



The Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration

- final report -

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The ALMA-RO Association

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- final report -

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Foreward

Not long ago, a front page piece of news shattered the Romanian public spirit, presenting a high official's statement regarding Bucharest's condition on the verge of Romania becoming a EU member: "Romania does not have a capital city worth acceding the EU. Ruined buildings, chaotic traffic and authorities' lack of perspective as far as the city's development is concerned, make Bucharest a capital city unworthy of becoming a European metropolis"¹. The statement belongs to Jonathan Scheele, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Romania, who depicts an extremely topical problem which Bucharest's citizens are facing.

Mr. Scheele's statement was made on the background of loud debates over the last year, regarding the steps to be taken in order to solve Bucharest's problems. We talk about development projects, building the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, drawing funds and investors. But nobody talks responsibly and consistently about transparency in the decision-making process, about development strategies which all the stakeholders contribute to, or about public consultations. And, under no circumstances, as the above quotation mentions, nobody talks about a coherent perspective on the capital's development on both short and long term.

The problem becomes even more complicated as the "metropolitan area" concept has been wandering about for over three years now. The idea of a metropolitan area has been so politicized that it lead to a genuine competition regarding the initiation of various legislative initiatives concerning the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, without a real public debate and without having pursued obtaining the best ratings for the project's viability, for the extent to which it would represent the majority's interest or to which it would set a well-balanced development for Bucharest and the surrounding area. A first comment on this situation is that some of the initiators of the projects concerning the metropolitan area act before thinking, promoting structures and administrative mechanisms before having made sure that all the actors involved know and understand their place, role and priorities within a future metropolitan area. Naturally, under these circumstances, any metropolitan structure is bound to fail, since all that would be left would be nothing but a project elaborated and approved on paper, but with no effective results of public interest.

Taking into account that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area has been on the public agenda for some years, ALMA-RO Association approached the problem from the point of view of the local authorities in Bucharest and in the nearby localities, trying to get involved in building this structure. In this respect, the main target group we approached, considering our experience and expertise, were decision-makers at a local level, who might be interested in Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

Therefore ALMA-RO Association's initiative didn't focus on supporting and promoting a certain metropolitan area structure, but on informing decision-makers and facilitating the dialogue between them on this topic. The lack of communication and genuine public debates on the Bucharest Metropolitan Area topic was identified as a much more important problem than its future geographical conformation, the exact number of localities to be included or its organizational structure.

We feel that actually building Bucharest Metropolitan Area should not be a goal itself, but an instrument with which Bucharest's and the neighboring communities' sustainable development could be reasonably achieved. That is why it is necessary that, whatever structure the future metropolitan area

¹ Alexandra Duțulescu, *Bucharest doesn't deserve to be come a EU member*, Evenimentul Zilei, December 10, 2005

may have, it answers to the needs and interests of all the communities to be associated, regardless of their number, size or geographical setting. And this will only happen if the decision-makers at the local level (mayors, local councilors etc.) identify the priorities of the communities they govern and communicate coherently and in an organized manner with the future partners, in order to establish the best structure of the metropolitan area.

From this perspective, we think that promoting a number of legislative initiatives referring to the Bucharest Metropolitan Area profoundly contradicts the basic principles of this type of structure: the voluntary association of cities and villages, public participation to the decision-making process and the identification of a series of development priorities, which should be applied through projects implemented in partnership, within the metropolitan structure.

On the other hand, we can't overlook the fact that, once Romania becomes a EU member, the Bucharest Metropolitan Area could become a very useful facilitator into drawing European funds for the development of Bucharest area (especially as a capital city organically linked to the surrounding area). In this respect, the partnership between public authorities in order to solve local problems will be vital. But, taking into account that Romania will become a EU member in January 2007, there is little time left to make a decision regarding the types of structures which could efficiently draw and administrate European funds.

In this context, this report will present the manner in which ALMA-RO Association approached the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area" topic within the project called "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration". The following chapter is dedicated to the projects referring to actually building the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, in some shape or form, over the last year, information which we consider useful in order to determine the context in which the activities coordinated by ALMA-RO were carried out. The second chapter describes in detail the activities within the project and the results we achieved, as well as the comments on the information we received from our beneficiaries in the project. The third chapter presents the results of the sociological research conducted by the Institute for Public Policy, and the fourth chapter is dedicated to conclusions and recommendations.

This report is intended for all the actors interested in the Bucharest Metropolitan Area issue, either representatives of local or central public administration, citizens, experts, representatives of the business sector, of the civil society or the media. We would like to present a situation as it is, which goes beyond subjective information initiated in public and which would show to what extent the local authorities in Bucharest and neighboring areas could effectively and wittingly contribute to building the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. The report also presents the opinions of some public administration representatives concerning how a future Bucharest Metropolitan Area should be built and made functional.

We would like to thank the Institute for Public Policy, ALMA-RO Association's partner in this project, for having professionally achieved their task and for the quality of the materials they provided. We would also like to thank the experts who supported us during the project's implementation and all the representatives of public institutions who were actively involved in all the project's stages. Last but not least, we would like to thank our donor, The Open Society Institute, for the financial support of our initiative.

Eliza Teodorescu,
Executive Director
ALMA-RO Association

Chapter 1 - The general context

We came up with the idea to implement a project whose aim was to inform stakeholders on the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area" topic in the autumn of 2003, as a consequence of a high media coverage of the concept, generated by a project promoted by Mr. Vasile Gherasim, mayor of Bucharest's 1st Sector at the time. Mr. Gherasim's project brought about a series of debates which drew the attention on the manner in which the actual process of building the metropolitan area involved the stakeholders, but also on the local public authorities' knowledge and understanding of the concept and practices related to metropolitan areas, in general. ALMA-RO Association's initiative could only be put into practice in early 2005, when it was funded by the Open Society Institute in Budapest.

At the same time, a series of projects (legislative or not) were being written, aiming to create a certain structure for the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, a geographical delimitation and a model for its administration.

1. In August 2005, The General Council of Bucharest adopted a decision which proposes "The development model of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area", elaborated within the documentation of "Area Urban Plan - The Bucharest Metropolitan Area, update and current situation's analysis, diagnosis, regulations, land's digital model, action plan, priority programs", stages 2003-2004².

The decision of the General Council of Bucharest is based on a study coordinated by the Center for Urban and Metropolitan Planning in Bucharest and carried out by an inter-disciplinary team. The study is based on statistical data and elaborate research and it is intended to give a geographical conformation to the area, a series of strategic development guidelines and cooperation objectives for the local administrations envisaged, and two versions of organizational models for the Metropolitan Area, as follows:

- ∅ The Bucharest Metropolitan Area consists of 94 administrative-territorial units, from 5 counties (Calarasi, Giurgiu, Dambovita, Ialomita and Ilfov) and Bucharest.
- ∅ Strategic principles:
 - a balanced development of the metropolitan area by stopping uncontrolled urbanization;
 - leveling the need for economic and social development with the need for maintaining and improving the environment's quality through sustainable development;
 - developing a better relationship between the urban and the rural localities by creating major technical infrastructure networks, diversified and well-connected to national and international networks;
 - improving the quality of life in the area.
- ∅ Specific instruments:
 - the green-yellow belt;
 - regional parks.
- ∅ Out of a series of general organizational structures of metropolitan areas, the study proposes two alternative types of cooperation: the associative type and the economic agency type.

According to the decision of the General Council of Bucharest, between August 2005 and January 2006, "The coordination group of Bucharest's actions in the study territory of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area" is in charge of organizing the public debates with local authorities included in the project, followed by completing the "final development model" of the metropolitan area.

² Decision of the General Council of Bucharest, no. 176/4 August 2005

2. In September 2005, a legislative proposal regarding the establishment of metropolitan areas³ was registered at the Romanian Parliament. This was intended as a framework regulation, which stipulates the following::

- ∅ The metropolitan area administration will be performed through the Metropolitan Area Development Agency (non-governmental, private legal entity), as well as through the county councils whose administrative territory the constitutive cities and communes of the metropolitan area are part of;
- ∅ The Metropolitan Area Development Agency's attributions;
- ∅ The main objectives of the metropolitan areas;
- ∅ The planning and development activities of the metropolitan areas at a national level is coordinated by the Ministry of Transport, Constructions and Tourism;
- ∅ Within the county, municipal or city councils and within the General Council of Bucharest, specialized structures in the field of metropolitan areas, supervised by the chief-architect of the county or city, will be created and they will operate according to the legislation in force;
- ∅ The urban planning activities of metropolitan areas are funded by local budgets of the administrative-territorial units, as well as by the state budget.

3. In October 2005, a legislative proposal regarding the constitution of the "Bucharest-Ilfov Metropolitan Area"³ was registered at the Romanian Parliament. The document proposes a territorial and administrative structure of the metropolitan area and a series of competences for the metropolitan public administration:

- ∅ The Bucharest-Ilfov Metropolitan Area includes the Bucharest municipality, called the Bucharest Metropolitan Center (the sectors are considered cities), and the Ilfov Pre-metropolitan Area (cities and communes in the county);
- ∅ The metropolitan area members have local autonomy;
- ∅ The governing institutions of Bucharest-Ilfov Metropolitan Area are: The General Council of Bucharest-Ilfov Metropolitan Area (61 councilors), The General Mayor and two Deputy Mayors (one for the Metropolitan Center and one for the Pre-Metropolitan Area) and a Prefect assisted by two Deputy Prefects;
- ∅ Public services of metropolitan interest: surface public transport, underground public transport, city-related objectives (the main streets network, water, sewerage and district heating), theatres, libraries and other cultural institutions, graveyards, the Zoo and the Botanical Garden, parks', public gardens' and green spaces' administration services;
- ∅ The Metropolitan Center can coordinate investments anywhere within the Bucharest-Ilfov Metropolitan Area's territory.

4. On October 24th 2005 the legislative proposal called "The Law of Bucharest Metropolitan Area"⁴ was registered at the Romanian Parliament. Similar to the previous project, the document proposes a very detailed administrative structure which the future metropolitan area should have, explicitly presenting the metropolitan area's local public administration institutions and their attributions:

- ∅ - The Bucharest Metropolitan Area is an administrative-territorial unit having county status and it consists of the Bucharest Metropolitan Center (the sectors have the status of cities) and the Bucharest Pre-Metropolitan Area.
- ∅ The Bucharest Metropolitan Area includes 62 localities and Bucharest City;

³ www.cdep.ro, legislative project no. 391/26.09.2005

⁴ www.cdep.ro, legislative project no. 473/21.10.2005

⁵ www.cdep.ro, legislative project no. 483/24.10.2005

- ø Public authorities within the Bucharest Metropolitan Area:
 - The Central Government appoints a Governor (this position is similar to the one of the Prefect) and two Deputy Governors as its representatives in the Bucharest Metropolitan Area;
 - The Metropolitan Area's Council coordinates the activity of local councils, sectors, cities and communes, in order to provide public services of metropolitan interest;
 - A permanent delegation having consultative role operates at the Bucharest Metropolitan Area level and it consists of the General Mayor and sectors' Mayors in the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. The Governor is a rightful member of the permanent delegation and has a consultative vote;
 - The Metropolitan Area Council consists of 75 councilors, who elect four Deputy Mayors and the President of the Metropolitan Area Council. The Council's decisions are compulsory for all the authorities of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area administration;
 - The General Mayor (the name "Capital's General Mayor" is maintained in the internal and external relationships he has) and four Deputy Mayors;
 - The General Assembly of the local elected representatives of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, consisting of the President of the Metropolitan Area Council, the General Mayor, General Councilors, local Mayors and Councilors.
- ø Public services of metropolitan interest: surface public transport, underground public transport, city-related objectives (the main streets network, water, sewerage and district heating), theatres, libraries and other cultural institutions, graveyards, the Zoo and the Botanical Garden, parks', public gardens' and green spaces' administration services..

The three legislative initiatives mentioned above were being debated within the commissions of the Romanian Senate in January 2006. All of them were adopted tacitly by the Chamber of Deputies after having gone beyond the 45 days legal time-limit necessary to vote for a decision.

