

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **TOURISM AND GEOPOLITICS. ISSUES AND CONCEPTS FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

Edited by: DEREK HALL, CABI (CAB International), Wallingford, Oxfordshire,  
UK / Boston, MA, USA, 2017, 378 pp., ISBN: 978-178-064-761-6

**Reviewed by** OLIMPIA COPĂCENARU,  
University of Bucharest, Romania

In recent years, tourism development in the post-communist European countries has been characterized by a growing number of international visitors, attracted by the favorable geopolitical evolution.

*'Tourism and Geopolitics. Issues and Concepts from Central and Eastern Europe'*, edited by Derek Hall, presents the various connections between tourism and geopolitics and it brings an important contribution to the literature regarding the formerly communist countries situated in this part of the European continent.

The book consists of 26 clearly organized chapters, structured in 7 parts (I-VII), representing articles written by 29 contributors from different countries of Central and Eastern Europe. From these 26 articles, 7 belong to Derek Hall, the editor of the book, as an unique author or contributor.

The book gathers information on a wide range of post-communist European countries and territories: Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Albania, the states that belonged to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo or Montenegro) or the ex-Soviet countries (Ukraine, Russian Federation, including the exclave of Kaliningrad).

The publication can be described as extremely

topical and of immediate interest, as it brings to the public attention important recent geopolitical events and changes that took place in Eastern and Central Europe, such as the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the recent migrations, the Middle East refugee crisis or the growing number of terrorist attacks and their impact on local tourism. What is more, the focus is explicitly on the idea of tourism as a promoter of peace and cooperation.

The first part, *'Introduction and Overviews'* gathers three chapters, *'Bringing Geopolitics to Tourism'* (Author: Derek Hall), *'Tourism and Geopolitics: The Political Imaginary of Territory, Tourism and Space'* and *'Tourism in the Geopolitical Construction of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)'*, and it provides a rather theoretical approach of the evolution of the connexions between tourism and geopolitical strategies, interpreted in the authors' view.

The second part of the book, *'Reconfiguring conceptions and reality'*, consists of 4 chapters that bring into focus the concepts of 'post-socialism' and 'post-communism'.

These concepts and ideas are illustrated with relevant examples: the Adriatic region, which faces a continuous cultural development, Ukraine and Crimea, whose tourist activities have been highly affected by the unilateral reunification of the peninsula with Russia, or

Montenegro, whose tourism expansion may cause difficulties in the European integration process due to the close economic relations with The Russian Federation.

'*Tourism and transnationalism*', the third part of the book, gathers four chapters and it examines the way in which transnational corporations have exerted their economic power in the countries situated in Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, the articles focus on the large-scale tourism development in Czech rural areas, highly influenced by the great flow of Dutch tourists, the expansion of international hotel chains in the former communist states or cross-border consumption practices, very obvious especially in the case of the Romanian - Hungarian border. Moreover, this part of the book brings into attention important trends, such as the liberalisation of post-socialist markets, the decentralisation, the privatisation processes or the rapid growth of transnational companies.

The fourth section of the book is called: '*Borderlands*', it consists of four chapters and it develops the widely debated idea of the changing character of political frontiers and its both internal and international impact. In the last years, a great number of cross-border collaborative projects were implemented all across Central and Eastern Europe, changing the pace of local development. This issue can be easily exemplified through transborder tourism in the Polish - Czech space. Another important topic addressed in this part of the book is the problem of historical barrier effects of the border and their impact on the present state of tourism, illustrated through the example of the Finnish - Russian geopolitical relations. Two chapters of this fifth part of the publication highlight tourism issues related to the exclave of Kaliningrad, characterized by a much higher level of international tourism compared to other parts of the Russian Federation. Kaliningrad, whose main economic activity has become tourism, is a theme rarely encountered in the international specialized scientific literature.

The fifth part, '*Identity and image*', consists of five chapters and it is probably the most

heterogeneous section of the book. It approaches various aspects of tourism market development in Central and Eastern Europe. Polish gastronomic tourism and ethnic cuisines, the growth of tourism in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, recreational tourism and ecotourism in Kosovo, and destination safety in a post-conflict area, are all explained in relation to geopolitical processes. Two of the five chapters are centred on the situation of Romania. The first article focuses on the case of the European Night of Museum and it develops the idea that cultural tourism in Romania changed significantly since the collapse of communism, while the second one addresses a very current theme: the power and influence of social media, more exactly blogging, in promoting travel destinations, based on the case of Bucharest and Sofia.

