density in the urban and rural localities in the Romanian Carpathian space.

By drawing up the Sustainable development strategy of the Romanian Carpathians (this strategy was developed by the National Institute of Research-Development in Tourism in 2015, based on a contract with the Tourism National Authority in Romania, with an emphasis on tourism), the specialists have made also a brief analysis of the rural and urban population. For both environments, one can notice a decrease of the population in a quick rhythm. Although, at world level they consider that the tendency is of population increase-for those who will live in urban areas at the end of the XXIth century. In this context, a more profound analysis for the Romanian towns included in this Carpathian Convention has been realised.

**Keywords:** Carpathian Convention, Population, Urban Environment.

### Introduction

On the Romanian territory, the Carpathian Mountains cover 66303 km<sup>2</sup>, which represent 27.8% of the country surface, with a length of more than 910 km, between the Tisa valley, the Danube Gorge (Svinița) and the Someș valley. Having in view several tectonic, geological and geographic particularities, pedo-climatical conditions, the biodiversity of the flora and fauna, these mountains include three groups.

Each of the three main branches of the Romanian Carpathians represents units with various geographic characters and with different orientations of the curving direction. The first branch, named the Orientali Carpathians occupies more than half of the mountain space, the

rest being divided between the Meridionali Carpathians (21%) and the Occidentali Carpathians (24%).

At European level, the Carpathians are included in the mountains with middle and low altitude, the general medium altitude being approx. 840 m and almost 90% of their surface is situated under 1500 m.

The Romanian Carpathians are characterised by a great variety of landscapes, selectively highlighted by bio-pedo-climatic and hydrological elements. The climatic levels, the latitude coverage, component massifs, local particularities are expressed in the structure of the flora and fauna, in the types of soil, in the multitude of springs, surface waters and lakes. The main river system is Carpathian (regarding the supply type) – here can be found 66% of the water total quantity that supports the multiannual existence of running waters.

On the other hand, the variations of the soil thickness, the micro-relief, intense movement can cause local plant associations to 'settle' lower, below the altitude levels for which they are considered characteristic. These aspects confer a unique touch to the Romanian Carpathians.

All along the inhabiting epochs, human pressure led to important changes of the Carpathian ecosystems, extending settlements and exploiting the soil and sub-soil resources. Thus, in many mountain massifs, the superior limit of the forest was lowered with about 300-400m below the natural one; for large surfaces the forest was replaced by secondary meadows and hayfields and in some inter-Carpathian depressions people extended the agricultural lands. The time and space expansion for human activities in the Romanian Carpathians was favoured by their natural conditions that, from the social and economic point of view, through regional unit and local diversification, have provided the population with a great variety of potential resources (minerals and rocks, water resources, springs, forest fund, game, etc.)

The humanising level advanced till the urban settlements level, contributing effectively to an intensified adjustment of the geographical landscape. The implications and social-economic consequences diversified and imposed in the landscape, in time, from the human, cultural, economic, political and administrative point of view, while developing productive, commercial and transport activities.

## **Methodology**

Tackling the urban space aspect in the Romanian Carpathians has been made gradually by gathering data and bibliographic and statistic information. First, they followed the steps of applying the Carpathian Convention in Romania and read the legislation dedicated to this aspect. Then, they selected the localities that are part of the Carpathian Convention and ranked them according to their importance - county capitals, municipalities, cities.

Later, through the connection with the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, they asked for support from the experts inside this institution in order to receive those socio-demographic data that can be useful in order to get a very clear image on the demographic evolution of the urban and rural population for the last general census of the population.

Using the data available, the authors of this article passed to their analysis and interpretation aiming to show that the Romanian Carpathian space is facing trends of continuous depopulation and that economic and juridical measures are needed to stop this phenomenon. In comparison with the other member states of the Convention, Romania owns

the largest mountain area. The entire Carpathian area in Romania presents specific demographic aspects given by the evolution of demographic phenomena in the past 25 years.

Based on the statistical data offered by the specialists inside the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, they noticed that most of the counties that are part of this convention are confronted with some important demographic decrease. Also, they used all the data and information obtained by the institute in the last 3-4 years through the field research trips, in different towns in the country, part of the mountainous area, for different projects and studies of developing tourism through public and private initiatives.

