



Deutsch-Rumänische  
Industrie- und Handelskammer  
Camera de Comerț și Industrie  
Româno-Germană



# CITIES OF TOMORROW

Quality of Life

**FOLLOW UP  
BROCHURE**

PREMIUM PARTNERS



GOLD PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS



BRONZE PARTNER



“

*How can a city be soft?  
Cities are made of concrete and glass and stone.  
But, of course, the people make the city soft.*

Arch. David Sim, Autor “Soft City”, Partner Softer Sweden



## Cities. Since 2013.

Cities of Tomorrow, already at its **11th edition**, has proven itself as Romania's top forum for business, architecture, urbanism and administration. Our experience and know-how, gathered during years of activity on and with relation to the Romanian and German markets, are the foundation of the event structure, the chosen topics and the promoted projects. Our common goal is to contribute to **Romania's competitiveness** and to set the stage for **sustainable development and smart solutions**. Hence, we encourage **cooperation and dialogue** between all involved actors as the means towards a more attractive and more modern country.

## 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. **Cities of Tomorrow** offers a platform for **exchange of ideas, concepts and know-how** between the three entities – the business environment, public administration and the civil society. The way we understand to **engage as a community**, as a company or public authority, to have a **unitary voice** and to constantly get involved together, defines our **future**.

# ABOUT



discussion panels



project competition  
public administration, business  
environment, civil society



project marketplace



exhibition area



networking



roundtables



international  
best practice examples



B2B platform

**11**

editions

**86**

topics

**220+**

speakers

**3000+**

participants

**80+**

exhibitors

**71**

roundtables

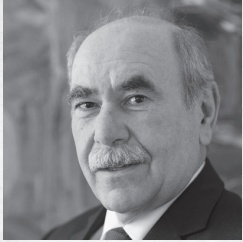
**30.100+**

social media interactions

**1.600+**

media appearances

**CONCEPT**



**Ivo Gönner**

Mayor of the City of Ulm  
(1992 - 2016); President of the Council  
of the Danube Cities and Regions



**Hilmar von Lojewski**  
Municipal Councillor German  
Association of Cities



**Ulrich Sierau**  
Mayor of Dortmund



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



**David Sim**  
Author "Soft City",  
Partner Softer Sweden



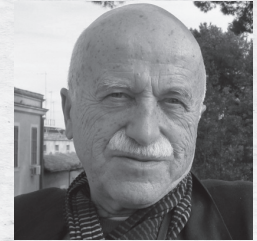
**Arch. Dorothee Dubrau**  
Deputy Mayor, Responsible  
for Urban Development  
and Constructions  
City of Leipzig



**Dr. Arnold Voss**  
Urbanist, Founder Office  
for the Art of Planning, Berlin



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



**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



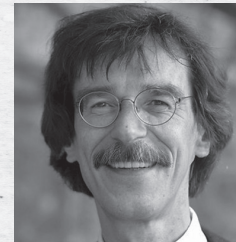
**Dr. Eng. Michael Horodniceanu**  
President  
MTA Capital Construction



**Karmen Strahonja**  
General Manager of Stadtmarketing  
Mannheim GmbH



**Andreas Kipar**  
Co-Founder, CEO &  
Creative Director, LAND -  
Landscape Architecture  
Nature Development



**Prof. Jörn Walter**  
Chief urbanist  
City of Hamburg

# SPEAKERS CITIES



**Dipl. Eng. Thomas Madreiter**  
Director of Urban  
Planning City of Vienna



**Arch. Reinhard Joecks**  
Partner  
FOSTER AND PARTNERS



**Dr. Arh. Șerban Țiganaș**  
President Romanian  
Order of Architects



**Dr. Marcel Heroiu**  
Senior Urban Development  
Specialist World Bank



**Arch. Eugen Pănescu**  
Founding Partner  
planwerk



**Stefan Reschke**  
Representative  
CEE ExpoReal Munich



**Ivan Patzaichin**  
President  
Asociația Mila 23



**Marius Perșenea**  
Chief Operating Officer, Iulius



**Ilinca Păun Constantinescu**  
Teaching Assistant at UAUIM,  
Faculty of Architecture,  
Author of "Shrinking Cities in  
Romania"



**Emil Boc**  
Mayor of Cluj-Napoca



**Prof. Arch. Stephan Braunfels**  
Director Stephan Braunfels  
Architekten BDA



**Astrid Fodor**  
Mayor of Sibiu



**Flavia Boghiu**  
Vice-Mayor of Brasov



**Nicușor Dan**  
Mayor of București



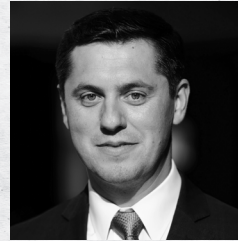
**Dr. Rolf Heyer**  
Bochum Perspektive 2022  
and MARK 51°7