In the mean time, some legislative projects including amendments to the Law no. 215/2001 of local public administration are taking into consideration the introduction of explicit provisions regarding the capacity of 1st rank municipalities (over 200,000 citizens) to initiate the establishment of metropolitan areas.

Chapter 2 - The "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration" Project

The main problem that ALMA-RO Association identified regarding the process of establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area was that neither of the initiatives related to this structure were preceded by a consultation of the local public authorities in Bucharest, the towns and communes envisaged by all those projects. A second problem, not less delicate, was the lack of information about what a metropolitan area actually means, under which circumstances it can be established according to Romanian legislation, what its functioning principles are and what is the administrative structure model that could best fit Bucharest's case.

This was the context in which the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration" Project was implemented. Its objectives were:

1. Raising awareness of the decision-makers involved in the process of establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area and
2. Capacity building for local public administration in order to reach consensus as far as the Bucharest Metropolitan Area is concerned.

The project's direct beneficiaries were decision-makers in the local public administration in Bucharest and seven other localities on the Bucharest-Oltenești Development Axis (Popești-Leordeni and Berceni - Ilfov County, and Budești, Frumusanii, Oltenești, Radovanu, Vasilești - Calarasi County), local authorities (decision-makers and civil servants) in Ilfov County, members of the Parliament and experts.

The activities within the project were meant to respond to the public authorities' need for information and communication and to facilitate the information exchange between them regarding the establishment of a future Bucharest Metropolitan Area. In the following pages, we will detail every activity implemented by ALMA-RO Association in partnership with the Institute for Public Policy.

Activity 1 - Sociological research

The research conducted by the Institute for Public Policy aimed at studying the perception of the institutional actors potentially involved in building the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, regarding the development of such an initiative. It was intended as an analysis of the current situation concerning the level of information related to the establishment of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area (BMA), the perception of the advantages and possible threats, thus representing a supporting instrument in implementing the following stages of the project coordinated by ALMA-RO Association. The entire research was conducted between May and August 2005.

The research was carried out through questionnaires, interviews and focus-groups. The questionnaires were sent to:

- City Halls in Bucharest, all the localities in Ilfov county and five localities in Calarasi county;
- Prefects in Bucharest, Ilfov and Calarasi;
- Presidents of the County Councils in Ilfov and Calarasi;
- Directors of Bucharest-Ilfov and South Muntenia Regional Development Agencies ;
- Members of the Parliament representing Bucharest, Ilfov and Calarasi counties, members of the parliamentary commissions with attributions in the public administration and land use management;
- Non-governmental organizations which activate in fields which could be influenced by the establishment of a future Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

23 complete questionnaires were received. The results obtained after interpreting the questionnaires were later on used to elaborate the interview guide for the individual interviews and for the focus-groups. The main conclusion, which had an influence on the interview guide's structure, was that decision-makers at a local level had little information on the metropolitan area concept, on its main principles and on projects regarding the Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

We have also organized 10 interviews with mayors or heads of the land use management departments in Bucharest and six localities in Ilfov and Calarasi; moreover, we conducted two interviews with representatives of the public institutions in charge of administrating the Iasi and Oradea Metropolitan Areas, on the way they operate from an institutional point of view, the problems they are up against and the solutions identified within this process.

In the end, we organized two focus-groups, the first one being intended for the public authorities in Bucharest and in Ilfov and Calarasi counties (County Councils, Prefectures) and the second - for local authorities in Bucharest and in the cities and villages on the Bucuresti-Oltenita Development Axis. Besides the above mentioned, experts and representatives of research institutes also participated in the meetings. We thought it was necessary to organize these group discussions in order for the decision-makers with similar levels of authority to be re-united in one place, to facilitate better communication between the participants and to make sure that the opinions expressed by the decision-makers in smaller localities are not influenced by the power that the authorities at a county level may have on them.

The complete research report provided by the Institute for Public Policy is available in the next chapter. We felt that conducting this research was necessary because, as the results proved, there had been no objective information sources regarding metropolitan areas in Romania, easily accessible to decision-makers. Consequently, there was no genuine debate on the concept and its applicability to Bucharest. This situation had to be mentioned in our project, as it underlines the fact that there are various visions of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, but they represent the opinion of a limited group of experts and public authorities. According to the research conducted by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) none of the subjects who answered the questionnaires or were interviewed had ever been consulted on this topic prior to the group discussion.

Activity 2 - Publishing informative materials

Considering that one of the objectives of this project was informing the decision-makers on the metropolitan area concept, we created a series of instruments to present the concept, its practices, case studies etc.

Thus, in May 2005 the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area. Information Guide for local public authorities" brochure was issued. It includes the following chapters:

1. The Bucharest Metropolitan Area - introductory elements
 - the motivation to build a metropolitan area;
 - defining the metropolitan area;
 - the legal framework for establishing the metropolitan area.
2. Geographical development of the metropolitan area
 - geographical organization - urban dynamics;
 - Bucharest - stages and characteristics of geographical organization and the relationship with the hinterland;
 - Bucharest - geographical organization in relation with the hinterland;
 - Geographical conformation of metropolitan areas - the German and English experiences.

3. Objectives and fields of cooperation, models of building and administrating a metropolitan area
 4. Oradea Metropolitan Area - case study
 5. Conclusions
- Annex a: Defining the metropolis as a geographical dynamic system
- Annex b: Bucharest - stages and characteristics of geographical development

The brochure was mailed to the Mayors and Deputy Mayors in Bucharest, Ilfov county and 5 localities in Calarasi county, to County Councils, Prefectures, Regional Development Agencies in the area, deputies and senators representing communities in Bucharest, Ilfov and Calarasi, to NGOs and experts.

The main target-group of the brochure were decision-makers, and the team who elaborated it took into consideration the results of the questionnaires research, trying to integrate those topics which the public authorities requested more information on. The brochure was followed by a leaflet which summarized the information contained by the brochure and it highlighted the concept of voluntary association, being a suitable instrument to promote our approach as far as establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area is concerned. Finally, along with publishing this report we printed a leaflet which summarizes the results of all our activities within the last ten months and draws the attention towards the logical steps to be taken when we talk about building a metropolitan area.

We elaborated these materials considering that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area cannot be established in a realistic and functional manner (according to the legislation in force) unless all the interested public authorities associate voluntarily. The decision-making process at a local level cannot be performed without essential information on the metropolitan area concept. As long as the decision-makers are well informed, they can approach the problem in a constructive manner, they can identify priorities and cooperation objectives with other localities and they can also inform and consult the population. From this perspective, we consider the public authorities to be the main actors to be involved in establishing the BMA.

Activity 3 - round tables

As a result of the research, we organized two round-tables through which we wished to approach the metropolitan area topic, not through the public authorities' eyes, but using their vision towards applying the concept to Bucharest and its neighboring communities.

These events brought together 25 people, representing local authorities in Bucharest, Calarasi and Ilfov and experts. Some of the opinions expressed by the participants, emphasizing on their vision of building the BMA and the problems they identify in this process can be found below. We would like to mention that during the meetings, the legislative initiatives and projects regarding establishing the metropolitan area (presented in the previous chapter) were subject of debate. Therefore, we will summarize the discussions during the round-tables, and we will include observations and comments upon them in the conclusions and recommendations' chapter.

A first idea identified during the round-tables in participants' speeches was related to the necessity of establishing a metropolitan area under current conditions. The participants mentioned reasons such as: eliminating Bucharest's chaotic development, a type of development that the Capital transmits to the localities which it is organically linked to, and also, capacity building for smaller communities in order to draw funds for infrastructure works (i.e. water, sewerage and traffic systems) and to contribute to citizens' quality of life.

The smaller localities around Bucharest could never draw the necessary funds for these types of investments, because limited local budgets do not allow co-funding of projects and because the number of citizens is too small to allow a significant impact of the initiatives. The participants mentioned huge development disparities between Bucharest and the neighboring localities and the lack of financial capacity of the public authorities to provide quality public services. In this respect, the Metropolitan Area could draw more investments to less developed areas, and could significantly reduce poverty within entire communities.

Generally, it was agreed that the area could develop better if the towns and communes got together with Bucharest in order for it, as the main decision-maker in the area, to stimulate considerable social and economic flow.

On the other hand, a series of participants brought up the issue of the lack of coherence in the initiatives related to the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, which vary depending on the context (possibly electoral cycles) and which pursue an increase in the initiators' visibility rather than the sustainability of the actions themselves. Also, it was mentioned that examples of cooperation and collaboration between the public authorities in the area should be established, but these don't necessarily imply actually building metropolitan areas. In order for the BMA to be established a political project is necessary, which should be presented by a powerful local public administration institution, the General Council of Bucharest being most entitled to this.

The debates revealed the following models and methods to build the BMA:

- (1) Association of localities, maintaining the current administrative organization. It was suggested that, in this case, it is imperative for the local public authorities and local decision-makers to communicate well and be well-informed, which is not happening at the moment. It is also required that the decision-makers understand the effects of building a metropolitan area (i.e. an increase in local taxes, which would have a negative impact on the usually poor population in Bucharest's hinterland). In addition, partnership could be a quick solution compared to the process of modifying the area's administrative structure. In the case of the localities near Bucharest taken into account in the projects, some of the participants identified the threat that decisions be made at a county level, without consulting the local public administration or the citizens, thus eliminating the area's chances to develop.
- (2) Expanding Bucharest's administrative area. Those who supported this point of view mentioned the issue of improving the area's general administrative structure, by increasing the number of territorial-administrative units, each public administration having a certain number of citizens and relatively similar responsibilities, in order to make each community's management more efficient. This type of argument was based on the current unfit administrative structure that Bucharest has (a small number of sectors, too many citizens assigned to each sector etc.). This model's priority is that of improving the local governance and, for it to be successful, the model should be promoted through a law, which should stipulate the framework according to which the BMA would be established (in this regard, the example of one of the legislative initiatives under parliamentary debate was mentioned).

This last model was criticized because the administrative re-organization process would take too long to answer to Bucharest's needs, but also because the method which would implement it, by promoting legislative initiatives, was considered unsuitable. It was also mentioned that, at a local level, the

should be the initiators of this type of project. Only after having identified the fields of cooperation and put them into practice, could local authorities initiate an administrative structure, according to the development trends of the area. Moreover, some of the experts who participated in the debate explained that a metropolitan area is mainly a space within which economic projects and programs for development are being implemented, not a space which was built exclusively through its administrative structure.

An aspect which was discussed during both meetings was the geographical structure, the expansion degree of the metropolitan area and the localities which it could include. Particularly Calarasi county representatives insisted on the fact that the project promoted by the General Council of Bucharest includes Oltenita and a considerable number of communes in the county, without realistic motivation. They mentioned that they support the metropolitan area project from the perspective of expansion of industrial activities and investments towards the South, but some of the localities included in the General Council of Bucharest's project have no close links to the Capital and are beyond the 30 kilometers limit from the metropolitan center, as it is stipulated in the Law no. 315/2001, referring to land use management and urbanism. Therefore, the idea of an economic collaboration was accepted to a higher extent.

Taking into account the territorial aspects of BMA and the partnership and collaboration principles, some of the participants proposed an approach of the metropolitan area based on the benefits which each of the localities involved in the BMA could have. Each one of these could offer and receive in return a series of advantages which would increase the interest in partnership. Thus, the cities and communes in the Capital's neighboring area could offer room for recreation activities, university centers, industrial sites etc. and Bucharest could offer in return more job opportunities, development opportunities for infrastructure and public services etc. The demand-offer principle could be used to identify the communities which would be part of the future Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

In the end, it was mentioned that, although Bucharest's natural development tendency is North-oriented, local public authorities could interfere simultaneously, in order to balance the Southern communities' development degree, but this requires a powerful and coherent political message.