'*Mobilities*', the sixth section of this publication, is organized in five chapters and it highlights a wide range of concepts, from critical geopolitical aspects, such as the earlier forced migrations and the refugee crisis in Central and Eastern Europe to the traditions of accepting culturally different refugees. The authors focus their studies on different tourism-related aspects of mobility: the role of Western tour companies offering trips to Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War, the impact of the expansion of low-cost flights over tourism development in the area, the international footballer mobilities, the migrants' transit and the way it is reflected in the tourists' perceptions or the case of Albania and the inter-relationship between co-ethnicity and tourism' development.

The seventh and last part of the book, '*Conclusions*', reviews the previously presented aspects, discussing the key concepts, theories, examples and approaches brought together by the wide range of authors. The publication is complemented by a consistent list of figures, tables, boxes, abbreviations and an extended index.

To sum up, the book represents an extremely complex collaborative work and it is fully coherent in introducing the current political issues that shape the European continent nowadays and demonstrating the

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characteristics of the contemporary underestimated branch of globalisation, the relationships between geopolitics and tourism authors prove that the political aspects and in Central and Eastern Europe. Although tourism are closely interconnected. international tourism is apparently an

**10 Years of EU Eastern Enlargement:  
The Geographical Balance of a Courageous Step.  
Proceedings of the Symposium in Vienna, 3-4 December 2014**

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**Reviewed by** FLORIN ALEXANDRU ZAHARIA,  
University of Bucharest & Ministry of Transport, Romanian Government

The European Union has faced a series of political, economic and social challenges over the last few years that have led to more public debate about the future of the Union. Political events such as the Brexit and the problems of increasing the frequency of terrorist attacks, threatening the national security of the Member States, and, last but not least, the migratory flows faced by certain countries have led to an increase in the number of Euro sceptics. In this context, the approaches of scientists, in fields such as economics, sociology and geography, to the evolution of the European space and the European community are welcomed, opening new perspectives on how the EU should evolve over the coming decades. Also, the future can not be properly planned without a systematic approach and a detailed understanding of the problems that the European community has faced in the past.

In this context, through the articles it brings, the book provides a perspective on the evolution of the European space since the last decisions on its enlargement to date. While the European Union currently seeks to reconfigure itself, the informal European Summit held in

Malta in 2017 brought to the public opinion the desire of the EU countries to pursue the process of European integration and to increase the degree of economic and social cohesion of the European territory in the coming years.

The book includes papers presented at the "10 Years of EU Eastern Enlargement -The Geographical Balance of a Courageous Step" Symposium organized by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, held in Vienna, in 2014.

The Symposium was organized to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Eastern enlargement of the EU space, and it was centered on regional development, regional disparities, urban development, intercultural contacts, migration and geopolitical and geostrategic aspects of Europe as presented at that moment. As the editor says, the symposium gathered 126 participants from 20 countries and three continents.

The proceedings present 31 papers presented at the symposium, involving the contributions of many individuals and institutions. The book has its structure organized in 9 chapters corresponding to the nine main themes of the Symposium,

indeed very current in an analysis of the enlargement of the European Community space. The papers cover various areas of study in the domain of social, economic and geographical sciences, in the context of EU Eastern enlargement, such as: geopolitical perspectives and European integration, migration, economic transformation, regional development and spatial planning, rural development, urban development, inter-cultural contact and minorities, other cultural-geographical and political-geographical aspects and data processing for planning and regional development.

The first chapter deals with a number of geopolitical aspects and the problem of the integration process in the community space for the new member states. The chapter begins with the work of Giuliano Bellezza, which immortalizes the image of the EU enlargement from the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community), which at the beginning of the 50s had only six states, to the European community as we know it today with the 28 member states. The themes presented in the first chapter deal with different geopolitical aspects from a geographic point of view on the EU's spatial dynamics and the implications that the expansion of the community space has assumed over time or may involve them. Starting with the analysis of Orient Express's influence on the cultural links between the East and the West of Europe, responding to the impact of East Germany's inclusion in the EU from an economic, demographic and geopolitical point of view, analysing the geopolitical implications of the economic crisis on the various regions of the community space, giving a point of view on the status of the Adriatic region in the EU space, and ending with an analysis of the political uncertainties in Bosnia and Herzegovina that stops its development and EU integration, the chapter covers

the approached themes in a generous way.