### **The Carpathic Convention aspect in Romania**

Following the sequential meetings of the member states, between 2008-2015, they settled several aspects connected to structure and functionality regarding the Carpathian Convention themes. In conformity with the map belonging to the Romanian partner in the Carpathian Convention, the surface that has been recognised represents about 43% of the territory of the Carpathian chain. The origin and evolution of the Carpathian population is included and fits entirely within the total population of the Romanian territory.

In the past two decades, the stability of the mountain population, of agricultural producers, the consolidation and revival of localities, villages, households from here should have been an essential goal and a national priority. But the statistical data from the censuses after 1990 contradict this purpose. At the level of the mountain area, the Carpathian inferior 'floor', situated under the limit of 1000 m altitude, corresponds to the most favourable conditions for the human habitat, grouping the depressions and intra-mountain valleys where are concentrated most of the human settlements.

In the floor that is superior to the 1000m limit, several households group as human settlements of scattered villages. For a household the medium surface varies in function of the altitude: 2.5 ha for 600-700m and 3.5-4.5ha for over 800 m.<sup>1</sup>

Before 1980, in the Romanian mountain space lived about 20% of the country population, being concentrated in several localities, most of them in non-technicalised areas. From 1966, the creation of small monoindustrial towns determined a rise of the urban population. After 1990, the demographic phenomenon started to evolve differently.

The lack of some structural policies from the last governments to stabilise and stop the depopulation of the mountain area has generated the phenomenon of internal and external migration of youth from the mountain rural areas. The disappearance of tens of thousands of households and many old villages and the existence of some aging population categories in these localities explains the continuous failure of the policies applied by the government institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>The Romanian Academy/Department of economic, legal and sociology sciences/National Institute of economic research/Romanian Centre of compared economy and consensus/Radu Rey (2008) "Comparative study of European strategies on mountain areas, with particular reference to the Romanian Carpathians' (code 01.2007-2008) synthesis - paper/2008. Decision no.1189/2014 on the organisation and functioning of the Agency for Mountain Area, in force since 01.02.2015. The Mountain Area Agency has its headquarters in Vatra Dornei municipality, str. Runc no. 23, Suceava county, but it is not yet organised functionally and statistically.

### **Characteristics of the Romanian Urban Environment from the Carpathian Convention**

The Carpathians as a whole, represented, from pre-history till nowadays, a secure home, with good shelters for the native Dacian-Getic population and, later, Romanian, which gathered both defence natural conditions (slopes, ridges, rocks, gorges, forests and a rich hydrographical area), possibilities of subsistence (water, land for crops, pastures, hay fields, wood, mineral resources, building rocks, fishing and hunting funds). More than that, people also had favourable conditions for commercial trade through the passages to Moldova, the Romanian Plain, the Banat-Crisana Plain, the Transylvanian Depression, places that were used later for designing railways and roads.

The mountain landscapes, with their regional diversifications, in function of altitude, slope orientation and the intra-mountain depressions have corresponding various potential resources used differently in economy. The diversification of natural resources generates a variety of types of economic activities and includes in the territory profile the geographic discontinuity areas, differentiated inside the three Romanian Carpathian branches.

The Carpathian population forms a component part of the Romanian geography environment, different concerning both the time flow and the spatial distribution as a product and as an active factor of transforming the existent geography landscape. On the basis of the geographical particularities of the population distribution, the anthropic and natural landscape can be differentiated, as a millennial achievement of human society.

The contact unwinding for centuries between the mountain nature and society, amplified by the modern civilisation expanding towards the mountain altitude, has produced important modifications in the mountain ecosystems and not only there but gradually inside the economic and cultural traditions. In general, the Carpathians have not rejected but attracted population. Of the nearly 50 million people that live and work in the European mountain system, our country has an important share in its Carpathian homeland, where still exist about 2500 rural settlements and 80 cities, of which some with a special economic and cultural importance, like Alba Iulia, Braşov, Petroşani, Hunedoara, Reşiţa, Vatra Dornei, etc.

Taking into consideration the territorial and demographic system of the Carpathian Convention we can deduce the following distribution of the types of settlements (Table no. 1, Figure no. 1 and 2).