Activity 4 - The "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - from theory to practice" training session

This part of the project implemented by ALMA-RO Association was meant to respond to the need for information and training of the decision-makers, identified after the sociological research and during the round-tables. Thus, the training session's design focused both on providing some detailed information about the process of establishing a metropolitan area and on developing the communication and negotiation abilities of the local elected representatives, essential to this process. The training session was a room for debates, in which, for three days, 16 decision-makers shared their visions of a future metropolitan area and understood the complexity of a structure of this type. One of the main results of the seminar was the identification of multiple priorities and interests of the communities to be involved in metropolitan area projects, which cannot be adequately represented unless they have a high degree of involvement and communication.

The training session took place in December, and the agenda included:

- a presentation of the metropolitan area concept and two case studies (Iasi and Oradea Metropolitan Areas in Romania);
- a presentation of the legal framework, underlining the voluntary partnership as a basis for a metropolitan structure;

- an analysis of the stakeholders' involvement in establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area (identifying them, their priorities, their available resources and position towards the topic - the Lindenberg and Crosby stakeholder analysis);
- communication techniques;
- alternative methods of dispute resolution.

Each of these sections included debates, group work, role-plays and case studies.

Activity 5 - "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration" final report

This report is meant as a resource-material for all the stakeholders involved in building the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. We consider that its major quality is that it draws attention on the current situation, raising a series of problems related to the preparedness of public authorities in Bucharest and the neighboring areas to get involved in a complex process of consultation and negotiation. Also, we hope that the brochure is useful to those who have initiated projects referring to the BMA so far, generating better knowledge of the manner in which the local decision-makers (particularly those representing communities outside Bucharest and who haven't been involved in public debates), foresee the development of a future Bucharest Metropolitan Area which would serve their interests.

Chapter 3 - Perceptions and attitudes of institutional actors regarding the constitution of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area⁶

Methodology

The Institute for Public Policy developed a research on the opinions of local public administration representatives concerning the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, included in the project "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for local administration", coordinated by the ALMA-RO Association.

As the project developed on the same topic, the research carried out by IPP aimed at studying the perception of representatives of institutions potentially involved in building the Bucharest Metropolitan Area (BMA), regarding the development of this initiative. The research was envisaged as an analysis of the current situation regarding the degree of information on the potential creation of the BMA, on the perception of its advantages as well as of its setbacks, therefore representing a basis for the implementation of the following phases of the project coordinated by ALMA-RO. The whole research was carried out between May and August 2005.

The research methods were both qualitative and quantitative, including questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Auto-administered questionnaires included open and closed questions and were distributed to all the City Halls in the Ilfov County, all the City Halls of Bucharest sectors, and to a sample of communes in the Calarasi County. The questionnaire has been elaborated together with ALMA-RO representatives, also benefiting from the suggestions of Mr. Serban Nadejde, Architect, whom we thank for his support. The questionnaires' results, especially regarding the section dedicated to the information that local public authorities would like to receive on the development of a Bucharest Metropolitan Area, were later used to elaborate the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area. An information guide for local public administration" brochure, available on ALMA-RO's website (<http://alma-ro.ngo.ro>).

The interviewees were representatives of local public administration institutions in localities placed on the Bucharest-Olteneita Development Axe (Berceni, Budesti, Glina, Frumusani, Olteneita, Soldanu). IPP also interviewed local public authorities' representatives that had already had initiatives regarding the development of metropolitan areas. Consequently, we would like to thank Mr. Laurentiu Droj, of the Metropolitan Area Department, Chief-Architect Institution, Oradea Municipality, as well as Mrs. Mihaela Vrabete, Director of the Iasi Metropolitan Area Association. The interview guide for local public authorities' representatives in Iasi and Oradea focused on some main directions: when and how the initiative of establishing the metropolitan area appeared; which were the steps followed to apply this initiative and several specific questions regarding the current functioning of Oradea/Iasi Metropolitan Areas.

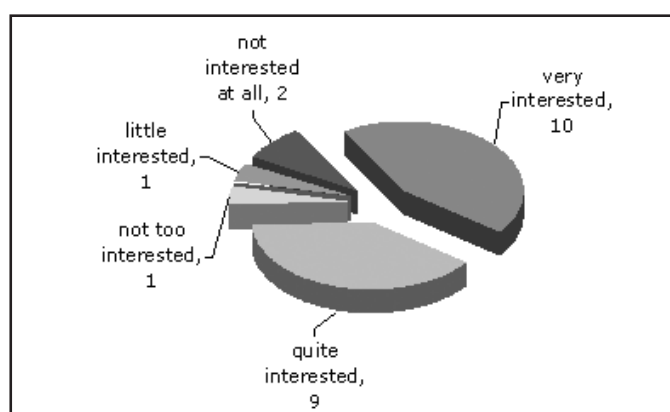
The focus groups gathered (a) representatives of Urbanism and Land Use Management Commissions in the Local Councils of all Bucharest sectors together with representatives of the General Council of the Bucharest Municipality and (b) representatives of county and regional public authorities in Calarasi, Ilfov and Bucharest (County Councils in Calarasi and Ilfov, Prefectures of Bucharest and Ilfov, Bucharest-Ilfov and South-Muntenia Regional Development Agencies).

1. Knowledge and information needs related to the Bucharest Metropolitan Area

The concept of Bucharest Metropolitan Area is well known among institutional actors from both Bucharest local public administration institutions and from Ilfov and Calarasi Counties. Our inquiry revealed that all those questioned - representing both local and county councils and prefectures - had heard about the BMA at least once.

At the same time, the interest expressed during the inquiry regarding initiatives related to the BMA is also very high. 19 of the 23 respondents at the questionnaire declared being interested and highly interested of this initiative, whereas 20 institutional actors admitted that they have little knowledge concerning the BMA.

How interested are you in initiatives related to the Bucharest Metropolitan Area? (N=23)



Almost two out of three respondents declared that they knew about the initiatives related to the BMA. Besides the initiative of the ex-Mayor of the Bucharest's 1st sector, Vasile Gherasim, the respondents referred to legislative projects, such as the Bucharest Law, and various plans and proposals made by the Bucharest Municipality that focused on extending the city's territory.

It is worth mentioning that, even though the BMA concept had a good media-coverage during the last years and there is some knowledge about initiatives regarding the establishment of such an area, none of the questioned institutional actors has ever been consulted on this subject, although the consultation principle is already mentioned in laws regarding local public administration in Romania.

The metropolitan area models already initiated in Romania, namely in Iasi and Oradea, are rarely known in the institutions our study focused on. Only three of the 23 participants in the inquiry know that there are metropolitan areas already functional in Romania, and two out of these three respondents are representatives of public institutions in Bucharest.

The inquiry also revealed those aspects that the institutional actors connect with the concept of BMA. "Development" is the key-word most frequently used in the answers given by the study participants. A second word related to the BMA term, by the interviewed institutional actors, is "infrastructure". The connections made with the BMA term can be divided into two categories - positive and negative - as shown in the following table.

Connections made by institutional actors with the BMA

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to information; - Regional development; - Coherence in development; - City decongestion; - Investments in infrastructure; - Development of surrounding localities; - Extension of utilities' networks; - Suitable land use; - Development of services; - Leisure opportunities; - Large financial resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setbacks and shortcomings in its administration; - Annexing areas of other counties to Bucharest; - Absorption of other localities by Bucharest (loss of local autonomy); - Funds will be centralized and distributed preferentially, following political criteria; - Increase in taxes.

One can observe that the quantitative tendency is to positively relate the BMA to a coherent development process of infrastructure and services, through an increase in the investment-drawing capacity, but one should also consider that the negative connections, though limited in number, come from extremely important institutions, such as the County Councils and Prefectures of Calarasi and Ilfov.

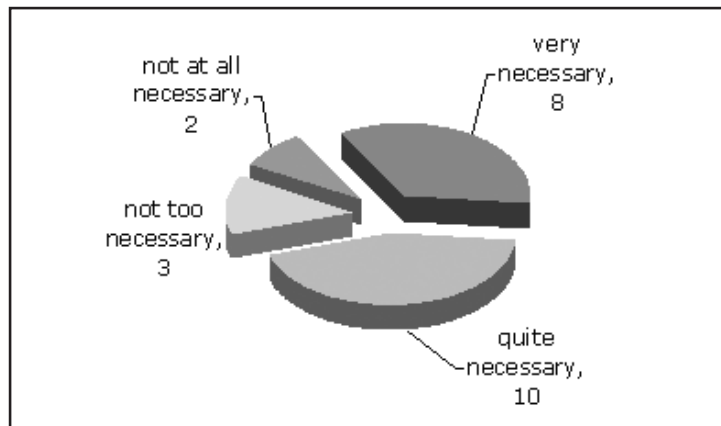
The need for information related to a project regarding the BMA is very high and covers a wide range of themes. To synthesize, we present below the questions which a BMA project should respond to, as seen by the institutional actors:

- What are the principles on which the BMA organization and functioning will be based on?
- What are the steps to follow in building a BMA?
- What is the metropolitan territory?
- What are the criteria used to set the boundaries of the BMA?
- What are the priorities of the BMA?
- What are the costs and the funding sources of the BMA?
- What will the BMA's administrative structure be?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the member localities?
- What impact will the BMA have on the quality of local public administration?
- What advantages and disadvantages does the BMA bring for local communities?
- How does the BMA influence the quality of life of its inhabitants?
- What will the taxation level be?
- What impact will the BMA have on the development of neighboring counties?
- What impact will the BMA have on the environment?

2. Perceptions of the opportunity of establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area

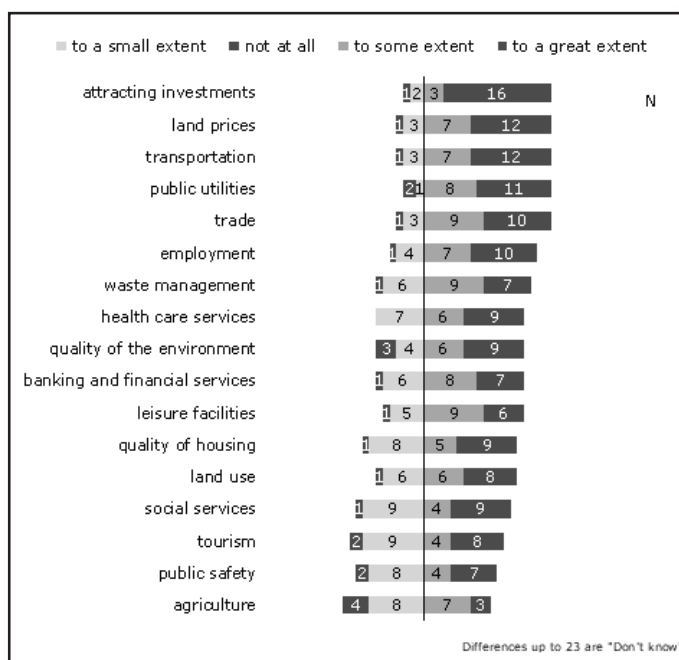
Most participants think that the setting up of the BMA is necessary. For some of the institutional actors, the BMA exists *de facto* - Bucharest already acts like a metropolis - and, to be able to control the capital city's development, its *de jure* existence is necessary.

In your opinion, is the constitution of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area necessary? (N=23)



The main arguments of institutional actors in favor of a formal development of the BMA are represented by the chaotic dimension of the Capital's development and the need for economic and social development of its hinterlands. The BMA, as seen by some of the participants in the study, would lead to the development of infrastructure - transport and networks of utilities - and to an increase in the investments, which in its turn, would generate new job opportunities and a general increase in the population's living standards. The BMA would also be necessary considering the need for an increased traffic flow and for an integrated urban management, through the coordination of activities of the Capital and its hinterlands. Another argument mentioned reducing congestion and pollution by expanding some activities beyond the Capital limits.

From the perspective of institutional actors, the positive effects of the BMA on communities can be grouped into four main categories:



1. Economic development based on increased investments, once the technical and city infrastructure is improved. The same category also includes development based on drawing population with a higher social and economic status in residential areas beyond the territorial limits of the Capital;
2. Development of market services;
3. Development of social services;
4. Use and market value of land.