**Ruxandra Dragomir**  
Head of Development  
Nhood Romania



**Raluca Munteanu**  
Development Director  
Iulius



**Tatian Diaconu**  
CEO NHOOD



**Judith Artmann**  
Urban Planning  
Department, Düsseldorf



**Allen Coliban**  
Mayor of Brașov



**Radu Mihaiu**  
Mayor of District 2



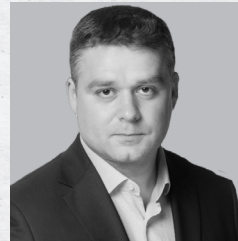
**Leif von Nethen**  
Urban Planning  
Department, Düsseldorf



**Dr. Georg Pammer**  
General Manager Asperrn  
Smart City



**Prof. Dr. Arch. Dorin Ștefan**  
Director Dorin Ștefan  
Birou Arhitectura – D.S.B.A



**Ciprian Ciucu**  
Mayor of District 6



**Burkhard Drescher**  
Managing Director, ICM –  
Innovation City  
Management GmbH



**Ioan Popa**  
Mayor of Reșița



**Dana Bordei**  
Commercial Country Manager  
VGP Romania





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Cities of Tomorrow is the best event dedicated to cities on the Romanian market! An event that brings together current topics and specialists from various fields to find the best solutions to the challenges that cities and their inhabitants face. Quality, valuable content and a team of dedicated and ambitious people, who contribute year after year to a better, more competent and more competitive Romania.

**Ramona Grozăvescu Chirtoc, Corporate Communication & CSR Manager NHOOD Romania**

Cities of Tomorrow is a unique platform that brings together people from different professions to discuss and collaborate on finding solutions to one of the most difficult problems of the future. "How can we make our growing cities sustainable and enjoyable for generations to come." During our discussion it became clear that the answer is not to freeze a city and stop all development.

