

IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development



Report 2022

The Commission on Local and Regional Development IGU is a dedicated group of scholars aiming to advance international knowledge of a variety of issues concerning local and regional development. The Commission's activities involve cooperation between scientists representing academic centres from different parts of the world, organizing meetings and expanding its intellectual network through academic conferences, publications, newsletters and its website. The basic mission is to advance international research and knowledge in a variety of domains concerning local and regional development through: 1) the development and dissemination of theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks concerning local and regional development, 2) the discussion of wide range of empirical and policy issues, 3) to widen of the scope of the debate on the topics of "local and regional development" in different national and institutional contexts.

A. MEMBERSHIP

1. Steering Committee members

1.1. Chairperson of the Commission

Ian-July 2022, Jerzy Bański, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, POLAND, 00-818 Warszawa, Twarda str. 51/55, +48 602391453, jbanski@twarda.pan.pl;

Post-July 2022, Ines Grigorescu, PhD, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, ROMANIA, inesgrigorescu@yahoo.com;

1.2. Vice Chair

Ian-July 2022, Ines Grigorescu, PhD, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, ROMANIA, inesgrigorescu@yahoo.com;

Post-July 2022, Carmen Vázquez Varela, Professor, Department of Geography and Spatial Planning, University de Castilla-La Mancha, Avda. de los Alfares, 44 – 16002 Cuenca, ESPANIA, +34 969179100, carmen.vazquez@uclm.es;

1.2. Scientific Secretary

Post-July 2022, Bianca Mitrică, PhD, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, ROMANIA, biancadumitrescu78@yahoo.com

1.3. Steering Committee Members

- **2022, Atsushi Taira**, Faculty of Education, Kagawa University, Saiwai-cho 1-1, Takamatsu, Kagawa, 760-8522, +81-87-832-1405, JAPAN, taira@ed.kagawa-u.ac.jp;
- **2022, Eberhard Weber**, School of Geography, Earth Science and Environment, The University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus, Suva, FIJI, (+679) 323 2542, weber_e@usp.ac.fj;
- **2022, Ashley Gunter**, Professor, Department of Geography, University of South Africa, Building Calabash, +27 011 471 3390, Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA, gunteaw@unisa.ac.za;
- **2022, Boian Koulov**, PhD, National Institute for Geophysics, Geodesy, and Geography, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Acad. G. Bonchev Str., bl. 3, 1113 Sofia, +3592 979-3367, BULGARIA, bkoulov@gmail.com
- **2022, Benjamin Ofori-Amoah**, Professor, Department of Geography, Western Michigan University, 1903 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49008, +1 269-387-3424, USA, ben.ofori@wmich.edu;
- **Post-July 2022, Ana Sabogal Dunin Borkowski**, Professor, Department of Humanities - Geography and Environment Section, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, 1801 Universitaria Avenue, San Miguel, 15088, Lima, PERÚ, bsabogal@puccp.edu.pe;
- **July-August, 2022, Konrad Czapiewski**, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, Twarda str. 51/55, 00-818 Warszawa, POLAND;
- **Post-October 2022, Michał Konopski**, PhD, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, Twarda str. 51/55, +48 226978834, 00-818 Warszawa, POLAND, konopski@twarda.pan.pl.

1.4. Honorary Members

- **2022, Michael Sofer**, Department of Geography and Environment, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bar-Ilan University, 52900, +972-3-531-8773, Ramat-Gan, ISRAEL, soferm1@mail.biu.ac.il;
- **Post-July 2022, Jerzy Bański**, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, Twarda str. 51/55, +48 602391453, 00-818 Warszawa, POLAND, jbanski@twarda.pan.pl;

2. Corresponding Members

Currently, the Commission on Local and Regional Development counts a total of 334 members from 50 countries (Fig. 1). Based on the estimation of the Members of the Steering Committee, about 50-60 members are considered active in the sense that they participate in the meetings organized by the Commission, the sessions within the events organized by the IGU, contribute with articles/chapters in the volumes and special issues of the Commission or of the IGU, etc. However, all members are

informed about all the events organized by IGU or related to it. A lower participation of countries from the Global South is still maintained, a situation that we are trying to improve in the coming years. In 2022 the Commission expanded by 16 members. Overall, most members are from Israel (31), followed by Poland (25), Romania (21), but also India and China (17 members each) (Fig. 2).