The arguments in favor of the necessity to establish a BMA are similar to the advantages the institutional actors perceive for the communities they represent. In the absence of definite and detailed information on the Bucharest Metropolitan Area's impact, the advantages perceived by the interviewees must be interpreted in terms of the expectations they have concerning development and, actually, indicate important problems that Bucharest and its hinterlands are confronted with.

For institutional actors in Bucharest, the main advantages of the BMA are expected to be, on one hand, a decongestion of the city and correspondingly, of the urban agglomeration, and, on the other hand, economic advantages that derive from an increased interest of the investors for the area. The communities around Bucharest, especially rural ones, expect the BMA to bring about advantages because: (1) it would lead to an improved technical and transport infrastructure; (2) it would create more job opportunities by drawing investments and (3) it would raise the population's quality of life.

Still, there are a series of disadvantages anticipated by institutional actors, both those from Bucharest and from the surrounding areas. For those of Bucharest, the main disadvantage is described as speculative trend in the real estate market, which could lead to a rapid increase in land prices. Other disadvantages perceived by institutional actors in Bucharest are related to the improper coverage of public services (health, for example), since the need for this kind of services will increase following the growth of population in Bucharest's neighboring localities. In county institutions of Ilfov and Calarasi, the disadvantages that the BMA would generate on local communities are, on one hand, an increase in local taxes and, on the other hand, the decline of neighboring communes of the BMA, since the latter would draw most of the resources: investments and job opportunities. In rural communities, expectations related to the negative effects of the BMA are environment degradation, through a more intense land use, and the loss of local autonomy. It is worth mentioning that almost half of the respondents from rural areas participating in the inquiry did not mention any disadvantage of a future BMA, which can be explained by a lack of information based on which they could build a coherent image of the positive and negative effects that the BMA would generate in rural areas.

3. The development of the BMA on the Bucharest-Oltenita Axis seen by institutional actors

Lacking definite information regarding the initiatives related to the BMA, individual and group discussions with local public authorities' representatives of both Bucharest sectors and a number of localities on the Bucharest-Oltenita Development Axe were focused on the current problems of urban development that these areas are facing.

3.1. BMA and the problems of the Capital seen by Bucharest decision-makers

The statements of City Hall representatives had two main themes:

1. Decongestion of car traffic in Bucharest;
2. The necessity of a coherent vision on Bucharest development.

Seen by local councilors and specialists of the local public administration, Bucharest has a chaotic urban development and, consequently, the Capital's Law and the establishment of the BMA are necessary to regulate and control the evolution guidelines of Bucharest. The functioning of Bucharest and certain neighboring areas indicates a *de facto* existence of a metropolitan area, needing a *de jure* establishment.

The constitution of the BMA would generate Bucharest's decongestion, considered by some of the local councilors as the European Capital having the highest housing density. The BMA would also generate a clearer determination of areas with regards to the fulfilled functions. Thus, the BMA should well differentiate residential, investment and leisure areas.

Defining the BMA should begin with a proper identification of Bucharest influence area, using relevant and valid criteria, such as commuters' flows between Bucharest and the surrounding areas. The BMA should also take into consideration Bucharest support areas, meaning those areas that provide resources, such as food.

Some opinions support the fact that the spread of the BMA should follow natural development tendencies of the city, as previously revealed. Thus, Bucharest has developed naturally towards north and, consequently, the expansion of the metropolitan area towards South on the Oltenita and Giurgiu Axis is unnatural, as the development potential of these axis is very low.

Another important problem that frequently came up in discussions with sector City Hall representatives is the issue of waste management, including solid waste and residual water. The problem (the lack) of landfills and of water stations is extremely delicate for the Capital and can only be solved through its collaboration with the surrounding localities.

The problem related to updating the urban plans was frequently brought about during the discussions. The existing General Urban Plan of Bucharest is considered outdated and not updating it practically blocks development opportunities. According to the statements of some of the interviewees, the Plan didn't take into account existing facts to begin with, and in certain areas, for which the Plan set up specific functions, construction permits have been released before the adoption of the General Urban Plan by the General Council.

During the discussions with local councilors, the following specific disadvantages concerning the BMA's establishment as an associative structure were identified:

- 1 - Lack of cooperation and consultation between sector and Capital City Halls. This is generated both by a lack of human resources which to with the relationship between the sectors' City Halls and the general administration of the Capital, and by subjective human factors, such as indolence and convenience;
- 2 - Reduced cooperation experience of local authorities in Bucharest and the surrounding localities, for the development of common projects;
- 3 - Reticent attitude regarding the establishment of the BMA by voluntary association. A number of local administration representatives mentioned that the BMA could only be established by gathering surrounding communes and towns under the administration of the Capital. Some of the respondents thought that a decision-making process validated by all local councils would not be effective because of interest groups and political disputes;
- 4 - Numerous technical infrastructure problems that Bucharest is already confronted with (especially in peripheral neighborhoods), and which is unable to solve, could transform the BMA in a simple plan that could only work on paper. The Capital would not be able to contribute to developing infrastructure in surrounding localities.

3.2. Local public authorities in Calarasi County on problems of their communities and the constitution of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area

The speech of Town Hall representatives in the two towns of Calarasi County - Budești and Oltenita - focused on competitive advantages of the two localities. Generally, they were open to a possible expansion of the BMA that would include the two towns, despite the fact that they did not have too much information on what the constitution of a MA would imply. In both situations, the expectations of local authorities regarding the advantages of belonging to the metropolitan area were related to an increased capacity of the two towns in drawing investments.

Oltenita, placed 60 km away from Bucharest, has the advantage of being a harbor at the Danube, thus being able to facilitate the access to fluvial transport. There are intense interactions between Oltenita and Bucharest, developing both advantages and disadvantages for Oltenita. On one hand, the inhabitants of Oltenita can relatively easily access services offered in Bucharest. Many prefer to go shopping in the large commercial centers of the Capital, as the prices are lower than in Oltenita. Youngsters have easier access to higher education institutions in Bucharest. The disadvantage derives from the fact that the Capital draws most of Oltenita's qualified labor force, depriving it from the human capital necessary for development. At the same time, Oltenita is also an attraction for the neighboring localities. On one hand, farmers from surrounding communities sell their products in markets of Oltenita, and, on the other hand, children from these communes study in the towns' high-schools. From the urban planning point of view, the town expanded more towards North, in the residential area, but also towards South, in the industrial area. In 2002, Oltenita succeeded in raising funds for sewerage and heating system rehabilitation and starting with the fall of 2005 it has a gas distribution infrastructure, which makes it more attractive for investors. Through the SAMTID program, the towns of the Calarasi County (Oltenița, Budești, Lehliu Gară and Călărași) signed a partnership agreement, which aims at developing a common development plan. Still, Oltenita did not develop any collaboration experiences with the neighboring communes on development projects. Regarding compatibilities between Oltenita urban plans and those of surrounding communes, the situation seems vague. Even though the County Spatial Plan should harmonize the development guidelines of the town and neighboring communes, the Chief-Architect of the Oltenita City Hall did not know if the communes' urban spatial plans include, for example, the main gas pipe that will supply the town.

The town of Budești was established in 1998 and was initially a commune consisting of four villages, with a population of around 10,000 inhabitants. Despite its town status, most of the economic activities are related to agriculture, especially wheat and sunflower cultures. Budești was initially part of the Ilfov Agricultural Sector, a status that the present authorities regret to some extent, as they feel neglected by county authorities, (at the county level, authorities' focus, as expressed by Budești representatives, is on raising funds for the city of Calarasi, residence of the county). Budești has close relationships both with Oltenita and Bucharest, as it is placed half way between them. On one hand, the young population of Budești is working in Bucharest and most of the farmers sell their products in the Capital's markets. On the other hand, teenagers from Budești study at Oltenita's high-schools. The urban plans of Budești were under development at the time of the field research, but the authorities intended to extend the town's limits for housing purposes. According to local public authorities, there were some investors interested in buying land in Budești, and the fact that the town will be connected to the gas pipe would make it even more attractive for investors.

Still, Budești faces serious problems related to the living standards of an important part of the population. The Roma community is quite large and, at the same time, there is a high number of beneficiaries of the minimum income guaranteed by the State through Law no. 416/2001. One of the advantages of Budești is the qualified labor force, namely ex-commuters of Bucharest industrial platforms. According to the public authorities' perception, there has not been any collaboration between Budești and the neighboring communes, as the administrative status differences (commune versus town) represent setbacks in developing common projects.

The commune of Soldanu stands out among from the neighboring ones because, of a population of around 3300, there are 220 beneficiaries of the guaranteed minimum income under Law no. 416/2001. There is also an important Roma community, around 8% of the population. In 2006, the commune will be connected to the gas pipe mentioned in the case of Budești and Oltenița. The authorities have also submitted a project at the County Council (according to Deputy Mayor's statements) to build a sewerage system. The same Deputy Mayor expressed its discontent concerning the fact that local authorities are not informed on the opportunities to access various development funds. The General Urban Plan of the commune⁶ was being developed at the time of the interview, but stipulated the extension of the commune limits as to include areas where new houses had already been built. Before 1989, Soldanu provided a great number of commuters which worked in Bucharest. There is no high-school in the commune and, because of low living standards, a relatively small part of the teenagers go to school in Oltenița.

The commune of Frumusani is better developed than Soldanu and was part of the Ilfov Agricultural Sector. The higher degree of development is also generated by the fact that there are several agricultural companies (a slaughter-house provides around 500 jobs), a plastic factory etc. Besides those, there are individual producers that sell fruits and vegetables in Bucharest's markets. Regarding demography, Frumusani has the highest increase rate compared to all the other communities in Calarasi, a fact which, according to the authorities, is linked to migration. Still, if one analyses age categories, the population is rather old⁷. The commuting line is mainly oriented towards Bucharest and is supported by public-private transportation from Oltenița to Frumusani. As in some of the other cases, the General Urban Plan of the commune was being developed at the time of the interview, including an extension of the commune's limits to allow building initiatives. The commune has high leisure potential (ponds, forests etc), most of the investors being interested in buying land even outside the commune limits. Concerning development perspectives, local authorities mentioned the support of the County Council in developing projects. As previously mentioned, regarding collaboration perspectives, the public authorities of this commune think that there are important development disparities between localities of the county, which impedes local administration institutions to associate.

Both local authorities of the two towns and of the communes stated a real interest and openness towards the Bucharest Metropolitan Area idea. As we have mentioned before during the research, expectations related to the BMA mostly focus on raising infrastructure development funds, which would lead to more investments, new job opportunities and, consequently, to an increase in population's living standards and in incomes for the local budgets.

⁶ As a detail worth mentioning, the funds destined to make the Urban Plan were given by the County Council, and the company that was contracted to do it belongs to a county councilor, according to Soldanu city hall representatives.

⁷ The Roma population (800-1000 inhabitants) does not own land and is mainly composed of day laborers.

Regarding the structure of the BMA, the consulted authorities generally think that it should be based on the association of local councils in a body having legal status and its own employees. The focus should be less on political interest and more on the functional aspects of the association, even though it would be led by the General Mayor of Bucharest.

3.3. Attitudes of county authorities in Calarasi towards the BMA project

To begin with, we have to underline the virulent attitude that the representatives of the County Councils and Prefecture of Calarasi had towards the BMA project, while they were completely uninformed about the purpose of the research and about the way a metropolitan area can be legally set up in Romania. County authorities focused on one of the maps included in the proposal of the Center for Urban and Metropolitan Planning in Bucharest (CUMPB) regarding the territorial demarcation of the BMA and accused the organizers of the group discussion they had been invited to of hidden interests. The main arguments against the BMA project proposed by CUMPB were the following:

1. None of the decision-makers in the Calarasi County were ever consulted concerning this project;
2. The area that the BMA is proposed to cover is enormous (bigger than the Paris Metropolitan Area) and is completely unjustified;
3. The criteria used to draw the limits of the BMA tend to be arbitrary and reveal the intention to modify the boundaries of the administrative-territorial units. Practically, one of the purposes in setting up the BMA would be to disintegrate the Calarasi County.
4. There are not any relevant relationships between the localities of Calarasi included in the BMA project, which could explain their inclusion in this area;
5. There are hidden economic interests behind this project aiming to speculate the price of land in the localities proposed to be part of the BMA;
6. This project could lead to an increase in disparities between certain areas of the Calarasi County, instead of reducing existing ones;
7. The BMA would reduce the opportunities of poor rural areas to access development funds;
8. The project is not viable and realistic and, consequently, the money spent to do it is useless.