**Jan Demeyere, Co-Founder Partner Speedwell**

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**300+**  
participants



**57**  
speakers & moderators

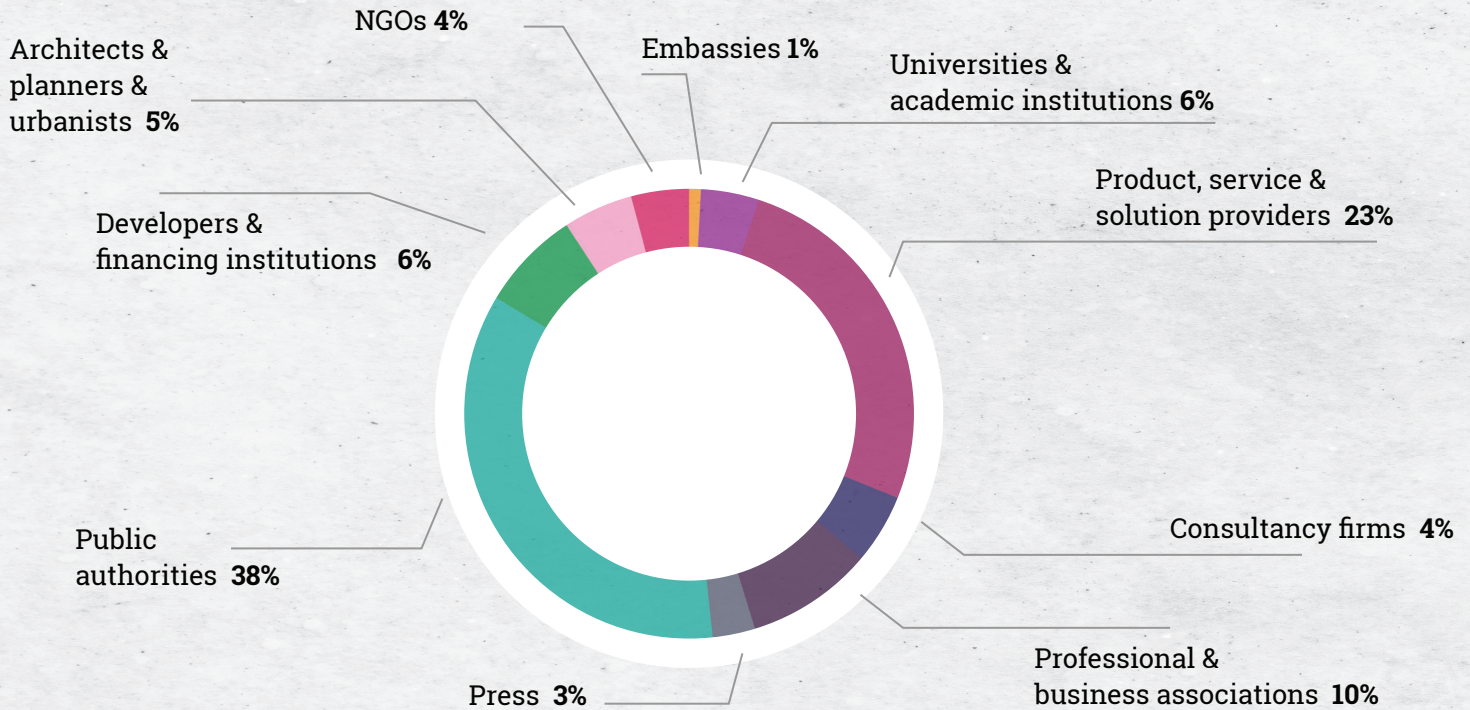
**10**  
roundtables

**10**  
finalists in the project  
competition & marketplace



**55**  
projects  
in competition

## OVERVIEW



# CITIES OF TOMORROW 2023

# PANEL DISCUSSION

Different layers of the quality of life  
and how they complement each other



**Dana Bordei**  
Commercial  
Country Manager  
VGP Romania

**Ruxandra Dragomir**  
Head of  
Development  
NhOOD

**Marius Perșenea**  
Chief Operating  
Officer Iulius

**Flavia Boghiu**  
Vice-Mayor  
of Brașov City

**Ionuț Oprea**  
Brand Manager  
Transilvania Business  
**MODERATOR**

The panel discussion was designed to bring together representatives from different public and private areas to explore various perspectives on the quality of life.

Essentially, the definitions and views expressed about the principle of quality of life are similar, all starting from the human interaction with the space in which they exist. The discussion was about the relationship with the space around us and how it influences us in our daily lives, about the aesthetics but also the utility of places, but also about the interweaving of these aspects with all sides of people's lives, be it private, professional, leisure, commuting to work, etc.

Quality of life is, among other things, the quality of relationships between people. So the overall objective in terms of smart and fair urban planning, both for public administration and the private sector, is to give the public space back to the people. The key to this is the uniform development of city planning and mobility. Beyond pragmatic things such as efficient public transport, quality health services, green spaces, etc., how people „feel“ the city is also very important. Its vibe, the experiences and feelings it offers are often essential to its inhabitants, to what it means to live in that area and to identify with the place.

City marketing is also an important tool in indirectly increasing quality of life. An optimal formula for city or region branding, which thus influences projects, business potential and the whole future of the area, is the public-private partnership. One cannot brand a city and make decisions that have a long-term positive effect on the community without public-private collaboration or the voice of the citizens.

In addition, in attracting investment, the public administration should play a role of encouragement, providing the necessary infrastructure and a unified overall plan, the big picture. The administrative side is the meeting point between all the players involved, towards a centralised and integrated management of all aspects. It is very important that each player understands and accepts their role in this socio-economic-administrative circuit.

In order to market effectively and sustainably, to become more attractive and competitive and thus increase the quality of life, a city must promote real beliefs and values, shifting the mentality from competition towards complementarity.

# PROJECT COMPETITION

The 11th edition of Cities of Tomorrow hosted a **project competition** for public administration, business and civil society. The quality of life factor was taken into account in the selection of the final projects. We were therefore looking for initiatives that lead to smart, soft, greener cities, with a focus on improving the quality of life of their inhabitants.

The jury - **Marianne Schulze** (freelance journalist Germany), **Ing. Arch. Dorothee Hasnas** (Editor Zeppelin), **Andreas Lier** (General Manager BASF Romania), **Tudor Popp** (Founding Partner Hotspot Workhub), **Arch. Eugen Pănescu** (Architect, Urban Planner Montag Studio) and **Sebastian Metz** (General Manager AHK Romania) – **chose 10 finalists from a total of 55 projects proposed in the three categories**. All submitted projects can be found here: [www.citiesoftomorrow.ro](http://www.citiesoftomorrow.ro)

## CATEGORY Public Administration

**Association for Public Transportation Bucharest-Ilfov (ADI TPBI):** project "Smart & green mobility integrated ITS system for the Bucharest-Ilfov region", [www.tpbi.ro](http://www.tpbi.ro)

**WINNERS** **Association for Public Transportation Bucharest-Ilfov (ADI TPBI):** project "Metropolitan Train", [www.tpbi.ro](http://www.tpbi.ro)  
**City of Cluj-Napoca:** project "Top tier educational infrastructure", [www.primariaclujnapoca.ro](http://www.primariaclujnapoca.ro)  
**Romanian Standards Association (ASRO):** project "Standardization framework for smart cities", [www.asro.ro](http://www.asro.ro)

## CATEGORY Business Environment

**WINNERS** **Kema Tronic:** project „Using nano-technology to turn waste into resource”, [www.nano-gen.ro](http://www.nano-gen.ro)  
**Versicherung Group:** project "Floating photovoltaic park", [www.dannichiforel.ro](http://www.dannichiforel.ro)  
**Regista:** project "Document management app, electronic registry, e-Government and online payments", [www.regista.ro](http://www.regista.ro)