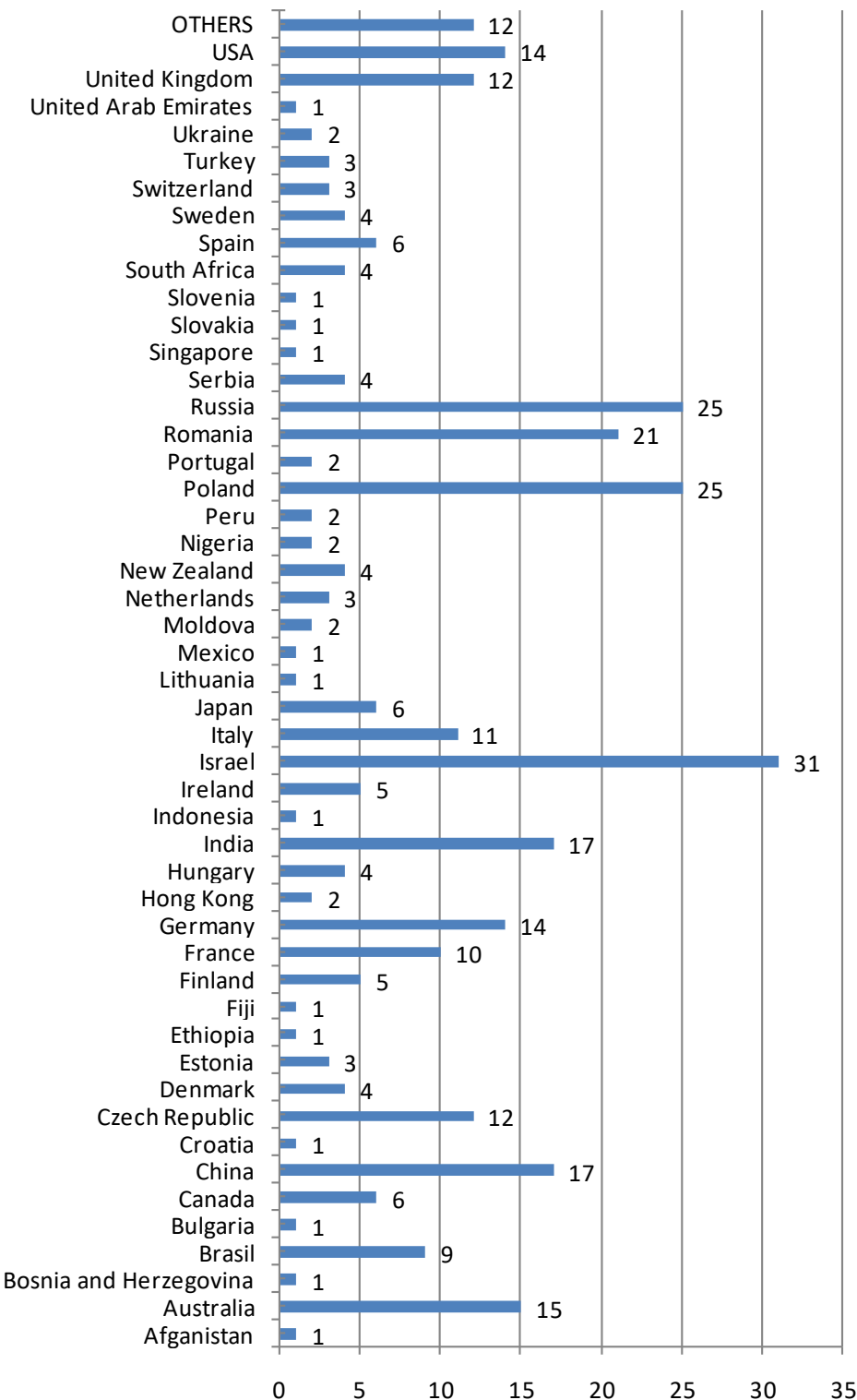


Figure 1. Number of Corresponding Members by country, 2022

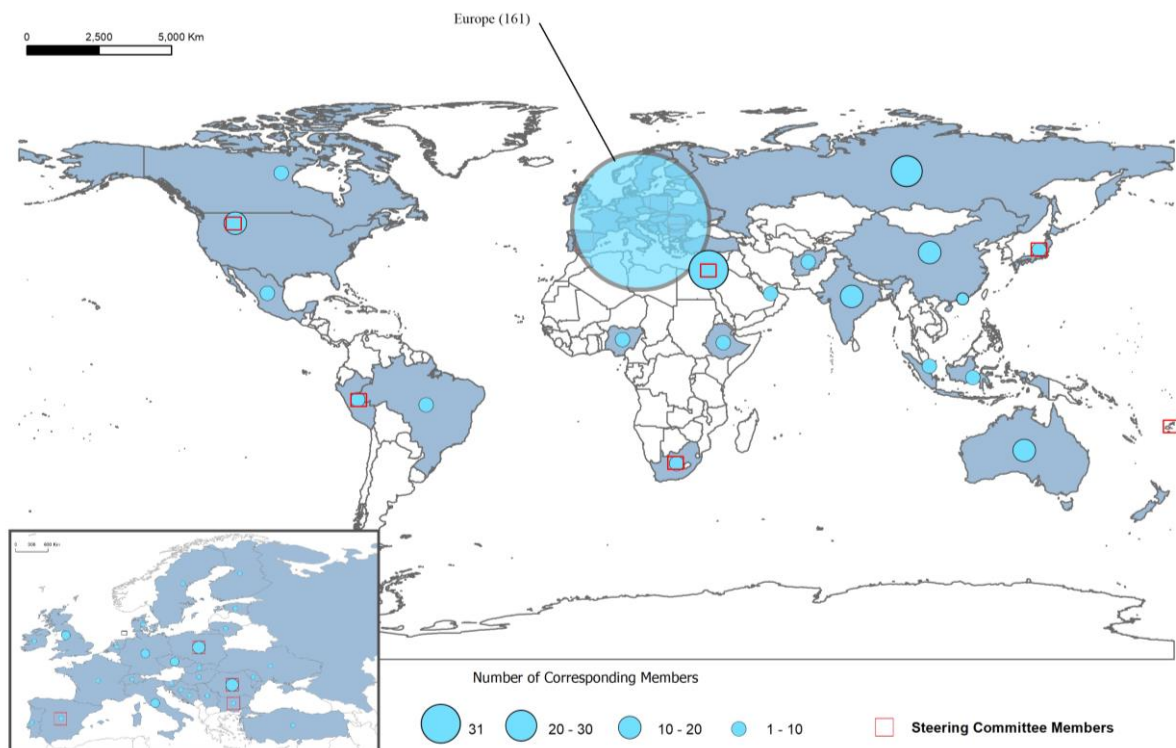


Figure 2. The spatial distribution of the Steering/Corresponding Members by country, 2022

B. MEETINGS

a. Meetings organized by the IGU Local and Regional Development Commission or participation in meetings organized by IGU in 2022

Event	Period	Location	Organizer(s)	No. of sessions/slots	No. of papers	No. of participants
Paris 2022 UGI Centennial Congress <i>Time for Geographers</i>	18-22 July, 2022	Paris, FRANCE	French National Committee of Geography, Association of French Geographers, CNFG	5/13	47	65
Annual Meeting of the IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development <i>Sociodemographic change and its impact on territorial development policies</i>	13-15 October, 2022	Cuenca, SPAIN	Spanish Working Group of Local Development; Department of Geography and Spatial Planning, University of Castilla-La Mancha	6	18	26

b. A brief summary of the topics addressed at each meeting and the main findings

PARIS 2022 UGI CENTENNIAL CONGRESS - TIME FOR GEOGRAPHERS



As part of this scientific event, the IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development held 5 sessions (totalling 13 slots) proposed by some of the Steering Committee/Corresponding Members covering the following topics:

- **Research Directions, Challenges and Achievements of Modern Geography** (Chair: **Jerzy Bański**, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, POLAND)
- **Local Development in The Rural Space** (Chairs: **Michael Sofer**, Department of Geography and Environment, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, ISRAEL & **Tony Sorensen**, University of New England, AUSTRALIA)
- **The Role and Functions of Small Towns in Local and Regional Development** (Chairs: **Boian Koulov**, PhD, National Institute for Geophysics, Geodesy, and Geography, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, BULGARIA & **Jerzy Bański**, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences, POLAND)
- **Local and Regional Patterns of Territorial Development. Challenges and Implications for the Urban-Rural Nexus** (Chairs: **Ines Grigorescu**, Institute of Geography Romanian Academy, ROMANIA & **Michael Sofer**, Department of Geography and Environment, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, ISRAEL)
- **Linking Borderlands - Transitions and Dynamics of Cross Border Areas** (Chairs: **Karina PALLAGST**, Tu Kaiserslautern, GERMANY & **Florian WEBER**, Saarland University, GERMANY)

A considerable number of Steering Members participated in Paris, including the former and current Chair, Vice-Chair and Scientific Secretary (Jerzy Bański, Ines Grigorescu, Carmen Vázquez Varela, Bianca Mitrică, Michael Sofer, Boian Koulov, Ashley Gunter, Benjamin Ofori-Amoah), to which was added a satisfactory number of corresponding members (nearly 65, 20%). All of them covered 20 countries: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Slovakia, Spain, UK, Ukraine, and USA.

During the congress, there were discussions on various theoretical and applied aspects related to local and regional development, cultural tourism and its role in the local development of the rural space, methods of analysing the dynamics of land use in relation to urban expansion phenomena, socio-economic and environmental vulnerability to extreme climatic phenomena, etc. with the members of several IGU commissions: *Urban Commission: Re-Thinking cities and the urban: from the global to the local; Geography of Tourism, Leisure, and Global Change; Land Use and Land Cover Change.*

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE IGU COMMISSION ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT ON TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The meeting was organized together with the Spanish Working Group of Local Development, part of the Association of Spanish Geographers (AGE) and the Department of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Castilla - La Mancha. The event brought together 26 academics from prestigious institutions from 8 countries: Denmark, Hungary, India, Israel, Poland, Romania, South Africa and Spain; 18 of them participated face-to-face and 8 online. The main themes of the conference were focused on:

- Population challenges and territorial development policies.
- Between theory and practice of local development. Issues, methods, and experiences.
- Cross-border cooperation and neighbourhood policies.
- Challenges of urban-rural relationships. Implications on local and regional development.
- Territorial development and 17 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Addressing territorial inequality in a post-pandemic world.



Annual meeting of the IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development, Cuenca 2022
Photo credit: José A. Montero & Ines Grigorescu

The results of the annual meeting were presented to the public through the media, respectively the online journal of the University of Castilla - La Mancha, La Circular (<https://lacircular.es/igulocalandregional.html>) and the Facebook Group of the Local and Regional Development Commission (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345703419029601>).

In addition to the very interesting scientific sessions, field trips were also carried out in the city of Cuenca (whose city centre is UNESCO World Heritage since 1996), Villa Romana de Noheda & Serrania de Cuenca Natural Park. During the 2 days fieldtrips, the participants were able to examine the territorial disparities driven by the tourism concentration in the Cuenca – Ciudad Encantada – Nacimiento del Río Cuervo tourist axis, which, contributes little to the maintenance of the population of the area. In this context, were held discussions with local actors related to the main challenges the municipality and local communities are facing (e.g., depopulation, aging) and local and identified solutions for the sustainable development. At the same time, the development projects on the agenda of the municipality were debated in informal discussions between the participants and the local stakeholders.



Annual meeting of the IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development, Cuenca 2022
 Photo credit: José A. Montero & Ines Grigorescu

c. The meetings or other events you plan to hold in 2023 and later years, including locations, dates, and the topics/themes to be addressed.