All the arguments against the project and fears expressed by participants at one of the group discussions on the BMA offer relevant clues on the information that needs to be disseminated in order to be able to set the basis for consensus building on the importance and the impact of the BMA constitution.

4. The experience of Oradea and Iasi in building metropolitan areas

To show some Romanian examples of the process of setting up a metropolitan area, on how such an area can be organized and what the obstacles that have to be overcome are, we will present below the experiences gathered around two metropolitan areas in Romania: Oradea and Iasi. Even though Bucharest is a municipality a lot bigger than Iasi and Oradea and, practically, the constitution of the BMA is an entirely particular case, we think that a considerable part of the experience gathered by the two municipalities may also represent a source of inspiration in the BMA case.

The Oradea Metropolitan Area (OMA) started with the development of urbanism studies that became the basis of a cooperation protocol between the Municipality of Oradea and the neighboring communes. The constitution of OMA began with the identification of common needs for quality public services and an effective management of local public administration, having the following objectives: improving the quality of life for the MA inhabitants, increasing regional development, integrating general urban plans and increasing the area's attractiveness and accessibility. The OMA includes eight localities, with Oradea Municipality as a core. After setting up the structure and the functioning rules of the MA consensually, the Metropolitan Area Association was established, having a staff of 6-7 employees. Inside the MA, each locality is designated a number of votes proportional to the amount of population, and the decisions can only be applied after being approved by each local council. The OMA budget is composed of contributions of each locality coming from the local budgets, contribution which is also established according to the population and the size of each local budget. During the last four years, since the initiative related to the OMA appeared, several studies have been developed and the activities focus on common projects, such as: integrating urban plans and development strategies of the localities, building a landfill, defining investment areas, regulating public transport between Oradea and the surrounding localities. During this first stage, the surrounding localities benefited from an improvement in technical endowments and training for Town Halls' staff. Oradea also started to set up social homes in the neighboring communes. Besides the contributions from the local budgets, OMA also received both Romanian governmental grants from the Ministry of Transport and Housing and funds from the United States Agency for International Development and the European Union. The MA structure and functioning is based on inter-communal partnerships on common development projects.

The Iasi Metropolitan Area (IMA) was set up, similarly, after developing a series of studies. An important component was informing the potential partners on what a MA is and which the advantages and disadvantages of building an MA are. Consultancy and training activities funded by the Governance Reform and Sustainable Partnership (GRASP) lead to the identification of needs and available resources. There was a series of risks that had to be overcome, such as political ones - following local elections, 40% of the mayors of IMA localities changed, but all of them continued to participate in the project; there were also setbacks and suspicions related to the loss of power, as small localities would have been absorbed by the Iasi Municipality.

Each administrative-territorial unit of the IMA is represented by a Mayor or Deputy Mayor mandated by local council decision, and each of them has one vote. Each decision must be approved by local councils of member localities. IMA has a permanent executive body (Development Bureau), which has the following competences: to write project proposals, to organize business opportunities for the area, to collaborate with the business sector, with public services providers, the decision makers and citizens' consultative commissions in conceiving the development strategy. Each member locality participates, with its own specialists, in the explanation of the strategy through projects. One of the first projects aims at creating an intranet, to which all IMA members should have access to. The IMA budget is formed by members' contributions from local budgets and of project-based funds. The first MA projects' fair

was organized in 2004, but to be able to implement the projects, metropolitan authorities have to develop activities of land inventory and clarify the statute and destination of each land first. Again, in 2004 the Association initiated a project to develop the Cadastral Plan of the area and, currently, the metropolitan spatial plan is being developed. IMA is based on public-public and public-private partnerships, the main partners of public authorities being the academic community and the business association.

Taking into account the information related to the experience of the two metropolitan areas, we can highlight a series of elements to be considered when initiating a MA development process:

1. Carrying out urbanism studies that could be the basis of member localities' decision to become associates in a metropolitan area;
2. The necessity of an information process about what a metropolitan area involves;
3. Identifying local development needs through consultation and the elaboration of a metropolitan strategy, which should harmonize local strategies;
4. Harmonizing urban plans and correlating them with the metropolitan development objectives and strategy;
5. Democratic participation of the members in the decision-making process;
6. Setting up a permanent executive body that should have its own budget and human and material resources necessary to coordinate the MA activities.

Conclusions

Most of the institutional actors that were interviewed / questioned had heard about the Bucharest Metropolitan Area in various contexts. The most notorious was the initiative of the ex-Mayor of Bucharest's 1st Sector, Vasile Gherasim.

None of those who participated in the research had ever been consulted regarding the BMA.

Generally, institutional actors, and especially those outside Bucharest, think that they have little knowledge about the BMA. Moreover, very few knew that metropolitan areas had already been created, based on the law regarding territorial planning.

In quite a few cases, this lack of information leads to a negative image of projects related to the BMA, which are seen as absorption of surrounding localities by Bucharest. There are also some suspicions about interests hidden behind the project.

Most of the institutional actors in counties surrounding Bucharest do not have a clear image of what the Bucharest Metropolitan Area is. Some see it as an administrative reorganization, an expansion of Bucharest's boundaries that would have an impact on their political interests, others, as an opportunity for easier access to investments and funding sources. Particularly those in the communes surrounding Bucharest see it as an opportunity to solve problems related to infrastructure, whereas local budgets do not allow it and the authorities have limited access to information about European funding opportunities.

Some opinions highlighted the fact that Bucharest has the characteristics of a metropolitan area, works like a metropolitan area, but the BMA must be formally put in place because it is the only way to control the spatial development of the city.

The interest in BMA initiatives is large, but it does not always originate in positive attitudes towards the BMA.

The need for information on this topic is huge. Most of those questioned are interested in the way it can be organized, in its limits and the criteria to establish them and in the advantages of being included in the BMA. Despite the lack of information, most of the institutional actors agree that the BMA is necessary, thinking that it will bring about the development of local infrastructure, which would draw more investments, new job opportunities and an increase in the inhabitants' quality of life. It could also generate a better management of environmental problems.

Those more informed about the subject think that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area would be necessary, seen from the perspective of a correlated and integrated development of both Bucharest and its hinterlands, and a priority objective would be decongesting traffic in the Capital.

During the last few years, the local public administration has been pressured to increase the inner city limits, especially for housing purposes. It is possible that, without a common strategy for the area, the territorial expansion of localities would hinder the development of certain projects inside de BMA.

There are very few collaboration examples between the various institutional actors involved in this research. Bucharest sectors have no collaboration on common projects. Moreover, the discussions revealed that a coherent communication process between the sectors or between the sectors and the General City Hall does not exist. None of the research subjects representing Bucharest public administration could identify a case of collaboration between the sectors.

Regarding the relationship between the sectors and the neighboring communes, we can hardly speak about collaboration in common development projects. There was a series of land exchanges, and Glina has a common project with the Capital General City Hall regarding a water station.

There is a gap between local public administration in Bucharest and other towns that could become associated in the BMA, regarding the problems of neighbouring communes. City Hall representatives in Bucharest and Town Hall representatives in Calarasi are aware of the communes' problems, but they are not able to identify any solutions that could include collaboration between urban and rural communities.

The lack of cooperation was often explained by a sort of convenience, the lack of human resources and opportunities of sectors, towns and communes to come together and debate common problems or generate common projects.

In Calarasi, the local administrations collaborated in a project which aimed at improving and extending the water supply network. The County Council also started a project regarding the network of gas supply, which many localities on the Bucharest-Oltenita Development Axis will soon benefit from. Generally, the investments in developing utilities networks could bring advantages, in that it would make the area more interesting for other investors. Some communes on this Axis raised European funds for infrastructure projects, and this experience could become an important resource in developing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. One of the advantages brought about by the BMA for the institutional actors in these communes is the opportunity for better access to information related to funding for infrastructure projects.

Some institutional actors in more developed communes of the Ilfov County are reticent to the BMA, because they are not able to identify the advantages that the BMA would bring. Some of these communes have already solved part of their infrastructure problems through European funds and, based on their experience concerning their relationship with the Capital, they think that only Bucharest will be able to benefit from the constitution of the BMA.

Other institutional actors mentioned that it would be easier for smaller communes to access funds if they were not members of the BMA.

Generally, local public authorities are not aware of the way the Bucharest Metropolitan Area could actually be organized, but they agree that it should be based on localities' voluntary association. There were a few suggestions that each local council should not approve decisions in the BMA, as this process would hinder the application of all decisions.

Some of the setbacks in developing and running a metropolitan area are represented by the suspicions regarding political and economic interests, as well as the case where, after replacing local councillors and mayors through elections, some projects could be abandoned or encumbered.

The perceived advantages of constituting the BMA and highlighted during the interviews and debates were:

- putting an end to Bucharest chaotic development;
- integrating development plans and strategies of localities included in this area;
- developing infrastructure, especially transport and utilities' networks;
- raising attractiveness of the area for potential investors;
- an efficient waste management strategy;
- facilitating the access of rural population to services available in the city.

To conclude, the local public authorities interviewed and questioned are obviously interested in the BMA, but this is combined with a serious need for information on the limits of the BMA and the criteria used to delimit it, on the management structure, as well as on potential common development projects, aiming to raise the quality of life of all citizens of a future Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

Chapter 4 - Conclusions and recommendations

As a result of the activities developed by the ALMA-RO Association during the 9 months of the project and of the research already described in the previous chapter, we can draw some conclusions concerning the attitude of the public administration representatives towards developing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. Although the number of subjects of this research could not be considered representative, the results were remarkably relevant for a series of core issues. Therefore, it would be possible to extend these conclusions to the majority of the localities which could be included in the metropolitan area (defined as a "metropolis") and in the potential Bucharest metropolitan region (defined as a functional urban region).

To begin with, within the research, it became obvious that the representatives of local public administrations were familiar with expressions such as "metropolis", "metropolitan area" and "metropolitan region", even though they did not know their meaning. The representatives of communes, towns and cities in which the research was conducted did not know the definition of the concept seen from the spatial-urban and administrative point of view.

This lack of information and the poor understanding of the mechanisms which the constitution of a metropolitan area is based on lead to errors of interpretation and generate susceptibility towards the application of such a project. This could be the reason why some of the representatives of local public administration perceive the establishing of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area as an administrative reorganization, through the absorption of lands and resources belonging to neighboring administrative-territorial units.

The confusion is due to the lack of knowledge regarding Romanian legislation, which regulates the constitution of metropolitan areas, defined as "areas established through association, based on voluntary partnership, between large urban centers and urban and rural localities within a 30 km distance, which cooperate on various levels" (Law no.351/2001). In the case of communes involved in the ALMA-RO study, the lack of legal information background concerning the constitution of metropolitan areas could be explained, since the issues related to building the metropolitan area are not always a priority for the mayors.

The legal initiatives which have flooded the Parliament during the last half year also contribute to the general confusion around the BMA phenomenon. These initiatives reveal a one-sided approach (mainly focused on administration and governance issues) and, generally, a lack of knowledge of urban economy mechanisms which lead to the establishment of a metropolitan area. On the other hand, these legal initiatives show the same lack of knowledge and understanding of the metropolitan area/region concepts. The term "Pre-metropolitan Area", which is never used in the West-European specific literature, is very frequent in two of the three legislative initiatives submitted at the Parliament. Bucharest becomes "the Bucharest Metropolis" and what used to be called pre-urban area becomes the pre-metropolitan area. The fact that Bucharest does not have the spatial conformation, the economic behavior, or the administrative structure worthy of being defined as a metropolis is not taken into account.

