

## BALKAN ENVIRONMENTAL ATLAS

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**Abstract.** *This paper points out an extremely delicate urbarchitectonic-environmental drama, with innumerable global complex situations. There seems to be little hope for improvement in the actual living environment where the condition, in the developmental sense of the term, grows less and less sustainable. Very frequent conferences organized at all quarters of the world, with important declarations and recommendations do not manage to curb the increasingly evident crisis.*

*The author points out to the need to create new action conditions in the Balkans and argues for the creation of a singular, coordinated, environmental Atlas of the Balkans, an important document, with bases of key data, so that a better quality of life in micro and macro ambience units could be achieved. Therefore, striving for a different, new reality which will not be based on the declarative principles, but on the scientific research and academic education.*

**Key words:** *urbarchitectonic-environmental drama, environmental Atlas, new reality, scientific research.*

*"It may appear as a personal optimistic opinion. I have an impression, almost a conviction, that we are at the beginning of a new town planning and one more complex philosophy of our settlements. There are at least four reasons for this change, as I see it: it becomes clearer and clearer that the settlements are not "professional accomplishments" but a significant living environment, and that taking the cities into ones own hands by those who live in the cities and finance them, is the historical social and political task, almost an obligation. Secondly, we have destroyed and restored so many structures in our settlements, and we have built and made mistakes in so many new buildings - we have changed our natural and city landscape of suburbs and villages to such extent, that this sheer extent and the new omnipresent environment impose the new doubts and new relationships, a new philosophy and more thoroughness by the force of their substantiality."*

*Prof. arh. Ranko Radovic, in the book:  
"The new garden and the old cage"*

The words of Professor Ranko Radovic offer me the clue to assert: that at the beginning of this century, we are at the threshold of an entirely new ecorbarchitecture, new living environment, where the balance between the artifacts and the nature has had a disrupted character for a long time. The dramatic change in the urban environment, with a lot of errors in forming the new living environment, indicate that, in essence, the profiteering reality was faster than the planners, environmentalists, professionals, experts and the science in general. We live in the progressively complex conditioning philosophy, with blurred spatial images, and disarranged frameworks, for which, the architect Bogdan Bogdanovic says: that in the beginning they were a sort of a tool as any other, but that this definition was soon overgrown and the frameworks exceeded the usual attributes of a uniform function. It redirected its functionality into an entirely new direction: it became a tool to understand the world and a cognitive instrument. At the heyday of its history, the city - and I would add ecorurbarchitectonic continuum, was a very useful plaything for a man - the less visible analogon in the fancy of the structured spatial organization.

The spectacular world summit on the sustainable development held in Johannesburg from 26<sup>th</sup> August - 4<sup>th</sup> September 2002 in the organization of the UN, with a motto "RIO+10" demonstrated the impotence of many people worldwide to overcome the emerging problems in the field of ecology and the sustainable development in general. The Conclusions<sup>1</sup> reached at the Summit demonstrated that not many places recorded a betterment in the previous period.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the status remained the same and in some communities there has even been the worsening of the living conditions, and even greater disharmony between the natural and artifact structures. Apart from that, the irregular concentration of population, enlargement of differences between the rich and the poor in the world, excess exploitation of the natural resources, especially energy and water, brought about the new problem, so that some "New Summit" in the near future should not be ex-

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<sup>1</sup> • The Summit affirmed the sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and gave a new stimulus to the global action of combating against poverty and environment protection..