After 1990, the biggest economic setback was seen in mono-industrial towns, focused on a single economic function (The project ESPON 2006 1.1.1. - Potential for polycentric development in Europe has set forth the functional urban areas and metropolitan growth areas in Romania. Local urban poles can be created). The urban population decreases constantly but slowly while the rural population decreases much faster. In conformity with Law no.351/2001, the city network includes localities that have more than 10,000 inhabitants. In the table 2 with the total number of urban population one can see that many cities do not respect this request.

The 35 towns that do not comply with this minimal condition need to revise their juridical and administrative status, or, by case, should implement special measures depending on their profile, that would help them recuperate their status through direct investments in infrastructure and economic activities.

More than that, the central administration and the county and local public administration should create a set of measures and facilities that would make private investors come in order to finally succeed in attracting a stable population in time and space.

**Table no. 1 – The territorial-administrative structure in the Carpathian Convention for Romania (2015)**

No.	County	Total territorial-administrative	Municipalities	Towns	Commune	Villages
1.	Alba	50	3	5	42	547
2.	Arad	30	0	2	28	149
3.	Argeş	15	0	0	15	51
4.	Bacău	23	1	4	18	98
5.	Bihor	45	0	4	41	226
6.	Bistriţa Năsăud	29	0	1	28	80
7.	Braşov	44	3	4	37	111
8.	Buzău	13	-	2	11	113
9.	Caraş - Severin	59	0	7	52	235
10.	Cluj	25	0	1	24	119
11.	Covasna	44	2	3	39	121
12.	Dâmboviţa	6	0	0	6	28
13.	Gorj	13	0	3	6	85
14.	Harghita	57	4	4	49	202
15.	Hunedoara	69	6	6	57	460
16.	Maramureş	50	2	9	39	121
17.	Mehedinţi	20	2	1	17	102
18.	Mureş	13	0	1	12	71
19.	Neamţ	26	1	1	24	110
20.	Prahova	23	0	6	17	104
21.	Sălaj	18	1	1	16	76
22.	Satu Mare	15	0	1	14	54
23.	Sibiu	21	0	5	16	53
24.	Suceava	50	2	5	43	156
25.	Timiş	8	0	1	7	41
26.	Vâlcea	18	0	3	15	105
27.	Vrancea	10	0	0	10	56
	<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>3675</b>

Source: Statistical and component data taken from the mayor hall websites, 2015

Note: For the towns, all the component localities and villages belonging to the current urban structures have been included.

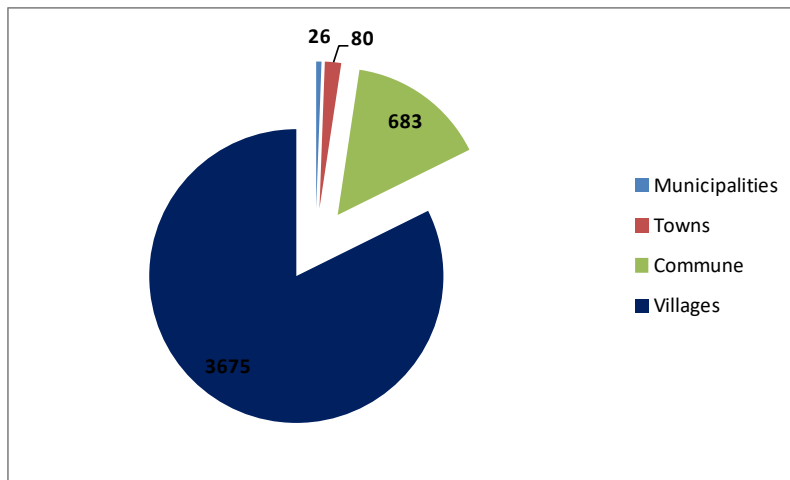


Figure 1. The territorial administrative structure in the Carpathian Convention for Romania (2015)