Some of the localities involved in the study and the project activities, particularly those who are administrative parts of the Calarasi County, but geographically (they are located within a maximum 30 km distance from Bucharest) and functionally (though economic relations) are linked to Bucharest, thought an administrative organization would be beneficial, formally including them in the city's area of influence. This attitude can be explained by the dysfunctional relationship between these administrative-territorial units and the county residence, placed at a longer distance than Bucharest.

We identified a lack of communication even between the administrative-territorial units' representatives having the same rank and a lack of communication in developing projects in association. Partnerships for common infrastructure development were rare and circumstantial. At the same time, most of the participants showed a lack of experience and expertise in elaborating projects that would draw European funding.

The conclusion of this short analysis is that the same lack of knowledge of the metropolitan area/region concept is obvious at both local and national levels of public administration. We should underline that the models of administrative-territorial structures proposed by the parliamentary legislative initiatives ignore the legislation in force regarding the constitution of metropolitan areas.

On the other hand, as a result of informing and explaining the metropolitan area concept, local public administration representatives who participated in the project showed a change of attitude and identified the benefits that the BMA would bring to their communities - funding of new partnership projects following local priorities and, consequently, generating local development. At the same time, participants at the training session and the round tables organized during the project identified some of the strengths of their localities, which would draw more interest for their inclusion in the metropolitan area. The round tables and, most of all, the training session created the setting where part of the public administration representatives could meet, know each-other and exchange information on the methods of solving common problems, the sources of funding they used and the potential partnership opportunities. From this perspective, we consider the project a success. Generally, the participants showed greater interest in the issues related to establishing/administrating a metropolitan area than in its spatial conformation, even though a certain configuration influences both its administrative structure and associations and the types of partnership projects.

Thus, ALMA-RO Association's project highlighted the importance of the information and debates necessary for defining the availability of local authorities to take part in establishing the metropolitan area, based on objective data and an internal process to identify each community's strengths and weaknesses.

The lack of information and the fact that the decision-makers are not familiar with the metropolitan area concept and the practices related to it is obvious at the local and central administration level and it is even more obvious that the population in the administrative-territorial units suffer from lack of information in this regard and cannot come up with a valid point of view to express in a public consultation. We estimate that both the population and the companies, public administration or other stakeholders interested in Bucharest Metropolitan Area don't have access to objective and technical sources of information which would give answers to questions such as: "What is a metropolitan area?", "What problems could a metropolitan area solve, and what are the issues it could not approach?", "How can we build and administrate it?" etc.

A complex approach to the problem raised by the configuration of a metropolitan area was elaborated within the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area Development Model" project, in the "Area Urban Plan - The Bucharest Metropolitan Area" phase. The project was elaborated by an inter-disciplinary team, coordinated by the Urban and Metropolitan Planning Center, subordinated to the General Council of Bucharest. Although this design phase has already been approved by the General Council of Bucharest through the Decision no. 176/04.08.2005, the initiative hasn't been brought to the local public administration's attention, in the communes/towns which potentially become a part of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. Unfortunately, at least the local authorities who participated in the activities developed by ALMA-RO mentioned that they hadn't been consulted after this initiative was published, even though the decision of the General Council of Bucharest enforces this type of communication and debate process. We consider that this lack of transparency and communication is the main obstacle when talking about constituting metropolitan areas and it affects both the local authorities' perception and the viability of the initiatives themselves.

On the other hand, we have to underline the fact that local public administration representatives (especially those in small communes and towns included in the CUMPB study) are closest to the citizens and are aware of their problems and necessities in detail, as well as of the development potential of each community. In this respect, the dialogue with local public administration representatives could have revealed the strengths and weaknesses of those localities, others than the ones identified from "behind their desks".

Although the project implemented by ALMA-RO had no intention to suggest a spatial configuration of the metropolis and the metropolitan area, neither did it chose one administration model to the detriment of the other options allowed by law, we also have to emphasize on the relation between the BMA and the euro-regions already existing. Both the administrative-territorial units North of Bucharest, having developed spontaneously and showing features of urban poles, and the units on the Bucharest-Oltenita Axis (which Bucharest City Hall intends to develop towards a metropolitan area) are included in the South-Muntenia Euro-region. The administrative-territorial units in Ilfov county and Bucharest are part of the Bucharest-Ilfov Euro-region. A metropolitan area including localities belonging to two different euro-regions with different priorities, objectives and funding strategies could face difficulties in accessing structural funds.

As far as the implementation of the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration" project is concerned, we think that it generated better communication between participating local authorities and it raised awareness on the complexity of the metropolitan area concept and on the diversity of options to choose from in applying it.

Still, we have to mention that the ALMA-RO team could not take responsibility to solve all the issues related to establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, nor will it ever take it. Therefore, we think it is necessary that the local authorities interested in this structure take full responsibility to get informed and to inform the population they represent, because they have the resources, the authority and the necessary means to do it. Bucharest public administration could be the 'engine' behind an efficient process of establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, but this can only be done if they also take responsibility for organizing the public debates and the training sessions with and for the local decision-makers, in order to provide an open, transparent and inclusive process.

The recommendations which we think could be followed in establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area are:

- ∅ In order for a process of structuring the BMA to be effective and to lead to a coherent structure, the public and private actors in all fields need to get involved, to be informed about the concept and practices related to metropolitan areas and about the alternatives to be taken into account;
- ∅ Any legal initiative related to establishing a metropolitan area must observe the legal framework (regarding land use management, public administration and its structure, public access to the decision-making process etc.) and the principles that it stipulates (voluntary partnership for creating metropolitan areas, public participation, transparency etc.);
- ∅ It is necessary that each community sets its own priorities and needs through public consultations and debates, prior to committing itself to any kind of negotiation regarding its participation in establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. The lack of such local processes could generate confusion and could hinder the consensus building process;
- ∅ An approach based on identifying the development needs and economic benefits which a Bucharest Metropolitan Area could generate, would help in building a more coherent vision of such a structure and its characteristics. This would enable elaborating development plans which could be a basis for the metropolitan structure, completing the territorial and administrative approaches;
- ∅ We need to take into account the issues raised by the expansion of a Bucharest Metropolitan Area, particularly from the EU accession perspective and from that of structural funds' absorption, since a metropolitan area expanded on more than one development region could hinder the process of drawing structural funds and of elaborating development projects in a unitary and undiscriminating manner within the entire metropolitan area;
- ∅ The "Bucharest Metropolitan Area Development Model" elaborated by the Urban and Metropolitan Planning Center and approved by the General Council of Bucharest could be a starting point for an effective process of establishing a metropolitan area. However, we think that the options for an administrative structure of the metropolitan area, as well as its boundaries should be submitted to public debates, in which all the stakeholders should take part. It is also necessary that a project like this cover, in addition to statistical data and organization models, the needs and priorities of the citizens, public authorities, companies and civil society, which would be directly affected by the constitution of the metropolitan area and by its administrative structure, whatever it may be;
- ∅ In the process of establishing the metropolitan area we need to take into account the "2007-2013 Strategic Reference Framework for the Bucharest-Ilfov Region" , which sets a series of options, objectives and development priorities, defined on the basis of the most recent studies and public consultations with the local authorities in the region;
- ∅ NGOs' active participation both in disseminating the information and in decision-making is essential in order to find a solution to the metropolitan area issue, unanimously agreed by all the stakeholders.

Report⁸ related to Mrs. Valeria Valeri's participation in the ALMA-RO project on the Bucharest Metropolitan Area⁹

During the course of 2005, I have participated in two meetings organised by the ALMA-RO Association, with the aim of debating the perspectives of establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. The meetings were prepared and followed by bilateral contacts with the ALMA-RO team.

Four main elements emerged from the debate:

1. The significance, in the debate, of the historical legacy and the administrative organisation of Romania before the Second World War, as well as before 1989.
2. The legal and normative issues associated to the establishment of a Metropolitan Area in Romania are to be clarified for the Metropolitan Area to become operational.
3. The value-added by the eventual establishment of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area is widely understood.
4. There is a growing degree of consensus by the concerned authorities regarding the possible establishment of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

1. The region that surrounds Bucharest has traditionally been a rural area. Presently, this area is under pressure by the expansion of the urban area of Bucharest, so that a number of communes lost their typical agricultural function to accommodate new residential districts, manufacturing plants, logistics platforms, trade and other services. This progress has "lights and shadows", since it is taking place within a normative framework that is considerably permissive in terms of use of the land. The territory surrounding Bucharest has been rapidly invaded by all sorts of constructions, and these developments were frequently inconsistent with the principles of sound urban planning (for example, new districts were developed with no connections to water-pipes, sewage, transport systems etc.). For those who are still linked to the agricultural activities and traditions, the expansion of the city outside its administrative boundaries raises a lot of questions and fears. Land prices are on the rise and the rural population is at risk of being marginalised and progressively "expulsed" from the rural areas closer to the city. Land trade became an important business that prevails on environmental and cultural matters.

Moreover, the present Ilfov County was in the past a much larger administrative unit than it is now. Until 1981, the Ilfov County accounted for over 2,700,000 inhabitants and included the Bucharest town, nowadays it accounts for approx. 276,000 inhabitants, with Bucharest town being a separate administrative unit.

⁸ Issued by Valeria Valeri, Pre-Accession Advisor to the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency, within the RO2003/IB/SPP/O8 Twinning Project between Regione Lazio of Italy and Bucharest-Ilfov Region of Romania funded by the European Union through the Phare Programme. Contact information: valeria.valeri@adrbi.ro, tel. 0040 722 294496

⁹ This report was prepared at the request of ALMA-RO Association and delivered on January 20th, 2006.

(as highlighted by the ALMA-RO study quoted in the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Reference Strategic Framework, see Annex 1 in attachment). Therefore, Ilfov authorities and citizens considered that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area could represent a positive development in that it would establish again a Unitarian Administration at least as far as Bucharest and Ilfov are concerned¹⁰. The advantage of belonging to the Bucharest Metropolitan Area would be that Ilfov citizens could benefit of better services, financed by the "richer" budget of the Bucharest Municipality. This is indeed important having in mind the important disparities between the urban areas of Bucharest and those of Ilfov. The Ilfov County has important deficits in terms of infrastructure, particularly road and transport connections, availability of potable water, sewage systems, waste collection, social services (more info at www.adrbi.ro, web site of the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency).

During the course of the debates facilitated by the ALMA-RO project, there were lively discussions on which territories should be included within the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. Several studies were carried out on the subject, but these should be updated. In a sense, economic and land development in the area is so fast that studies become obsolete very rapid. The most recent study on the subject indicated that approximately 500,000 citizens living outside Bucharest administrative boundaries have functional relations with the capital city, so that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area could include both Ilfov and other areas of counties surrounding Bucharest¹¹.

2. There are two legal options for establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area: a) Consensus by the concerned administrations or b) A special law. Both options have been considered. Case a) would require the organisation of local consultations, however the concerned communes reported not to be organised for such a work. Moreover, local governments' representatives (Mayors and Counsellors) expressed no doubts that the citizens agree with joining the Bucharest Metropolitan Areas. A special law would appear to be less democratic than option a), and also would not go so rapidly as the option based on consensus by the concerned administrations (it requires debate and vote by the two Chambers of the Parliament). During the debates organised under the ALMA-RO project, a preference for option a) seemed to emerge.

3. The Bucharest Metropolitan Area is a necessity, not an option. During the course of the debates, it appeared that there is large consensus on the fact that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, once established, would bring considerable value-added for local communities, in particular more efficient governance, in terms of public services and land use management.