- Understanding of the sustainable development is extended and reinforced as a result of the Summit, especially the significant connections between poverty, environment and natural resources usage.
- The governments agreed and reconfirmed the wide range of concrete duties and action goals in order to make the efforts of achieving the sustainable development more effective.
- The energy and hygiene-sanitary questions were the key elements of negotiations and conclusions, to a larger extent than in the earlier international meetings on the sustainable development.
- There was the support to establishing a fund of world solidarity aimed at eradicating poverty, which was a step forward in a positive way.
- The international community identified Africa and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) as a subject of support, so that the efforts for solving the African development problems could be focused.
- The attitudes of a civil society were paid due attention at the summit, as a result of recognizing the key role of a civil society in the application of the conclusions and in the improvement of the partnership initiatives. Over 8 000 members of the civil societies attended the Summit, which was supplemented with the parallel events which comprised larger groups, such as NGO's, women, indigenous people, young, farmers, syndicate people, prominent businessmen, scientific and technological community and the local authorities as well as the presidents of the Supreme Courts from various countries..
- The concept of partnership between the governments, world of business and the civil society received a great support in the Summit, and in the action implementation plan. Over 220 partnership (with \$235 million budget) was identified prior to the Summit, and during the Summit, a lot of countries announced around 60 partnerships.

pected as the hope that this state of affairs in the concrete living environments will be improved, or that a better response to the present status of (un)sustainable development will be found.

This meeting is an opportunity to make the joint initial steps, as the Balkan states, towards the production of - not a "Declaration..." any more, but of a concrete document - a Balkan Environmental Atlas, which would contain a data basis with identification in usage of the primary, secondary and tertiary interest in the Balkans, where the state borders, if for a moment would be forgotten. To be precise: it would be BALKAN AGENDA 2011 or 2015, where through new, meticulous, well-planned, visionary, ekistic-environmental vocabulary - identity of the Balkans would be made, through a scientific and mutual cooperation. It would comprise new micro and macro regional infrastructure, new ecorurbography. The remodeled territories, and reconstruction plans with maximum engagement and coordination of all interests and subjects of planning are required. It is time to reconsider our ways, and it is imperative that we lift the veil, in order to see the quality of the problems expressed in the quantitative and statistic terms, to establish different relations with all the local specifics and instate the new Balkan environmental standards. To unravel the common experience in the stratified historical, rural-urban and cultur-ologic reality, to balance the contours of the original *genius loci* of the Balkans, to create new environmental and wholesome-spiritual communications, better dialog for the sustainable development.

We are aware of the fact that the political scenery in the Balkans will be radically different soon. Closer to the Europe, and that as soon as tomorrow the discovery of natural and artifact riches in this region will be a duty aimed at reduction of crisis level in the space. It is our permanent obligation to create more humane environment, no matter where in the Balkans, to decrease the ignorant attitude towards nature and to establish the clear moves in the interval between the degrading yesterday and the near environmental future.

In my opinion, the Balkan peninsula<sup>2</sup> is, by its natural traits, an area characterized by the great relief, biological and landscape diversity. Especially important is its richness in waters (running and standing), forest complexes, great biological diversity of flora and fauna, farming land and the important mineral resources.

Those are the resources which are still in good conditions, and which can be counted on in the future development plans. On the other hand, we cannot remain indifferent and not see the images of problematic tendencies: waste dumps, waste waters, exploitation of mineral resources, pollution etc. That is why urgent, right and unique response ought to be given *according to the European standards in protection* and make an urgent effort to protect the environment, in order that the economy, agriculture, transport, tourism could normally function. Only a healthy living environment can make the Balkans developmentally sustainable, interesting and perspective. It is a question of its future environmental fresco - "personality", future and primary sense.

Another thesis, on the forming of the first Balkan Environmental University, with the community of Environment Faculties in the Balkan states, which would be conceived on

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<sup>2</sup> According to the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA 2005. it consists of the states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldavia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia, while Turkey and Greece are sorted as Mediterranean countries. Surface area is 666.700 km<sup>2</sup> and it has 59.297.000 inhabitants.

the principles of Bologna Declaration, with similar or identical curricula, is an idea which can be interesting and feasible. Forming of the central, academic institution which can help us in the cooperation, more balanced development in creation of our common Balkan and European future. I endorse the new reality which will not be founded on the declarative principles, but on the scientific research and academic education in order to create a better, more directed, less abused and controlled world.