Year	Event	Period	Location	Organizer(s)
2023	IGU Scientific Seminar <i>Health, Environment and Sustainable Development</i> jointly organized with <i>Commissions on HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT & LAND USE/COVER CHANGE</i> https://iguche2020.com/	13-16 June	Bucharest/Tulcea, ROMANIA	Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy
2023	Annual Meeting of the IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development	18-24 September	Mogale City, SOUTH AFRICA	University of South Africa
2024	Pre-Congress Meeting of the IGU Commission on Local and Regional Development	August	Cork, IRELAND	University College Dublin, NUI Galway
2024	35th International Geographical Congress <i>Celebrating a World of Difference</i>	25-30 August	Dublin, IRELAND	TBD - Support from the University College Dublin, NUI Galway
2024	Annual Meeting of the IGU Commission on LRD	TBC	Lima, PERU	Universidad Católica del Peru

C. NETWORKING

1. Collaboration with IGU commissions

- **Commission on Land Use and Land Cover Change** – joint publications of the Steering Committee/Corresponding Members on various topics that connects the two Commissions; preparation of the *IGU Scientific Seminar Health, Environment and Sustainable Development* which will be jointly organized to be held 13-16 June 2023 in Bucharest and Tulcea;
- **Commission on Health and Environment** - preparation of the *IGU Scientific Seminar Health, Environment and Sustainable Development* which will be jointly organized to be held 13-16 June 2023 in Bucharest and Tulcea;
- **Urban Geography Commission** - (Re-)Thinking cities and the urban: from the global to the local – Chair of the Commission (Ines Grigorescu) participated with a scientific paper and discussions to the Session Climate Change, Resilience, Urban Health and Well-Being at PARIS 2022 UGI CENTENNIAL CONGRESS;
- **Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems** – two members of the Steering Committee (Ines Grigorescu and Bianca Mitrică) participated with scientific papers and discussions to the 29th Colloquium “Necessities and implementations for Sustaining Rural Systems in both Developed and less Developed Environments” held in Cairo and the Nile Delta (Egypt), 28 February-4 March 2022.

2. Other collaboration

- Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy (ROMANIA)
- Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences (POLAND) - Inter-Academic Joint Research Project entitled *Internal peripheries in Poland and Romania – role of endogenous and exogenous factors in their development processes*. Coordinators from both sides are members of the Steering Committee: Bianca Mitrică (Romania) & Konrad Czapiewski (Poland)
- Department of Geography and Environment, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan (ISRAEL) - Inter-Academic Cooperation Agreement on *Challenges and implications of the urban-rural relationships. Comparative studies from Romania and Israel* Coordinators from both sides are members of the Steering Committee: Ines Grigorescu (Romania) & Michael Sofer (Israel)
- Department of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Castilla - La Mancha, Cuenca (SPAIN)
- Spanish Working Group of Local Development, part of the Association of Spanish Geographers (SPAIN)
- Mendel University (CZECH REPUBLIC) - HORIZON 2020 Project - *Social and innovative Platform on cultural Tourism and its potential towards (deepening) Europeanisation identities (SPOT)*, Coordinators from Steering Committee Members for the Romanian side (Bianca Mitrică) and the Israeli side (Michael Sofer)
- National Institute for Geophysics, Geodesy, and Geography, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BULGARIA)
- Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives – CESCO (HUNGARY), Member of the Presidential Board (Scientific Secretary Bianca Mitrică)
- Institute for Regional Studies, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, West Hungarian Research Department - Inter-Academic Joint Research Project entitled *The Urban Systems in the Age of Globalization. Geographical Studies with focus on Hungarian and Romanian Cities*. Coordinators from both sides are members of the Commission: Tamás Hardi (Hungary) & Radu Săgeată (Romania)
- Romanian Geographical Society
- Routledge Publishing House
- Journal - *Romanian Journal of Geography/Revue Roumaine de Géographie*
- Journal - *Land* (MDPI)

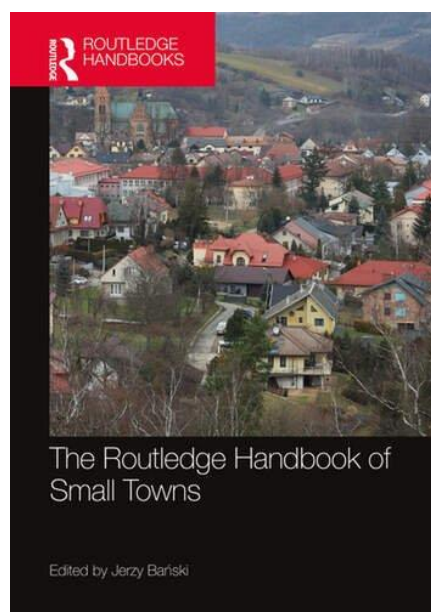
Digital networking

IGU Local and Regional Development Commission Facebook Group was initiated in November 2022 to facilitate interactions and exchange knowledge and information on conferences and interesting publications between academics interested in topics dealing with local and regional development-related issues. So far, 100 people are part of the Local and Regional Development Commission on Facebook Group. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345703419029601>.