4. The ALMA-RO project has the merit to have prompted dialogue between local authorities both in Bucharest and Ilfov on the Bucharest Metropolitan Area subject. In particular, two main events followed the events facilitated by ALMA-RO: a public debate on the Bucharest Metropolitan Area organised by the Municipality of Bucharest on 16 November 2005, followed by a statement by the General Mayor of Bucharest¹²; a meeting between Bucharest and Ilfov Public Authorities (the General Mayor of Bucharest, the Ilfov County Council President, the Prefects of Bucharest and Ilfov, the Planning Centre of the Bucharest Municipality and Metropolitan Area, the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency) organised at the initiative of the General Mayor of Bucharest on 30 November 2005.

¹⁰ It should be highlighted that several studies indicate that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area functionally extends beyond the administrative boundaries of the Ilfov County.

¹¹ It should be highlighted that a representative of the South Muntenia Regional Development Agency also took part in the debate - the Agency having mandate over the Muntenia Region, neighbouring Bucharest-Ilfov Region.

¹² Valeri delivered a presentation at the above-mentioned event.

Conclusions

The ALMA-RO project provided a valuable contribution to clarify the issues linked to the establishment of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. During the course of the project, there was wide recognition that on the one side the Bucharest Metropolitan Area is a necessity, on the other side dialogue and debate are necessary before the concept can become operational. Dialogue and debate are ongoing; however, to the view of the author of this report, additional specialised inputs would be necessary to further support this ongoing process.

Mr. Liviu Mănescu's¹³ contribution to the final report on the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for local administration" Project

During the second half of 2005, I got involved in the "Bucharest Metropolitan Area - a challenge for public administration" Project, developed by ALMA-RO Association in partnership with the Institute for Public Policies. I participated at the research and the debates, by attending two meetings and the training session in December.

At the meetings there was a considerable amount of written information materials, destined to increase awareness on the subject and on other recent approaches. Likewise, ALMA-RO Association team members and the specialists that answered ALMA-RO Association's request made a series of presentations on the Bucharest Metropolitan Area topic, having also regarded the urban development side of the concept. I will further present my observations and conclusions on the debates and training session I participated at:

- ∅ A historical presentation of Bucharest's (and its hinterland) administrative-territorial development helped in understanding the context of a potential Bucharest Metropolitan Area. Another approach mentioned the current dependency of the existing administrative-territorial areas regarding, for example, access to job opportunities. It was emphasized that distances of 70 km and more between residences and the work place are not an obstacle for local population anymore.
- ∅ It was emphasized that if so far every family generally possessed a single locative unit, usually situated at relatively small distances from the work place, a change in population's attitude seemed to emerge lately, in the sense that they have accepted to build a home at longer distance, usually situated in less polluted areas.
- ∅ Another aspect noticed and emphasized during the debates was that individuals from rural areas having agricultural activities understood that, in order to maximize their profit, they should sell their products in large city markets, where the demand of products is increasing. Therefore, they have organized and supported the development of freight transport between a series of localities, which led to an increase of traffic in the future Metropolitan Area, as well as of roads quality.
- ∅ The growing need for recreation in a natural environment increased appreciation of some areas that offered diverse leisure opportunities (lakes, rivers, forests and so on). This generated more traffic to and from these locations.
- ∅ Children and teenagers from the rural areas surrounding Bucharest chose to study in the Capital's educational centers, which also lead to an increase in traffic to and from Bucharest, as well as to longer commuting distances.

All these aspects resulted in an increase of social-demographic and economic interdependency between different parts of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, emphasizing on the need to turn the existing reality into a formal unitary administration.

¹³ Mr. Liviu Mănescu is a Local Councilor and the President of Bucharest's 4th Sector Commission for land use management, planning, environmental protection and tourism.

On the other hand, although the interdependency between the communities situated in a potential Bucharest Metropolitan Area emerged during the debates between representatives of different administrative-territorial units, there are divergent opinions regarding the need to formally set up this area. Some of the participants thought that the institutionalization of existing relationships would be natural, others saw the metropolitan area as a threat to the financial independence of their localities. This was a vivid and disputed subject of debate, based on information about Iasi and Oradea Metropolitan Areas.

Therefore, I think that setting up the Bucharest Metropolitan Area is a process that requires time and a series of projects focused on several aspects:

- ∅ The elaboration of a General Urban Plan which should answer to the needs and should be related to local interests and features;
- ∅ The setting up of a strategy to constitute the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, which should include the necessary steps, deadlines for the achievement of each objective etc. ;
- ∅ The establishment of a unitary infrastructure for the entire area;
- ∅ The setting up of decision-making and executive bodies which should administrate the entire infrastructure network;
- ∅ The training of human resources and the development of mechanisms that would contribute to creating a functional metropolitan area.

I think that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area needs a new and independent administrative body, which should have the suitable financial resources and decision-making competencies.

The project developed by ALMA-RO Association and the Institute for Public Policies was conducted in a professional manner and it facilitated access to information sources. Participating in the debates was of most interest for me, and I think they improved the participants' ability to become reliable sources of information within their communities, regarding the Bucharest Metropolitan Area issue. The project was an important and necessary step forward towards establishing the Bucharest Metropolitan Area. It was an excellent opportunity to raise the public authorities' representatives' motivation to set up the Bucharest Metropolitan Area and to understand the advantages that this structure could bring.

Annex 1 - Excerpt from the "Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Strategic Reference Framework"¹⁴ made by The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency

Box 5. The Bucharest Metropolitan Area: a lively debate

Several voices claim that the Bucharest Metropolitan Area already exists as a functional metropolitan zone. According to a recent study (CURS, www.undp.ro), 65% of Ilfov inhabitants work in Bucharest, whilst 15-20% of Bucharest inhabitants work in Ilfov.

The daily flow of commuters would account for over 480,000 people, from both Ilfov and other surrounding areas, mainly from Calarasi county. This means that, although presently the Bucharest Metropolitan Area has no administrative status, de facto a functional integration of the city with its hinterland is in place on the basis of intense socio-economic exchanges.

This is confirmed by the ESPON study financed by the European Union (www.espon.lu) that has identified Bucharest as a Metropolitan European Growth Area (MEGA), formed by Bucharest, Northern Ilfov (Voluntari) and Ploiesti (this city belonging to the South Muntenia Region).

It would appear a contradiction between the CURS and the ESPON study, in that CURS identifies functional connections mainly towards South (Calarasi county, South Muntenia Region), whilst the ESPON study mainly towards North (Voluntari-Ploiesti). In both cases, some areas of the South Muntenia Region are found to have functional linkages with Bucharest-Ilfov.

Another study finalised in May 2005 (ALMA-RO, see note 7) recalls that Bucharest and Ilfov administrative boundaries suffered various modifications over time, as presented below.

The ALMA-RO study also recalls the normative framework for the establishment of metropolitan zones in Romania. The law for territorial planning 350/2001 makes reference to the "metropolitan territory", law 351/2001 defines the "metropolitan zone" as a "zone established by association, further to a voluntary partnership agreement, between a large urban centre and the urban and rural localities surrounding it up to a distance of 30 km, linked by cooperation relationships on a multiple basis". On the basis of this law it was established, for example, the Oradea Metropolitan Area.

A specific reference to the metropolitan area of Bucharest Municipality is contained in the Ordinance of the Romanian Government no. 53/2002 containing the framework statute of the administrative-territorial units, art. 4, as follows:

Art. 4(3): The Communes surrounding Bucharest and those surrounding municipalities of "I rang" can be organised as municipal metropolitan zones.

A project for the legal establishment of a "Bucharest Metropolitan Area" was published, at the initiative of former Mayor of Sector 1 Bucharest Mr. Vasile Gherasim. This project, that can be consulted at www.zmb.ro, includes a study of the functional relationships between Bucharest Municipality and 62 localities in the surrounding areas.

¹⁴ Source: www.adrbi.ro

Annex 2 - What governance for european metropolitan areas?¹⁵

Author: Roger Read, Secretary General of METREX

Summary

Effective metropolitan governance is essential to the achievement of the better urban balance between metropolitan areas sought by the European Union as it extends to the wider Europe. A sustainable approach to European metropolitan strategies will involve compact urban forms and mixed use, public transport orientated development focused on city and town centres. A polycentric approach of this kind within metropolitan areas will also require effective metropolitan governance. This paper explores the competencies, capabilities and process required for effective spatial planning and development at the metropolitan level and the models of metropolitan governance that might be considered to achieve this.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)

Spatial planning and development has moved up the European agenda over the last 5 years with the publication of the European Spatial Planning and Development Perspective (ESDP), through the European Commission, and the Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of the European Continent, through CEMAT (the Council of Ministers of the wider Europe with responsibility for Regional Planning).

Towards a better European urban balance

The concentration of Europe's economic activity in the Global Integration Zone (GIZ) recognized by the ESDP and focused on the London, Paris, Brussels, Randstadt, Ruhr/Rhine area, is likely to continue and to grow. If it does then there will be increased urban pressures in this core area and could be related problems of decline elsewhere. Measures to achieve a better urban balance than this are required in zones such as the Baltic, Danube area and the Mediterranean.

Polycentricity

The ESDP sees a polycentric approach to urban restructuring within metropolitan areas and the development of polycentric relationships between metropolitan areas as an appropriate response to the need for a better urban balance. A polycentric Spatial Vision has been prepared for North West Europe and this gives an example of what is being sought.

Europe's metropolitan areas

There are over 100 metropolitan areas, with populations over 500,000, in the wider Europe, containing about 60% of the total population of 480 million. This is a measure of the importance of metropolitan competitiveness and wellbeing to the economic prosperity and social cohesion of Europe. It is also an indicator of the potential significance of effective metropolitan governance in achieving a better urban balance within Europe.

¹⁵ Source: www.eurometrex.org, METREX - The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas

The metropolitan dimension

The metropolitan dimension

The process of urbanization across Europe has resulted in core cities and their hinterlands (areas of social and economic influence), or clusters of cities and towns, becoming the primary urban form. Most such areas are now metropolitan in character, meaning that they function as one interdependent urban region or area.

Subsidiarity

The concept of subsidiarity means that metropolitan areas are now the level at which wider European spatial planning objectives can be realized most effectively. Without effective metropolitan governance the populations of metropolitan areas are unable to influence some of the key issues affecting their future and its sustainability.

Sustainability

Many of the strategic spatial planning issues of concern at the European level, such as sustainability, can only be addressed effectively at the metropolitan level. Metropolitan areas share common problems of economic change, social inclusion, urban sprawl, traffic congestion, city and town centre vitality, environmental damage and pollution. They also offer opportunities for renewal and regeneration, high quality urban life, and economic competitiveness. It is because these issues are inter related, and balances have to be struck between them, that effective spatial planning and development is required at the metropolitan level.

Integrated Regional Strategies

A sustainable approach to improving the quality of life in metropolitan areas will require integrated social, economic, environmental and spatial action in order to bring about an improvement in the wellbeing of metropolitan areas as a whole. These inter related issues can be addressed best through the formulation of an Integrated Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development produced and agreed by the various public, private and voluntary sector "stakeholders" concerned and with the active participation of the public.

Whilst spatial planning and development has an important part to play in moving towards a more sustainable future it is only one of a number of related functions that have to integrate their activities in a mutually supportive way. Such an Integrated Regional Strategy will provide the necessary context for coherent spatial planning and development at the metropolitan and community levels.

Stakeholder planning

In most European metropolitan areas there are a variety of authorities and bodies, with responsibilities that are related to spatial planning, that need to be integrated into the plan making process. These key stakeholders are,

- Bodies with responsibility for specific social functions such as housing, welfare, education, health and culture and also for wider spatial planning issues such as social inclusion.
- Bodies with responsibility for specific economic functions such as promotion and training and also for wider spatial planning issues such as economic development and environmental renewal.
- Transportation authorities or companies with specific responsibility for operating the road or rail networks and services and also with wider spatial planning interests in urban change and the location of development.

- Environmental authorities or bodies with specific responsibility for safeguarding natural resources or urban heritage but also with wider spatial planning interests in sustainability. These include bodies responsible for water and sewerage..