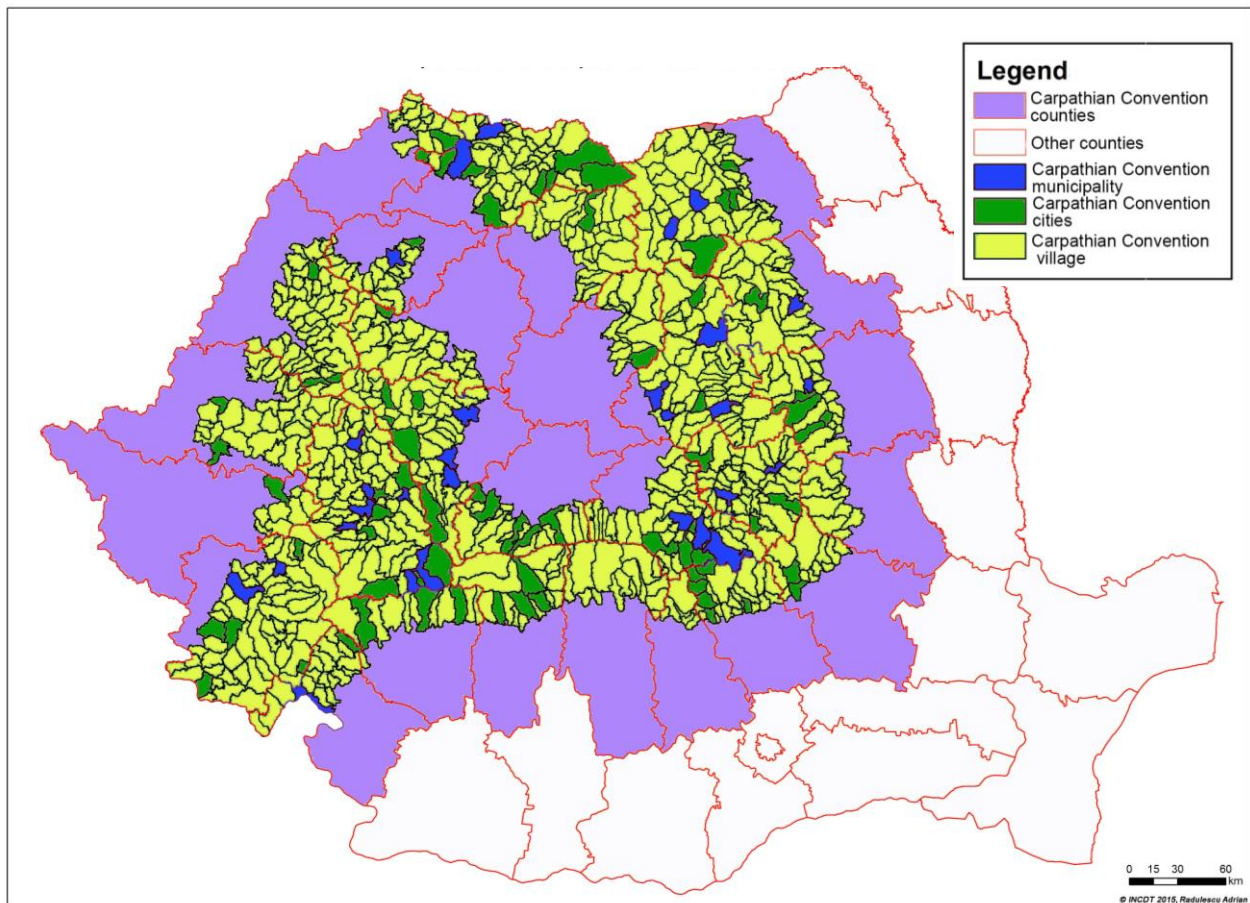


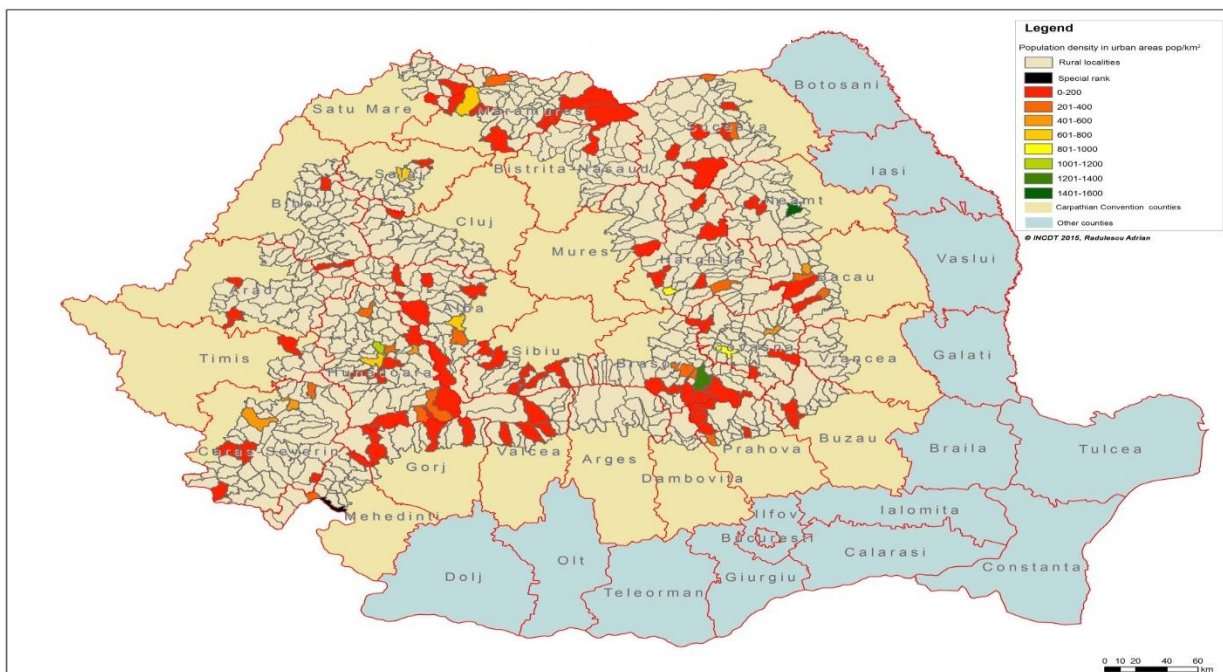
Figure 2. Administrative territorial units of Romania, part of the Carpathian Convention (2015)

There are counties that are part of the Carpathian Convention that have no town on the list, even if for other counties were accepted towns lying outside the Carpathian area, situated at altitudes lower than 200 m. Thus, for the Dâmbovița County, the Pucioasa and Fieni towns could be included as they lie on the exterior line of the Carpathian Mountains (Figure no. 3 and Table no. 2).

The localities with a population between 4,000-10,000 inhabitants should be reviewed from the juridical and administrative point of view as having a future potential of gaining a polarising role, for the rural-urban relation. In the future, these can become small urban centres with polarising role for all the neighbouring rural settlements.

The quick development of some peri-urban localities where the structure of facilities and services has not been adapted to the fast growth of the number of inhabitants and creates multiple problems for the transport and urban development. This aspect is relevant for the metropolitan areas situated close to some mountain ranges.

An example is the Florești locality, situated in a hilly area on the superior corridor of the Someș Mic river, in the area of the Apuseni Mountains - Occidentali Carpathians, otherwise a rather hilly area (the Gilău-Florești corridor), in the western part of the Cluj-Napoca municipality, whose population has increased 10 times in the past 15 years and which is included the Cluj municipality area. The village, locality residence, has mainly lost its identity, becoming a village that was systematised in a hurry. Thus, it should be declared a town or a component locality of the Cluj Napoca municipality.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Law no.351/2001 approving the PATN section IV highlights 17 Areas lacking towns within a radius of 25-30 km, which require priority actions for the development of localities with intercity services role, comprising 452 localities, i.e. approx. 17% of the total number of localities.



