

GEOGRAPHICAL EVENTS

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The 1989 radical political change triggered Romania’s development in what may be called “the transition period”. This development means the country’s EU accession, NATO integration and participation in the global production and consumption networks. One aspect of the EU accession process is the growing importance of regions. The provisions of the first law on regional development in the history of Romania (Law no. 151/1998 was replaced by Law no. 350/2004) give the institutional framework of regional policy in Romania. This shows that national policy needs to take into account regional differences and problems. This Law also stipulates the formation of development regions compatible to EU NUTS II regions.

Geography has been influenced by these general evolutions. Geographers have participated in local and regional development planning. Regional Geography Departments have been created in several universities. Human Geography and Regional Geography have been better represented in all academic curricula; new regional development institutions have been founded.

An institutional innovation in Romania’s academia is the “Centre for Regional Geography” (CRG), which was founded at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, in 2003. It brings together four research areas: territorial planning, GIS, tourism, and geographical risks. The Centre is affiliated to the Association of Regional Studies. Between 22-24th October 2004, the Centre organised a first international conference on “The Concept of Geographical Region at the Turn of the 21st Century.” Participants from Hungary, Austria, Germany, and Romania exchanged ideas and experiences in Regional Geography. They discussed the theory of geography, regional disparities, sustainable regional development, etc. As a characteristic we should mention the abundance of factual empirical studies and the numerous contributions of physical Regional Geography. Every two years CRG will organise a conference on Regional Geography. The next one will take place in 2006 and we will come back with more details in the future.

CRG intends to introduce a new perspective in Romanian academia and it hopes to find international partners in order to present and spread new knowledge. The 2004 participants in the CRG conference founded a cooperative network and they will do their best in order to institutionalise it. The publication of the *Romanian Review of Regional Studies* is part of this cooperation. The first issue contains some of the papers read at the CRG conference. This Review is the only Romanian geographical journal in English, which will provide information about the regional processes in Romania and about EU accession. We hope that the presence of many international experienced researchers will improve the journal and will contribute to the international integration of Geography as an academic field.