An integrated approach to spatial planning and development at the metropolitan level is required, involving all these key stakeholder interests. Strategic planning will not always be the primary function of such stakeholders but their integration into the plan making process means that the implementation of the plan will be that much more effective.

Metropolitan Magna Carta and its associated Practice Benchmark

METREX, the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas, responded to the challenges of the ESDP through the Porto Convocation, held in 1999 on the initiative of the Junta Metropolitana do Porto with the support of the European Commission. The Porto Metropolitan Magna Carta, and its associated Practice Benchmark, aims to assist in achieving effective metropolitan spatial planning in Europe through the development of the necessary Competence, Capability and Process.

Competence, Capability, Process

Competence means having the powers to approve, implement and safeguard a metropolitan strategy. Capability means having the knowledge and understanding to take informed spatial planning and development decisions. Process means having in place the means to regularly monitor, review, consult on and roll forward a metropolitan strategy.

Metropolitan competencies

There are a number of key competencies that will enable a metropolitan planning authority or body to be effective.

National Spatial Plan availability

The availability of a National Spatial Plan, to provide a context for strategic planning at the regional level, can make a major contribution to effective metropolitan spatial planning. The concept of "subsidiarity" (decisions being taken at the level to which they apply) depends on spatial frameworks being in existence at European, National, regional and local levels.

Formal terms of reference the planning body

The overall objective of spatial planning at the metropolitan level is to meet the social and economic needs and demands of the area in the most sustainable way possible. This means that the planning authority or body must have the formal terms of reference to do this effectively.

Powers of the metropolitan planning body

Through public participation in the process of plan formulation a strategic metropolitan planning body can seek to obtain the highest possible level of support for the preferred metropolitan strategy and its related policies, programmes and projects. However, there will inevitably be occasions when differences of opinion between communities or public or private interests have to be balanced and resolved in the wider interest of the metropolitan region as a whole. A strategic metropolitan planning body is most effective when it has the powers to take decisions on such conflicts of interest within its area.

Coherence of area of the planning body

In order to ensure that the integrated approach described earlier is effective the strategic planning body should operate over a coherent metropolitan area. The example, this could mean covering most of the commuting area, housing market area, retail catchment areas of towns and cities and possibly the hydrological (water catchment) area for environmental reasons.

Power to implement and safeguard a strategy

A planning strategy which is prepared in partnership with key stakeholders and approved by a metropolitan planning body, after a open process of public participation, should be binding on all public and private interests and related levels of local planning. In these circumstances the need for the metropolitan body to use its powers to resolve conflicts of interest or safeguard the approved strategy, from major incompatible developments or incremental erosion from numerous small-scale developments, should be limited.

Level of influence on implementation strategy

If the key stakeholders are an integral part of the strategic planning process then a high level of commitment to the plan should be able to be obtained. The plan will then be a major influence in directing investment in support of the metropolitan strategy. However, there may be occasions when the interpretation of the requirements of the plan becomes an issue or when partners simply disagree. In these circumstances Government approval of public sector investment programmes and projects could be made dependent on their compatibility with the metropolitan strategy.

Models of Metropolitan Governance

Across Europe there are now a number of models of metropolitan governance. They range from authorities with comprehensive statutory powers, through authorities with selected core powers to voluntary groupings of authorities with advisory powers only. They can be summarized as follows.

1. Elected metropolitan authorities with a comprehensive range of social, economic, infrastructural, environmental and spatial planning powers, through which to plan and implement effective and integrated strategies.
2. Elected or appointed authorities with selected core powers through which to plan and implement effective strategies to address key issues.
3. Appointed metropolitan agencies or joint bodies with strategic planning responsibilities and advisory implementation functions.

The comprehensive model (Diagram 1)

The establishment of elected metropolitan authorities with comprehensive powers for integrated strategic planning and implementation usually requires the restructuring of traditional forms of local government based on communities, towns and cities. It is therefore much less easy to establish than other models of metropolitan governance based on the voluntary cooperation of existing authorities to address key issues of common interest such as economic change or transportation. However, the scale of the pressures, problems and opportunities being faced by some metropolitan areas can make the comprehensive model the most effective option.

The core powers model (Diagram 2)

Where the key issues being faced by a metropolitan area are more specific or intense then it may be effective to establish a metropolitan authority with the core powers necessary to address these. Such models usually involve the core spatial planning, transportation, economic and environmental powers necessary to achieve substantial urban renewal and regeneration or urban expansion.

The agency model (Diagram 3)

Where there are established and integrated national and regional strategies in place, which have the support of the key stakeholders involved, it may be easier to plan and implement at the metropolitan level with fewer powers and a more voluntary approach.

Metropolitan capabilities

Whatever the model that is adopted for metropolitan governance, depending on the national and regional circumstances and the key issues being faced, there will be a need for the authority or agency concerned to have the capabilities to plan, monitor, review, safeguard and implement the metropolitan strategy. Some of the key capabilities can be summarized as follows.

Professional resources

Strategic planning at the metropolitan level is concerned with key issues that require a longer term approach. The process of data collection, analysis, the formulation of a strategy and associated policies, programmes and projects, and their subsequent monitoring and review, requires the allocation of professional resources on a continuing basis. A permanent dedicated professional team will provide the necessary continuity and commitment and develop expertise from experience.

Survey and data collection

The key stakeholders will all be able to contribute information, experience and expertise to the metropolitan planning process, as will the constituent local authorities. It will be important that surveys and data collection are organized to agreed standards, that is, to agreed definitions, time periods and geographic areas, to enable analysis and planning at the metropolitan level. Such standards should be reasonable, having regard to the key strategic issues being addressed in the plan.

Projections and forecasts

From the agreed metropolitan data sources, and from national sources such as the census, the strategic planning authority will be able to carry out projections and forecasts to provide a social and economic context for the investigation of strategic planning scenarios and policy options.

Urban development capacity

Within mature European metropolitan areas the key issue is very often the need to balance the demand for development with the development capacity within urban areas and the need for their extension. It is therefore important that the strategic planning authority should have the most complete and up to date assessment of urban development capacity available to it as is possible.

Policy analysis at the metropolitan level

Social, Economic, Housing and Retail development, Transportation and a sustainable Environment are at the heart of all policy analysis at the metropolitan level. Although they may each involve specific groups of stakeholders with sectorial or geographic interests they are often inter related.

For example, there may be competition between them for limited development opportunities or development may have an impact on other urban functions, such as transportation, or on environmental resources.

Capability to prepare strategic scenarios and an integrated strategy for a metropolitan area

It is because of the inter related nature of urban development that strategic choices have to be made which balance sectorial and geographic interests in the wider metropolitan interest. This is the key function of metropolitan governance. Whatever the model of metropolitan governance that is chosen it must have the competencies and capabilities to prepare and sustain a metropolitan strategy over the medium to longer term. Many of the development choices for the coming 5 years will often have already been made and it is the ability of the strategy to influence events in the 5-15 year period that is important.

Effective planning process at the metropolitan level

It is the ongoing process of planning, monitoring and review, which will sustain a metropolitan strategy in the medium to longer term and enable it to anticipate and guide urban change. It will also enable it to be responsive to changes in the wider national or regional context.

A pro active, inclusive and transparent approach

In order to ensure that the plan identifies and addresses key strategic issues within a metropolitan area and that the adopted strategy commands widespread understanding and support, it is essential to provide opportunities for public participation to shape the plan. Although the strategic planning process will involve a range of formal authorities and bodies it will also need to involve a wide range of other informal bodies and the general public, or third parties. Good practice should incorporate a requirement to involve third parties in the participation process.

The most powerful force for effective metropolitan spatial planning is a reasoned justification, or well founded argument, for the adopted strategy. Complete transparency, or openness, to the general public and to key stakeholders throughout the plan making process, and its subsequent monitoring and review, will ensure widespread understanding of the strategic plan and continuing support for it.

Implementation, monitoring and review

Support for the implementation of the strategic plan, through the allocation of the necessary human and financial resources, can be secured through the adoption of formal partnership agreements with key stakeholders to secure their commitment to strategic policies, programmes and projects.

As the implementation of the plan proceeds monitoring will reveal new key strategic issues that have to be addressed or policies, programmes and projects that have to be modified in order to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the strategic plan. The plan should be reviewed regularly, in whole or in part as necessary, preferably every two years but at least every five years.

Metropolitan finance

The financial resources available for effective metropolitan governance can include government revenue support and capital grants, local taxes or charges, loans (bonds etc.), public/private finance and revenue income. Only an elected metropolitan authority will have the mandate to raise finance from local taxes or charges and the discretion to allocate these resources according to its own priorities. Financial independence and discretion will be one consideration in choosing the appropriate model of metropolitan governance in any given circumstances.

Conclusion

Whatever model of metropolitan governance that is chosen in particular individual circumstances it should have the competence, capability and process to fulfill the following key functions effectively.

- Preventing unsustainable development;
- Safeguarding sensitive areas or resources;
- Exercising foresight by taking a longer term view of development prospects;
- Presenting possible futures for public consideration and debate;
- Enabling the realisation of chosen spatial planning and development options;
- Sustaining a chosen spatial planning and development strategy.

METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE MODEL 1					
ELECTED METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY WITH COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING, OPERATING AND MANAGING POWERS					
22 primary stakeholders in the metropolitan spatial planning and development process (denotes privatised)					
OPTIONS	SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	TRANSPORTATION and other infrastructure	ENVIRONMENT	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL Health, education, welfare, housing
	ELECTED REGIONAL AUTHORITY WITH MAXIMUM POWERS	2 Regional planning	5 Regional road authority 7 Regional public transport authority 8 Water authority 9 Sewerage authority	14 Regional park authorities	15 Development agencies 16 Training agencies
	RELATED STAKEHOLDERS	1 National government 3 Local planning	4 National road authority 6 National rail authority 10 (Rail operators) 11 (Bus operators)	12 Natural resource agencies 13 Built heritage agencies 14 National Park Authorities	17 Health authorities 18 Education authorities 19 Higher education authorities 20 Welfare authorities 21 Social housing authorities
					21 Social housing agencies 22 Private housebuilders

METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE MODEL 2					
ELECTED METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY WITH CORE STRATEGIC PLANNING, OPERATING AND MANAGING POWERS					
22 primary stakeholders in the metropolitan spatial planning and development process (denotes privatised)					
OPTIONS	SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	TRANSPORTATION and other infrastructure	ENVIRONMENT	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL Health, education, welfare, housing
	2 Regional planning	5 Regional road authority 7 Regional public transport authority	15 Development agencies (environmental recovery)	15 Development agencies	
	ELECTED REGIONAL AUTHORITY WITH MINIMUM POWERS				
RELATED STAKEHOLDERS	1 National government 3 Local planning	8 Water authority 9 Sewerage authority 4 National road authority 6 National rail authority 10 (Rail operators) 11 (Bus operators)	12 Natural resource agencies 13 Built heritage agencies 14 National and Regional Park Authorities	16 Training agencies	17 Health authorities 18 Education authorities 19 Higher education authorities 20 Welfare authorities 21 Social housing agencies 22 Private housebuilders

METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE MODEL 3					
STRATEGIC METROPOLITAN BODY OR AGENCY WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING POWERS ONLY 22 primary stakeholders in the metropolitan spatial planning and development process (denotes privatised)					
OPTIONS	SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	TRANSPORTATION and other infrastructure	ENVIRONMENT	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL Health, education, welfare, housing
	2 Regional planning	4 National road authority 5 Regional road authority 6 National rail authority	12 Natural resource agencies 13 Built heritage agencies 14 National and Regional Park Authorities	15 Development agencies 16 Training agencies	17 Health authorities 18 Education authorities 19 Higher education authorities 20 Welfare authorities 21 Social housing agencies 22 Private housebuilders
	1 National government 3 Local planning	7 Regional public transport authority 8 Water authority (or companies) 9 Sewerage authority (or companies) 10 (Rail operators) 11 (Bus operators)			
APPOINTED REGIONAL AUTHORITY WITH PLANNING POWERS ONLY					
RELATED STAKEHOLDERS					