Figure 3. Geographical distribution of population density in Romania, in urban areas of the Carpathian Convention (2015)

Table no. 2 – Concerning the degree of demographic evolution in the urban localities of the Carpathian Convention taking into consideration the total population level

No.	County	Urban locality	1992	2002	2011	2014
1.	Alba	m. Alba Iulia	71168	66942	63538	73776
		M Aiud	31894	28934	22876	26543
		Abrud	6729	6195	5072	32506
		Baia de Arieș	5001	4669	3761	5595
		Câmpeni	8878	8080	7221	4158
		Cugir	31877	25977	21376	7761
		Sebeș	29754	28603	27019	27129
		Zlatna	9391	8612	7490	8076
2.	Arad	Lipova	11993	11236	10313	11511
		Pâncota	7474	7186	6946	8239
3.	Argeș	nu	0	0	0	0
4.	Bacău	m. Moinești	25560	24787	21787	24813
		Comănești	25020	24811	18568	24219
		Dărmănești	13921	14194	12247	14774
		Slănic Moldova	5323	4996	4198	5206
		Tg. Ocna	16122	13576	11300	13312
5.	Bihor	Aleșd	10842	10415	10066	11352
		Nucet	2523	2399	2165	2097
		Stei	10415	8736	6529	7596
		Vașcău	3313	2854	2315	2510
6.	Bistrița Năsăud	Sângeorz Băi	10430	10200	9679	11567
7.	Brașov	m. Brașov	323736	285712	253200	291490
		m. Codlea	24547	23604	21708	26192
		m. Săcele	30234	29915	30798	35638
		Ghimbav – declared town in 2002	5360	5112	4698	5885
		Predeal	7296	5615	4755	5282
		Râșnov	16347	15456	15022	17481
		Zărnești	26319	25446	23476	26747
8.	Buzău	Nehoiu	12659	11631	10211	11383
		Pătârlagele		8290	7304	7917
9.	Caraș Severin	Anina	11292	9167	7485	30803
		B. Herculane	6333	6019	5008	89862
		Caransebes	31878	28301	24689	9429
		Moldova Noua	16862	13917	12350	5284
		Oravita	15228	12858	11382	13806

		Otelu Rosu	13075	11749	10510	13604
		Resita	96918	87411	73282	12859
<b>10.</b>	<b>Cluj</b>	Huedin	9921	9439	9346	9638
<b>11.</b>	<b>Covasna</b>	m.Sfântu Gheorghe	68359	63363	56006	65446
		m. Tg. Secuiesc	22951	20488	18491	20500
		Baraolt	10399	9670	8672	9441
		Covasna	12476	11369	10114	11400
		Intorsura Buzăului	8612	8926	7528	9305
<b>12.</b>	<b>Dâmbovița</b>	nu	0	0	0	0
<b>13.</b>	<b>Gorj</b>	Bumbești- Jiu	11153	10617	8932	10232
		Novaci	6422	6105	5431	5783
		Tismana/ 2002	8476	7894	7035	7209
<b>14.</b>	<b>Harghita</b>	m. Gheorghieni	21444	20018	18377	20189
		m.M.Ciuc	46228	42601	38966	42382
		m. Odorheiu S.	39959	36967	34257	38785
		m. Toplița	17148	15880	13929	16158
		B. Tușnad	1953	1728	1641	1674
		Bălan	10867	7902	6115	8081
		Borsec	3053	2864	2585	2773
		Vlăhița	7613	7042	6898	7650
<b>15.</b>	<b>Hunedoara</b>	m. Brad	18853	16482	14495	16202
		m.Deva	78438	70834	61123	70919
		m.Hunedoara	81337	74415	60625	74961
		m.Lupeni	32853	31502	23390	27664
		m.Orăștie	24083	21213	18227	22796
		m.Petroșani	52390	46614	37160	43901
		m. Vulcan	34524	30555	24160	29404
		Aninoasa	5569	5106	4360	4853
		Călan	14438	13030	11279	13462
		Geoagiu	6525	5984	5294	5679
		Hațeg	11599	10910	9685	11007
		Petrila	29302	25840	22692	25472
		Simeria	14320	13895	12556	14131
		Uricani	12835	10227	8972	10003
<b>16.</b>	<b>Maramureș</b>	m.Baia Mare	149205	142856	123738	148581
		m.Sighetu Marmației	44185	42618	37640	44332
		Baia Sprie	16068	16609	15476	17098
		Borșa	27450	27667	27611	29813
		Cavnic	5770	5205	4976	5350
		Dragomirești/2002	3479	3132	3213	3279
		Săliștea de Sus		5196	4893	
		Seini	9180	10105	8987	9578