D. PUBLICATIONS

Bański J. (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Small Towns, 1st Edition, 2021*

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Small-Towns/Banski/p/book/9780367555900>



The book is devoted to the role and functions of small towns in the local development of areas representing different socio-economic categories and located in countries with different levels of development and economic systems. Particular attention is paid to issues: theoretical background and research methodology, functional structure of small towns and their role in the urban system, relations between small towns and rural areas and the challenges of spatial planning in the context of shaping the development of small towns. The thematic scope of the book is to cover theoretical, methodical and practical issues related to small towns and rural development. However, the spatial scope has a very wide dimension because it takes into account the subject of small towns issues in 25 countries from Europe, Africa, South America, Asia, and Australia. The authors of the book are mainly committee members.

SECTION 1. SMALL TOWNS – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH ISSUES

J. BAŃSKI (POLAND) - *The functions and local linkages of small towns – a review of selected classifications and approaches to research.*

E. KORCELLI-OLEJNICZAK (POLAND) - *Small towns in settlement systems: a return to the foreground?*

B. OFORI-AMOAH (USA) - *Small Towns. Theoretical Background and Research Issues - Perspectives from the United States.*

Ch. DEMAZIÈRE (FRANCE) - *Small towns – theoretical background and research issues. Exploring the diversity of small towns in France.*

C. VÁZQUEZ-VARELA, J. M. MARTÍNEZ-NAVARRO (SPAIN) - *Spanish Small towns: evolution, functional structure, and characterization.*

M. ALTANBAGANA, B. SOLOGO, B. MUNGUNCHIMEG (MONGOLIA) - *Determining villages status and their economic functions: The Case of Mongolia.*

SECTION 2. THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SMALL TOWNS IN SCOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. IANOS (ROMANIA) - *The small Romanian towns – from creative destruction to destructive creation and back?*

M. AMADO, F. POGGI (PORTUGAL) - *From informal to formal: towards the Sustainable Transformation of Small Towns in Africa.*

A. TAIRA (JAPAN) - *Small but resilient: A case study of the town of Utazu, Kagawa, Japan.*

J. BAŃSKI, W. KAMIŃSKA, M. MULARCZYK (POLAND) - *The natural and migration movements versus population ageing in Poland's small towns.*

L. NOVOTNÝ, M. KULLA, J. NESTOROVÁ-DICKÁ, L. PREGI, S. CSACHOVÁ (SLOVAKIA) - *Performance of small towns in economically lagging region: A case study of the Spiš region, Slovakia.*

F. POGGI, A. FIRMINO, M. AMADO (PORTUGAL) - *Small towns in the Energy Transition Era: local drivers for Climate Change adaptation?*

B. KOULOV, Ch. MLADENOV (BULGARIA) - *Contemporary Status of Small Towns in Bulgaria: Functions and Role in the Development of Rural Regions.*

SECTION 3. SMALL TOWNS IN RURAL SPACE

M. SOFER, L. APPLEBAUM, I. AMIT-COHEN, N. COHEN, I. SHMUEL, Y. SHAUL (ISRAEL) - *Perspective on Urban-Rural Relations in Israel's Periphery.*

I. KRISTENSEN, E. SLÄTMO (SWEDEN) - *Urban-rural linkages: an inquiry into second-home tourism in the Nordics.*

K. P. SCHUMACHER, K. M. BORN (GERMANY) - *New rural-urban relationships of small towns in north-western Germany.*

W. LEIMGRUBER (SWITZERLAND) - *Small regional centres at the periphery of Switzerland: Porrentruy and Brig-Glis;*

A. VAISHAR, J. ZAPLETALOVA (CZECHIA) - *Small towns in rural space - the case of Czechia.*

A. COPUS (UK) - *Urban Growth Engines or Relational Proximity? An assessment of enterprise population and business demography indicators in the context of rural and small-town Scotland.*