## CATEGORY Civil Society

**WINNERS** **Association Valea Jiului Development Society Project:** project "Vibrating Jiu Valley", [www.valeajiuluiimplicata.org](http://www.valeajiuluiimplicata.org)  
**Monumentum Association:** project "Ambulance for Monuments", [www.ambulanta-pentru-monumente.ro](http://www.ambulanta-pentru-monumente.ro)  
**WorldSkills Romania Foundation:** project "Landscape Factory – center of vocational excellence in urban greening", [www.platformurbangreening.eu](http://www.platformurbangreening.eu)

**AHK Romania offered 3 prizes for the encouragement of the projects development.**

The 10 round tables, held online and in hybrid format during four consecutive days, were a good opportunity to discuss practical and applied topics & projects. Afterwards, the conclusions and identified solutions were briefly presented in a final wrap-up panel during the main conference on March 28th.



**Energy Efficiency & Energy Management**



**Financing & EU funds**



**Digitalisation & City Governance**



**Mobility**

Intelligent urban mobility & alternative transportation means in the city (focus: trams)



**Construction Law**

Zonal Urban Plans & the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors



**Reconversion & Revitalisation**

The backbone and implications of a revitalisation project



**Circular Economy**

Circular economy & the quality of life. How do we achieve our goals by skipping steps?



**Tourism, Lifestyle & Culture**

Projects by the water, revitalisation of lakes and rivers & their important role in increasing the attractiveness of the city and enhancing the quality of life



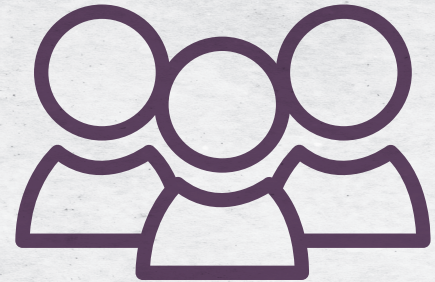
**City Safety**

Seismic risk and earthquakes, preparation for earthquakes, public aspects & technological solutions



**Work-Life Balance**

Shifting the way we work, new working needs and models in today's world & contemporary workplace design











## City Safety

Seismic risk and earthquakes,  
preparation for earthquakes,  
public aspects & technological solutions



### 1. Data Collection Challenges

- Local authorities are mandated to collect vulnerability data through rapid visual assessments.
- There is a lack of interoperable tools for centralizing and storing the collected data.
- Bucharest City Hall is preparing visual assessments for 10.000 buildings; Sibiu faces difficulties in fieldwork due to address identification issues.
- Clear guidelines, database models, and tools for field data collection are currently absent.

### 2. Legal Framework Changes

- Recent legal changes impact risk assessment, prioritization, and consolidation investment financing.
- Prioritization based on rapid visual assessment is introduced.
- Owners' consensus is no longer mandatory, with works possible with 50%+1 owners' agreement.
- Restrictions on income-generating activities in buildings to encourage owner participation.

### 3. Additional Legal Framework Elements

- The introduction of state programs similar to "Prima Casa" for the consolidation of buildings was suggested.
- Adaptation of safety regulations for historic buildings over a century old.
- There is a need for a legal framework encouraging demolition of structurally compromised buildings.
- Importance of a technical book for older buildings, often missing or outdated.

## CO-MODERATORS

### 4. Risk Awareness and Communication

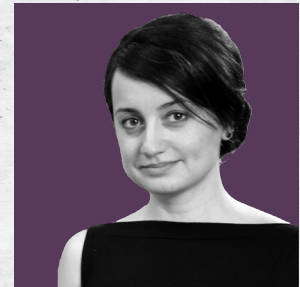
- Emphasis on expanding programs to enhance risk awareness among the public.
- Noticeable gap in awareness and action between Bucharest and other regions.
- Authorities and civic organizations urged to regularly disseminate positive, action-oriented awareness materials.
- High openness to cooperation between institutions and civil society organizations.

### 5. Positive Trends in Seismic Risk Management

- Over the last 5-6 years, a significant increase in individuals, institutions, and organizations addressing seismic risk can be noticed.
- Improved quality and frequency of meetings and debates on seismic risk management.
- Despite the remaining challenges, the overall trend indicates positive movement in the right direction.



**Răzvan Munteanu**  
Executive Director,  
Municipal Administration  
for the Consolidation of Buildings  
with Seismic Risk AMCCRS



**Marina Batog**  
Managing Partner,  
MKBT: Make Better



## Mobility

Intelligent urban mobility & alternative transportation means in the city (focus: trams)



This roundtable addressed the issue of mobility in cities by looking at the alternatives available in order to avoid private cars. The discussion was based on several best-practice examples, both national and international: the Bucharest-Ilfov region, Sibiu, Reșița, Târgu-Mureș, and the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

Traffic congestion is a major problem in many Romanian cities. This leads to delays, air pollution and high transport costs. Unfortunately, there is a lack of access to public transport in many areas of Romania or less than optimal networks, leading to a reliance on personal cars, with unfavourable consequences. To overcome the challenges and to seize the opportunities of mobility, a number of measures should be implemented. Investment is needed in public transport and in smart or alternative mobility solutions, such as walking, cycling and electric transport, which can help ease traffic congestion. Specifically, new tram and metro lines need to be developed, new buses and trams need to be purchased and public transport infrastructure needs to be improved.