		Târgu Lăpuș	14251	13355	11744	13320
		Tăuții Măgheruș /2002	6553	6713	7138	7998
		Vișeu de Sus	19189	16879	15037	18329
<b>17.</b>	<b>Mehedinți</b>	m. Dr. T. Severin	112156	104557	92617	111048
		Baia de Aramă	5604	5648	5349	5629
		Orșova	15985	12965	10441	13135
<b>18.</b>	<b>Mureș</b>	Sovata	12074	9987	10385	10620
<b>19.</b>	<b>Neamț</b>	m. Piatra Neamț	123360	112872	85055	16492
		Bicaz	8806	8428	6543	8764
<b>20.</b>	<b>Prahova</b>	Azuga	6477	5213	4440	4936
		Breaza	19293	18199	15928	16911
		Bușteni	12451	10463	8894	10013
		Comarnic	13809	13378	11970	12594
		Sinaia	15407	12512	10410	11822
		Slănic	7626	7113	6034	6073
<b>21.</b>	<b>Sălaj</b>	m. Zalău	68404	65550	56202	69915
		Jibou	11980	11306	10407	11948
<b>22.</b>	<b>Satu Mare</b>	Negrești Oaș	16669	13871	11867	16908
<b>23.</b>	<b>Sibiu</b>	Avrig	14867	14260	12815	7807
		Cisnădie	17871	15648	14282	9625
		Miercurea Sibiului/2002	4182	4063	3910	2438
		Săliște	6103	5795	5421	5954
		Tălmăciu	9367	7147	6905	8102
<b>24.</b>	<b>Suceava</b>	m.Câmpulung Moldovenesc	22114	20041	16722	20328
		M. Vatra Dornei	18467	16321	14429	17342
		Broșteni/2004	6789	6603	5506	6558
		Frasin/2002	6553	6532	5876	6652
		Gura Humorului	16635	15656	13667	17115
		Solca	4772	2513	2188	2611
		Vicovu de Sus /2002	13082	14125	13308	15929
<b>25.</b>	<b>Timiș</b>	Oraș Făget/1994	7722	7213	6761	7640
<b>26.</b>	<b>Vâlcea</b>	B.Olănești	4778	4610	4186	4590
		Brezoi	7577	6859	6022	7261
		Călimănești	9094	8605	7622	8929
		Horezu	7245	6807	6263	7129
<b>27.</b>	<b>Vrancea</b>	nu	0	0	0	0

Source: INSEE, statistical data from the Population censuses in Romania

But there are also small towns, like Borsec in the Orientali Carpathians, that at a certain moment seemed completely degraded, with aspect of mountain village, but which in the past five years with small Romanian and foreign investments that stimulated the renaissance of tourism managed to gain back its profile of mountain town, with an architecture dating from

the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Romanian Kingdom (The National Institute of Research-Development in Tourism contributed to the tourism development in this locality through projects in 2011).

After having read all the documents, the EU objectives are connected especially to reducing poverty, increasing employment, developing the peripheral rural areas and small towns. With reference to the medium and small towns functioning inside the local development through the hierarchical structures of economic activities and services offered to the population, the starting point is represented by those public or private institutions that are organised in function of partnerships and efficiency, while the superior management level is located in large cities, usually regional urban centres.

### Conclusions

Based on the statistical data provided by the specialists inside the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, we can notice that in most of the counties that are part of this convention important demographical decreases are noticed. The decline of the territorial system in the mountain area is increased by constraints of competitive nature that can determine a sudden drop of the specific economic activity associated to incapacity of self-regulation as a consequence of the previous excessive control.

To this are added the migration of the labour force and the more profound lack of human resources on a long term. An important role in specialisation is played by the centralisation of the political-administrative function at macro-urban level and the weak functioning of this at the level of small and medium urban centres existing in the territory. On one hand, one can notice a decrease of the birth rate and an increase of mortality and on the other hand an acceleration of the migration phenomenon, especially towards other European countries, first for work and later for a permanent change of the residence.

Economic activities specific to urban congestions, oriented mostly to the secondary and third sector, determine functionally the 'city-adjointing areas' relationship, meaning other small towns and localities. But the productive aspect is weak – of creating added value for the natural resources exploited in the Romanian mountain space.