E. NEL (NEW ZEALAND) - *The role of farmers in small town community development in an age of austerity: reflections from Australasia.*
R. MCAREAVEY (UK) - *Agri-food workers: transnational connections in small towns and rural areas.*

SECTION 4. THE SMALL TOWNS PLANNING CHALLENGES

G. COTELLA, E. BERISHA (ITALY) - *Inter-municipal spatial planning as a tool to prevent small towns' competition. The case of the Emilia-Romagna Region.*

E. MARUNIAK, L. RUDENKO, S. LISOVSKIY, O. DRONOVA, A. MOZGOVYI (UKRAINE) - *Ukrainian small cities in the perspective of sustainable spatial planning.*

A. SORENSEN (AUSTRALIA) - *Small Town Survival in Rural Australia: A New England Case Study.*

S. TSHABALALA, A. GUNTER (SOUTH AFRICA) - *Technologies of Government and Policy implementation in Small Towns Economic Development Plans in Mpumalanga South Africa.*

B. OFORI-AMOAHA (USA) - *Small Towns in Planning System: The Experience of the United States.*

E. WEBER (FIJI), C. KOTO (MARSHALL ISLANDS) - *Disturbing the creation of a spatial system – Outside intervention and urbanization in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.*

A. SABOGAL DUNIN BORKOWSKA (PERU) - *Challenges of local planning in Peruvian small towns on example of Alexander von Humboldt town in the Amazonian basin.*

Book in preparation

Bański J., Meadows M. (eds.), *Research Directions, Challenges and Achievements of Modern Geography*, Springer

The aim of the book is to identify and discuss research directions, challenges and achievements in contemporary geography. The study is intended to document the most current theoretical and methodological considerations undertaken by scientists representing various sub-disciplines of geography (with particular reference to human geography). It was assumed that the thematic structure of the currently active International Geographical Union Commissions corresponds to the most relevant and current research directions in geography. Thus, representatives actively involved in the work of these Commissions were invited to prepare the individual chapters of the book.

Publications derived from previous conferences (co)organised by the IGU Commission on LRD (2019-2021): published and in preparation (due 2023)

- From the IGU CLRD Pre-congress seminar *Local and Regional Aspects of Natural Hazards* held in 2021, three papers were published in WOS Journals by the Steering/Corresponding Members:
 - Grigorescu I., Popovici A.-E., Damian N., Dumitraşcu M., Sima M., Mitrică B., Mocanu I. (2022) *Adaptation and resilience of sub-urban farming in Bucharest metropolitan area in response to COVID-19 pandemic*, Land Use Policy, vol. 122, 106351 (Q1/IF: 6.189).
 - Mitrică B., Grigorescu I., Mocanu I., Şerban P., Damian N., Dumitraşcu M., Dumitrică C. (2022) *COVID-19 Pandemic and Local Cultural Tourism in the Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians (Romania)*, Healthcare, 10(12), 2392 (Q2/IF: 3.160).
 - Bański, J., & Kamińska, W. (2022). Trends for agricultural land-use in the CEECs following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. Land Use Policy, 112, 105794 (Q1/IF: 6.189).
- From the Annual Meeting of the IGU Commission on LRD *Sociodemographic change and its impact on territorial development policies* held in 2022, several publications are in preparation for the Special Issue *Revue Roumaine de Géographie/Romanian Journal of Geography* (due 2023).

Other publishing initiatives for 2023

(1) **Special Issue *Revue Roumaine de Géographie/Romanian Journal of Geography*** - in which the results of the Annual Meeting held in Cuenca in September 2022 will be published

(2) **LAND, MDPI (Q2)** – Joint issue with the *Commissions on Health and the Environment & Land Use/Cover Change* following the IGU Scientific Seminar on *Health, Environment and Sustainable Development* (December 2023)

URL of the Commission's website.

Website: <http://igu-clrd.igipz.pan.pl/home.html>

E. ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Copies/links of all materials and publications sent to the IGU Secretary General.