A good case study is the Municipality of Sibiu, which has purchased new buses that also run in neighbouring towns as part of an integrated concept of sustainable and efficient mobility for citizens. In addition, a transition to electric transport is taking place to reduce pollution and to be able to provide transport also in old city centres or areas with narrower streets. The reintroduction of electric

## CO-MODERATORS

transport in cities that have previously abandoned it is to be encouraged, following the model of the city of Reșița, which has this project under way. Another large-scale and very promising project in terms of its impact on the quality of life and traffic optimisation is the Bucharest-Ilfov Metropolitan Train.

Today's technical solutions can improve public transport and reduce the risks, for example Tram Forward Collision Warning systems (TFCW). Such systems have been implemented in projects in Germany, reducing accident rates by up to 30%. Information and education campaigns and the development of infrastructure for alternative mobility were also recommended to promote alternative modes of transport. There are initiatives across the country to create leisure circuits or to develop cycle paths, for example the Masterplan Velo of Bucharest.

A more efficient and sustainable transport system contributes significantly to improving the quality of life in cities. All these projects and discussions come at a promising time, as the law has been updated and is still being refined to allow and further encourage cities (including various forms of partnership) to engage in urban regeneration and therefore mobility projects.



**Ștefan Roșeanu**  
President, Romanian  
Railway Reform Authority ARF



**Paul Pandrea**  
Technical Sales Manager,  
Bosch Engineering



## Circular Economy

Circular economy & the quality of life.  
How do we achieve our goals  
by skipping steps?



This roundtable brought together representatives from the public administration, the business environment, associations, technical experts in the field of circular economy, NGOs and academics. The discussion started from the current situation in Romania regarding the circular economy and recycling, and then focused on the challenges and problems we are facing, as well as some solutions, examples of best practices and proposals for improvement.

Romania ranks last in the EU in terms of circular economy: the EU average is 49% waste recycling rate, while Romania is at 11, 3%. Due to the fact that we are lagging behind in this area, compared to Western countries for example, we need to use the existing advantages to skip some steps and recover the last 30 years in ways other than identically implementing methods used by other societies.

The main challenges that were identified are: the citizens' mistrust in public services of waste management, lack of information and/or awareness campaigns on this segment and lack of selective waste collection/ recycling exercise among Romanians. But beyond these aspects, the fact that the results of selective collection and recycling are not immediately visible and do not bring direct benefits to the waste generator - the citizen - makes the efforts to encourage people in this direction all the more difficult. The only current element with an immediate effect on the waste generator is the „pay-as-you-throw” principle, but in reality this is not applied uniformly or consistently either.

In order to properly adjust the mindset, it is necessary to accept the change and the set objectives at a societal level, and this can only be done by educating the population at local and national level, through public campaigns and sustained, almost obsessive, messages on this topic. We must also discourage as far as possible the production of waste, rather than selective collection or recycling, and

encourage eco-design, re-use and the extension of products' life, because the circular economy does not actually involve waste.

The internet and the technology at our disposal are key aspects in our efforts to develop the circular economy and related infrastructure sustainably and efficiently. These tools must be used to increase public education & awareness, to ensure continuous and transparent communication with citizens, both to increase trust and to inform, and to ensure efficient data and waste management. Specifically, it was also proposed to adapt the current „pay-as-you-throw” principle (per bin size, instead of its content's weight) and to standardise the colours of the distinct bins and the rules at national level. In addition, the importance of correct waste management was stressed, to limit the risks, as in the case of batteries. It is also important that funds are available for projects of this type and accessing them is encouraged.

The key to success is partnerships between local/national authorities, retailers, producers, educational institutes, NGOs, associations and civil society, in order to develop, implement, maintain and verify the systems and circuits necessary for the circular economy, but also to enforce existing legislation and sanctions, where needed. The municipalities of Sibiu and Alba Iulia were mentioned as good-practice-examples, where projects have been implemented or pilot projects are running.

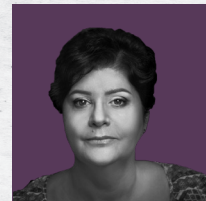
## MODERATORS



**Dr. Radu Merica**  
CEO RER Group



**Ionuț Georgescu**  
Founder, FEPRA



**Elena Gaspar**  
President, Association  
Sistemul Național de  
Reciclare a Bateriilor SNRB



## Reconversion & Revitalisation

### The backbone and implications of a revitalisation project



Reconversion is a process whereby a building or urban area is given a new use. This process can be an opportunity to improve the quality of life in cities by creating more sustainable, accessible and inclusive spaces. Reconversion and revitalisation are not just individual projects, but become processes of transformation of both physical space (land, cities) and society.