Chapter 2 brings us the issue of migration in the context of the enlargement of the European space. Heinz Fassman's first paper analyses migration to and from South and South-Eastern Europe from three different perspectives, with an emphasis on the factors that determine these migratory flows. The second paper deals with migration issues in Albania and their effect on the development of this state. The approach is very modern, considering the new concepts it treats like transnationalism and multilocality as social practice.

Chapter 3 contains three papers and it addresses the economic issues appeared in the context of the growth of the European Community space. The papers deal with the economic issues in countries such as Hungary, Serbia and Romania. The first paper analyses food tax evasion in Hungary, presenting the causes of this growing phenomenon and the consequences for the economic development of this state. The second paper represents an analysis using GIS tools to see the dynamics of the private pension insurance market in Serbia. The author's contribution to developing a methodology based on modern GIS tools in identifying spatial models in the analysis of this private pension insurance market should be welcomed and encouraged. The 3<sup>rd</sup> paper captures a study realized by a transnational college of researchers on the transport network in Romania. The focus of the analysis is on the trans-European networks for all modes of transport and it discusses their development prospects and the impact on the increased accessibility of the territory.

The chapter on regional development and spatial planning is the most consistent

and it includes six works with authors from different countries. The first paper analyses the evolution of the urban system in Croatia and its challenges in the context of the European regional development policies applied at the level of NUTS regionalization. Another paper is Hunor Bajtalan's work on the regionalization process in Romania and the questions posed by the implementation of policies, analysed from two perspectives of centrality and regionalization. Another work is the one of Igor Sirodov et al., related to the dynamic analysis of foreign direct investments and their impact on regional inequalities. The analysis is intended to capture the positive and negative effects of these foreign direct investments on regional development at the different stages of the transition in Romania. The following two papers analyse elements related to socio-economic changes in Poland and spatial planning in Slovakia in the context of their accession to the European Community space. The last paper analyses comparatively the policies and spatial planning system in Austria and Bulgaria, immortalizing how the two, especially the Bulgarian system, could be improved.

The next two chapters refer to rural and urban development. The first paper in the rural development section analyses the public policies of rural development in the context of Romania's accession to the EU, concluding with the inconsistency between the part of the strategic documents and the difficulties in the implementation process. The second one presents a number of issues that could be the starting point for the sustainable development of rural areas in the Eastern European area, with case studies of rural settlements in Romania.

The urban development chapter contains

three papers addressing various themes, from metropolitan development in Poland, to the effects of retrocession by the Catholic Church in Croatia, and the revitalization of industrial heritage in Romania, with all the themes responding to the current challenges of urban spaces. The chapter on inter-cultural contacts and minorities contains a series of papers analysing the specific issues of this theme in Central and Eastern Europe. The papers analyse the problems faced by minorities in countries such as Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria, as well as the causes and effects of these problems in the new context of these states, in relation to the integration policies of EU. Other cultural-geographical and political-geographical chapter contains two papers that address the globalisation and glocalisation concepts over the Slovak language in the context of the European Union and on the theme of functional and territorial differences of post-communist elections in Romania.

The last chapter on data processing for planning and regional development highlights the role of the European integration transposed in the visibility and interconnectivity of authors who have written in „Europa Regional”, the regional geographical scientific journal by the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL). Evelin Muller explains the evolution of the journal in the scientific context of the European Community space. The last paper presents a series of successful projects conducted by Ukrainian geographers in the European context of Ukraine's development, such as the National Atlas of Ukraine and the Atlas of Natural, Technological and Social hazards and Emergency Risks in Ukraine. In terms of graphic and cartographic representation, the majority of works in

this book can be appreciated by their high quality and professionalism. What can be noticed in most papers is the high quality and transdisciplinary optimal character, where the geographic perspective is not diminished at all, and which, through the varied and tangential methods from other social sciences, succeeds to answer a number of concluding questions related to the approached themes.

In conclusion, the book manages to bring together, in a very clear structure, works that answer various questions on the last 10 years of the EU. The analysis of the problems related to the dynamics and evolution of the community space

following the choice of enlargement to the Eastern area is a necessary one and it answers to some concerns about the future evolution of the EU. In the new European context in which the evolution of the EU, as we know it, is called into question, approaches such as this book are absolutely necessary. Specialists should analyse what was good and what did not succeed so well in the European integration and development process so that the future policies established at the level of the European community to better respond to the territorial realities in which they are applied.