Having in view the analysis of all statistical data that were available, we could determine in short a certain typology of the Carpathian settlements from the demographical point of view, that is:

- ❑ urban settlements with evolution of natural positive movement and positive migration value (ex. Alba Iulia, Aiud, Sebeş, Braşov, Sângeorz Băi, Râşnov, Huedin etc.);
- ❑ urban settlements with evolution of the negative natural movement and negative migration value (ex. Dărmăneşti, Codlea, Zărneşti, Nehoiu etc.);
- ❑ urban settlements with constant values of the natural movement and constant migratory value (ex. Lipova, Baraolt, Novaci, Topliţa, Miercurea Ciuc, Borsec etc.).

Regarding the migrations of internal character, one can say that there is a population movement from the urban environment to the rural environment, demographic aspect unknown in the countries of Western and Southern Europe. Here (France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Germany) the migration of the large urban centres focuses on small and medium towns with new opportunities of economic development.

Creating networks of small towns in mountain areas less populated and weaker from the economic point of view is also important. The future of many rural areas is more and more connected to the development of towns. The town-village relationship is different in densely populated and weakly populated regions, like the ones in the mountain areas. In these areas, the reorganisation of the urban potentials is sometimes the only possibility to get a group of consumers to maintain commercial units and services, thing that is not possible independently at the moment, as there are no supporting elements.

One of the noticed negative aspects is the fast evolution of peripheral areas and localities neighbouring the large urban centres. For the whole country territory, the development of inhabiting and activities took place without a previous plan, despite the existence of some plans to design the territory, eliminating lands with agricultural and forest use, with consequences on the quality of environment and life and living (reducing productive agricultural surfaces, reducing the speed of vehicles and extending travel time, rise of the air and noise pollution, degrading of areas with attractive landscape aspect).

In this context an intense support is necessary - for the medium and small farms with regulation and support intervention from the state, to save one of the most fragile and valuable economy and cultural heritage in a sustainable way. The appearance of new world challenges imposes a functional re-evaluation of the urban centre position in relation to the roles inside the system and its reorientation towards tertiary and rural communities' activities.

In the last decades of the XXth century, the use of the 'polarisation' concept has intensified, term meaning to attract, to focus the attention, activities, influences towards the same point (Larousse dictionary) and names 'the physical process through which a system acquires preferential properties after a certain direction' (Explicative dictionary of the Romanian language). This concept, treated theoretically is too little applied in Romania.

The functioning and organisation of modern society cannot be planned without the existence of centres that can offer and concentrate services, from the basic to the most 'rare' or sophisticated. The distribution of population influences the polarisation of the spatial system when the availability of necessary human resources is extremely important for the specific economic functions. At the same time, the demographic factor is an indication of polarisation, the demographic movements indicating the polarisation directions<sup>3</sup>.

Taking into consideration the evolution of urban population from censuses, we can notice a decrease of population especially for the medium and small towns from the Carpathian Convention. One of the objectives of the convention is that of maintaining the population in the sub-mountainous areas and a stable network of small and medium towns, especially in the extra-Carpathian area and to keep a partial stability of the mountain population through the emerging tourism.

Creating some juridical and fiscal instruments could offer a background of consolidation and development for small and medium towns in the mountain area, as development poles and for larger localities for improving life quality, stabilisation of the estate market, consolidation of urban planning and capitalising the existent heritage.

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<sup>3</sup> The growth poles were established by HG no.998/2008 and the development poles and urban centres were identified by HG no.1149/2008 concerning the amendment and completion of H.G. no. 998/2008 for the designation of national growth poles which offer priority for investments from the EU funding national programmes.

More than that, through the European experience, in Romania, regional conventions can be settled to support the socio-economic development that should be focused on a certain mountain massif (Retezat, Făgăraș, Piatra Craiului etc.). In perspective, political decisions and investments that have a significant spatial impact will have to inspire from a model of polycentric development, on mountain massifs, with the creation of several dynamic areas of economic integration at national and European level. In this context, the role of small and medium towns in the Romanian mountain space would intensify, in socio-demographic, economic, cultural and environment protection plan.

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