In Romania, reconversion is still a relatively new process. It is important to talk about urban regeneration, because Romania was one of the most radical post-socialist revitalisation experiments, which means that many cities grew or were artificially formed around the big industries of the communist period, and 30 years later Romanian cities are facing some challenges: economic restructuring, demographic decline, among others. However, there are a number of reconversion projects underway that demonstrate the potential of this process to contribute to sustainable urban development. Good-practice-examples include the municipalities of Reșița and Sibiu, projects and initiatives in Făgăraș and Bucharest (the belt of forts), for which the involvement and collaboration of local authorities, civil society and the private sector, as well as the commitment of these partners, have been essential.

There are a number of challenges that can delay or even prevent reconversion in Romania. These include:

- **Lack of financial resources:** Reconversion can be a costly process and financing can be a problem for building owners and developers.
- **Regulation:** Legislation can sometimes be a barrier to reconversion. For example, some regulations may limit the use of certain buildings or urban areas.
- **Mentality:** There is still a conservative mentality in Romania, which can make people reluctant to accept reconversion.



# Winning round table

Reconversion offers a number of opportunities for cities in Romania:

- **Sustainability:** It can help reduce environmental impact by reusing existing buildings and materials.
- **Accessibility:** Reconversion can create more accessible spaces for all levels of society.
- **Inclusion:** Reconversion can help create more inclusive communities by promoting diversity and citizen participation.

In many Romanian cities, former factories or other industrial premises (which are often located in central areas) are left to decay. Similarly, many historic buildings have potential and need special attention in terms of revitalisation. The conversion of all these spaces and buildings could create new spaces for housing, offices, commerce, culture or tourism.

Reconversion is an important process for sustainable urban development. The most important aspects are dialogue and cooperation between private and civil entities and the public sector. By identifying and addressing challenges and seizing opportunities, reconversion can become a powerful tool for improving the quality of life in Romanian cities.

**\* Reconversion & Revitalisation was the roundtable voted by the public as the winner in terms of the topics addressed, the need of this discussion, the suggestions put forward and the projects presented.**

## MODERATOR



**Arch. Eugen Pănescu**  
Architect & Urban Planner,  
Montag Studio



## **Construction Law**

### Zonal Urban Plans & the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors



Construction law is a wide and very complex subject, but this discussion was not strictly legal. The debate focused on how the laws can be used and interpreted so that the effect can lead to more open and fair steps in the partnerships that are needed between the public administration, the political side, the investment side and the citizens' side.

A very important notion, which is at the heart of this subject, is the urban negotiation. This principle is essential in the sustainable development of cities, because facilitation in the legal framework produces development and added value in the daily life of all citizens and in the public interest. Moreover, one of the difficulties of this much-needed dialogue is the gap between the technical interpretation of a project and how this approach is understood by either the public administration or the private sector.

From this point of view, a good-practice example is the Municipality of Timisoara, where a very transparent dialogue has succeeded in ensuring that the action plan for better spatial planning and the urban development strategy for Timisoara Nord were unanimously approved. The way in which this document was elaborated was very much due to moderation, the use of data and databases dedicated to this type of project, social and economic analyses, which played an important role in the future projection of the area's development. Also, the clear communication in understandable language to all relevant stakeholders, including the public, of the objectives, long-term vision and reasons for developing a strategy is essential to validate such an approach.

## MODERATOR

These are important means and tools that should be used in any urban development process to build better, fairer, more ethically and more balanced. In addition, there is currently a very promising context, due to the development of the future legislative framework and the ongoing legislative codification through the Code for land use, urban planning and building, as well as other connected documents such as procedures or guidelines, which support this complex effort to unify legislation throughout the country.



**Arch. Eugen Pănescu**  
Architect & Urban Planner,  
Montag Studio



## Energy Efficiency & Energy Management



This roundtable addressed energy efficiency from several perspectives, focusing on alternative sources of energy generation, energy efficiency, transparency/energy management solutions and project funding sources.

The European Green Deal is a legislative and policy package that has a major impact on many aspects of daily life. The main aim is to address the climate change that is taking place and to implement a range of funding sources for various programmes. In recent years, Romania has been characterised by a fairly stable demand development. However, in the near future more pressure is expected to be put on the energy system as a result of the wider European electrification context. This will increase the demand for, and hence the production of, electricity. In addition, there will be a greater emphasis on renewables, which will grow significantly by 2030. The expectation is that by 2030 prices will not fall significantly.