I have an impression that we do not have much time to wait, or to describe the environmental status of our rural agglomerations with the inadequate ecologic identities and various space-rural matrices, which failed to be sustainable, regardless of the effort invested. The excess and irrational exploitation of the natural resources and the conclusions from Johannesburg, imply that in certain segments - protection of the atmosphere, forests, water resources, through health protection, agriculture, environmentally healthy management of biotechnology and waste disposal issues, cleaner production technologies, there is a unsustainable status. The status is dissatisfactory and is not a good heritage for the future generations. We must have radical, staged changes and corrective measures, at the same time acknowledging the importance of the general long term conducting of the regular development concept, and thus cancel the disagreements, so that the numerous chaotic and critical rural situations which are a result of our negligence towards the environment could disappear forever. The new relationships could mend and reorganize the status where the innovative technologies and interventions in space were applied to the disadvantage of the old, existing structure - a sort of abolishment of the historicity of a place, and its spirit - its *genius loci*. This requires that the intensive exchange of experience in the Balkan is provided. Development of the new feeling for the environmental rurality, for the different approach to the exchange of ideas and solution on the road to the new reality, involves our common cooperation with the relevant international associations, is the mother of all issues in the focus of common action. It is the demand of the time we live in, philosophy for creation of the new environmental ruralogenesis, an overture for different, more realistic understanding of the sustainable development. Apart from the concrete interventions in the field, I would like to support the common Balkan environmental, coordinated internet-site, common target oriented programs and activities in the strategy of reduction of natural and general poverty, for the permanent electronic exchange of ideas and concrete moves, where all the information on the activities and the research aimed at sustainable development would be available for the purpose of better environmental education of the population and "modest" functional development of Balkan area. One idea sounds feasible to me, the idea of organization of a virtual, uniform education program in order to better understand the issue of continual adapting to the newly formed demands of the revitalization and the status in the field, in order to attain the better quality of life in micro and macro ambience units, in natural reserves, and units which are important in culturologic-historical significance, in the artifact structures. The long term development means consideration of the status of potentials on the earth. Above and under the ground, highly active relationship to all the environmental values, division of wider spatial units into the zones with all the valid indications.

With all that the rural areas can have the special significance and give a contribution to the natural and topographic diversity of the Balkans. The rural continuum must not continue to be the marginal area of city agglomerations nor depend only on the agricultural or tourist potential. The rural continuum on the Balkan must undergo not only the

"cabinet" or the "academic" observation and consideration, but also the structural changes processes, planned, matrix, reconstruction and remedial analyses so that the necessary changes could be applied and the status improved. Unfortunately we have not dealt with the rurism sector to a sufficient extent and it remained pushed aside. I am convinced that its richness is yet to be discovered at all the levels, local, regional, national, global. More so, because the majority of states on the Balkan have a majority of population in the rural parts which is not a negligible fact.

The author of this paper is optimistic as for the opening of a new historical chapter of the Balkans on the road to the more realistic environmental sustainability of its development and the more concrete rurbarchiteconic future, based on the real, scientific foundations.

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## BALKANSKI EKOLOŠKI ATLAS

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*U ovom radu ukazuje se na izuzetno delikatnu urbarhitektonsko-ekološku dramu, sa bezbroj složenih situacija u kojima se globalni svet našao. Izgleda da ima malo nade za poboljšanje u konkretnim životnim sredinama gde stanje, u razvojnom smislu, postaje sve manje održivo. Ni vrlo česte konferencije na svim meridijanima sveta za značajnim deklaracijama i preporukama ne uspevaju da preusmere sve evidentniju krizu.*

*Autor ukazuje na potrebu stvaranja novih uslova delovanja u balkanskim prostorima i zalaže se izradu jedinstvenog, koordinisanog, ekološkog Balkanskog atlasa, važnog dokumenta, sa bazama ključnih podataka, kako bi se postigao bolji kvalitet života u mikro i makro ambijentalnim celinama. Dakle, nastojanje za drugačiju, novu realnost koja neće biti zasnovana samo na deklarativnim principima, već utemeljena na scientističkim istraživanjima i akademskoj edukaciji.*