

PREFACE

The 3rd Conference of the Adriatic Forum took place September 23-25, 2010, in Vienna, Austria. It was the follow-up of the *First Conference of Geographers of the Upper Adriatic – Joint Management of a Borderless Area*, held in Koper/Capodistria, 27-28 November 2008, organised under the direction of Prof. Milan BUFON by the Science and Research Centre of Koper/Capodistria and the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska, as well of the 2nd Conference titled *Construction and Deconstruction of Nationalism and Regionalism: A Long Journey to Europe*, held in Trieste, 1-2 October 2009, organised under the direction of Prof. Maria Paola PAGNINI by the University of Trieste.

Vienna was chosen as the third venue, although it is – much in contrast to the first two venues – certainly not an Adriatic city. Its choice may, however, be regarded as an acknowledgement of the fact that it was not only historically well-connected with the Adriatic, but cultivates many relations to the Adriatic space up to the present day and is the home of several geographers interested in it.

The event was organized by the Austrian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Urban and Regional Research (director: Heinz FASSMANN) in cooperation with the Institute of Geography and Regional Research, University of Vienna (head: Helmut WOHLISCHLAGL), the International Geographical Union (IGU) – Political Geography Commission (chair: Anton GOSAR), the International Cartographic Association (ICA) – Commission on National and Regional Atlases (chair: Peter JORDAN), and the Austrian Geographical Society (OEGG, chair: Christian STAUDACHER). It took place in the Theatersaal of the Austrian Academy, right in Vienna's historical downtown.

The conference was devoted to the general theme *Regional Development and Regionalisation* which corresponds to global and European challenges as well as to demands for research in the wider Adriatic region. Political geographers as well as regional, cultural and social geographers, spatial planners, geographers of tourism and transportation were addressed. But studies from other fields of geography and interdisciplinary approaches were by no means excluded.

The Adriatic space in the sense of the coastlands of the Adriatic Sea and their hinterlands was to be the focus of this conference in regional terms. But this spatial

concept was not regarded as clearly defined, and comparison with situations elsewhere as well as methodological and theoretical approaches applicable on regional research were also accepted with pleasure.

These proceedings comprise just a smaller selection of papers presented at the conference, i.e. the papers closest to the conference theme in regional and thematic terms.

They start with transnational views followed by focuses on individual countries in the Adriatic space.

While Milan BUFON (Koper/Capodistria) and Damir JOSIPOVIČ (Ljubljana) present surveys over the development of trans-border relations and ethno-demographic situations, resp., in the wider region of the Upper Adriatic, Maria Paola PAGNINI (Rome) and André Louis SANGUIN (Paris) draw a comparison between the development of border regions in the Southern Alps and the Pyrenees. Peter JORDAN (Vienna) closes this transnational part by an analysis of administrative decentralisation processes in all Adriatic countries.

Contributions on individual countries start with Slovenia, of which Lučka LORBER (Maribor) discusses the development of spatial disparities in recent decades followed by Anton GOSAR (Koper/Capodistria), who presents the various attempts of regionalising Slovenia for purposes of tourism branding. Simon KERMA (Koper/Capodistria) then focuses on the Slovenian coastal region Primorska, when he describes efforts to promote wine tourism.

Jelena LONČAR and Zoran STIPERSKI (both Zagreb) deal with a Croatian topic, when they highlight the relative socio-economic role and development of Central Croatia within the country. Jan WENDT (Gdańsk) throws finally a glance on Polish tourism to Croatia and Slovenia.

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Peter JORDAN, editor