Public authorities are currently not focusing on electricity generation. But the good news is that steps are being taken in this direction. This is an important signal that we are starting to understand the limits of the distribution systems (one of the biggest problems is in Bucharest). From this point of view, the solution involves very large investments. On the other hand, there are also alternatives that can improve the lives of citizens and that are related to energy efficiency. For example, the insulation of buildings, which is currently on-going and for which there are funding possibilities.

## **MODERATOR**

Another proposed solution, and a topic that is currently enjoying increased attention, is geothermal energy. However, the difficulty is the distribution of geothermal energy and the fact that no viable solution has yet been found for transporting this type of energy into the public system.

From the point of view of energy management, a new approach has been proposed, namely transparency. There are digital technologies and solutions that allow integrated management and analysis of all aspects of electricity generation, storage and distribution, as well as energy efficiency, applicable to public administrations.

The energy transition must be a joint and sustained effort by the authorities together with the community, because we will all benefit and we all need to be aware of the need for this change.



**Vlad Gheorghe**  
Principal Energy & Utilities,  
Horváth



## Work-life Balance

Shifting the way we work,  
new working needs and models  
in today's world & contemporary workplace design

During this discussion, three important topics affecting the work environment and employee well-being were explored: the influence of the workplace, the influence of the city, and the situation of state employees.

With respect to the workplace influence, post-pandemic trends were discussed that include the concern for the employees' well-being as an important factor in HR decision-making. The impact of an attractive work environment in bringing employees back into the offices and that of relaxation facilities, which can be offered by building owners or developers, were also highlighted.

In addition, as important factors for the employees' wellbeing the participants mentioned the quality of the work environment, but also the setting of goals by the employee in both personal and professional life, to boost motivation and work-satisfaction.

In terms of the city's influence, infrastructure was discussed and transport improvements were suggested, such as a mobile app providing real-time information and schedule of public transportation. Recommendations were also made for more recreational and sports facilities, such as parks and green areas. However, the quality of time spent in traffic is in the hands of the employee, who can also choose productive ways of spending it, in order to reduce "downtime": for example, by reading, phone conversations, listening to podcasts, etc.

The importance of mixed-use development projects and the avoidance of mono-functional areas to create an integrated and diverse urban environment was also stressed.

Finally, the situation of state employees and the fact that they do not benefit (in most cases) from modern offices and/ or positive post-pandemic influences was mentioned. It was suggested that simple, standardised projects to improve office space could help in this regard.

## MODERATOR



**Tudor Popp**  
Founding Partner, Hotspot  
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## CO-MODERATORS



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## Tourism, Lifestyle & Culture

Projects by the water, revitalisation of lakes and rivers & their important role in increasing the attractiveness of the city and enhancing the quality of life



This roundtable focused on projects located and carried out on or near water, as well as on the administrative processes involved in the revitalisation of lakes and rivers. More than 100 people participated in the discussion, creating a good mix of visions, ideas and expertise in the field: representatives of central and local public authorities, renowned architects, private actors, environmental NGOs, etc.

Among others, the initiatives in Bucharest on the Dâmbovița river and lakes, in Timișoara on the Bega river, in Sibiu on the Cibin river, were discussed. While it is encouraging that there are projects implemented or underway across the country to exploit the potential of waters, participants also raised the challenges they face in these endeavours. For example, in Bucharest the different district administrations should work better together, when it comes to the Dâmbovița river. There are stretches where each side of the river belongs to another district, and the risk is that each one will carry out its own projects for revitalisation, greening, etc. without consulting the district responsible for the opposite side, hence lacking a unified concept and vision. In addition, this also makes it more difficult for the private sector or civil society to get involved, as it means aligning with two or more administrative entities. We can also come across situations where things happen without the knowledge of the City Hall and therefore without a centralised and integrated structure, in the worst case, or where only one district gets involved in the regeneration process. This produces an uneven and asym-



metrical result, not only visually but also in terms of usefulness, functionality and coherence for the purpose and end user, the citizen.

The first conclusion was the desire and the need to expose the relevant actors to good-practice-examples from other countries (e.g. Germany), where these types of projects already happened and could be adapted and implemented in our country. Participants also continue to strongly support the importance of professional project management, where all stakeholders must be consulted and involved - this is necessary and applicable on all levels: public-private environment, but also state-state (local governments with each other; central authorities with local authorities). The culture of "stakeholder meetings" must be encouraged and practiced in Romania, in all aspects of sustainable development.

Another key issue is the legislative framework, which must be designed in such a way as to allow a project involving several entities to run smoothly and make it easier to exploit water directly, but also connected fields, taking into account its potential for people's well-being, tourism, culture and events, etc. in both urban and rural areas.

The main call to the participants of the round table was to set up a working group or a user guide for the revitalisation of waters, under the umbrella of Cities of Tomorrow and AHK Romania. For this to happen, the willingness and involvement of a number of interested actors is needed to carry out a regular activity, keeping track of the results, for this important element in the sustainable development of the country and the increased attractiveness of cities and regions - water.

## **MODERATOR**



**Dr. Dragoș Anastasiu**  
President  
Eurolines Group



## Digitalisation & City Governance



The session began by highlighting how economic growth has led to the urbanization process, with similar trends observed in Romania. More than half of Romania's population lives in urbanized settlements, with Bucharest accounting for half of the GDP. Currently, there is a rising trend among cities regarding their digitalisation and smart city projects: according to 2022 statistics, in Romania there are 1001 smart city projects in total in 144 cities, out of which 470 are already finalised. There is also an ongoing digitalisation project of the ministry dedicated to all areas of Romania, but focusing mainly on small municipalities with less access to technology. The promise and priority of the concept of smart and digitalised cities is making the life of the citizens easier, more efficient and integrating new technologies in the daily reality of both the urban and rural areas (e.g., online payments, smart traffic & traffic lights system, AI integration for public transportation, etc.). In some cases, these are already realities and a trend, which we have to encourage further on.

A best-practice example is the platform [ghiseul.ro](https://ghiseul.ro), a successful partnership between the public and private sectors. Increased collaborations of this type were identified following the shift in mentality due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which encouraged the concept of innovative platforms/ ecosystems with the collaborative participation of the community members in developing digital solutions. Additionally, a hub was founded for cities to share good practices for achieving climate neutrality. The need for digitalisation and climate change solutions to go hand in hand was also emphasized.

The session discussed who needs to be involved in the digitalisation of city governance, highlighting the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors, and bringing all levels of stakeholders together to establish cross-departmental and interdisciplinary work. Romania's future is digital, but, of course, there are also some challenges.

## MODERATOR



**Melike Nur Ülsever**  
Smart Cities Researcher,  
Urban Sociologist,  
BABLE Smart Cities

One of the identified risks were the insufficient digital skills among citizens and employees. There was a call for the preparation of an educational system (theoretical, but also with a strong practical component) throughout all levels of society, academia, the public sector, the business environment, in order to increase the digital competencies. Programs and strategies are already in place for this purpose. A further challenge is the cybersecurity and data security, which are currently still vulnerable areas in Romania, statistically speaking. Also, there is a lack of qualified workforce, even for handling basic topics such as maintenance of systems or support. There is still a lot of confusion around the GDPR policy.

The future goal of Romania is to have a smart one-stop marketplace, which citizens can access through a single unique account/ set of credentials. The practical advice given during the session included the need for each one of us to embrace continuous learning, as it is the only way to keep up with the current agenda and opportunities.



## Financing & EU Funds



This roundtable provided participants with presentations and a dialogue with representatives from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The IFC wants and encouraged the participation of Romanian municipalities in EU-funded projects and said that it intends to stabilise these approaches. In addition, contacts have already been established and discussions started with many municipalities for such projects. There is a need to optimise PPP (public-private partnership) projects, and the IFC has already informed government representatives of this issue. In this context, the openness of the authorities to make the necessary changes was mentioned, estimating that it will probably not be long before they are completed, so that pilot projects can be carried out to test the legislation.

The EBRD is also working with the authorities to restructure the financing scheme, following the Paris climate agreement regulations. For example, "Green Cities" is a €5 billion program within the EBRD to help cities implement green solutions. The funding goes to cities with projects where the EBRD brings added-value and is in the form of commercial loans to municipalities.

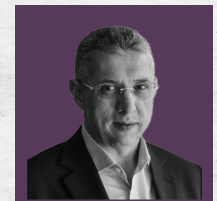
The "Green Cities" Program has 4 components: 1. helps to prepare a Green Cities Action Plan; 2. facilitates and stimulates green investments; 3. increases the capacity of city managers; 4. supports access to green investments.

Both the IFC and the EBRD, providing the necessary consultancy, implementation and/or strategic support, are long-term partners in projects with municipalities.

### GUESTS



**Venera Vlad**  
Associate Director,  
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**Cristian Nacu**  
Senior Country Officer  
for Romania and  
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Deutsch-Rumänische  
Industrie- und Handelskammer  
Camera de Comerț și Industrie  
Româno-Germană

**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**.

[www.ahkrumaenien.ro](http://www.ahkrumaenien.ro) ● [www.econet-romania.com](http://www.econet-romania.com) ● [www.citiesoftomorrow.ro](http://www.citiesoftomorrow.ro)

ABOUT US



# Green Tech initiative of AHK Romania

[www.econet-romania.com](http://www.econet-romania.com)



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 almost ten years, AHK Romania is the main starting point in the field of sustainable development, offering a bilateral platform for know-how and experience exchange by means of its GreenTech initiative, econet romania.

## Our partners in Romania



## Our partners in Germany





For further information  
on sponsorship or participation  
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