

# Preface

*Marko Krevs*

Aren't Ljubljana and Belgrade just too different to be compared? This has even been a spontaneous first reaction of several authors of this book, and a reader could ask just the same question. However, as the circle of researchers from diverse fields discussing the developmental factors and challenges of the two cities expanded, and the communication intensified, the idea of preparing a book combining research results, knowledge and ideas of both teams of researchers became both interesting and feasible.

The person initiating the cooperation within a bilateral cooperation between Department of Geography in Ljubljana and Geographical Faculty in Belgrade, titled "The role of strategic planning, EU comparative data and GIS for spatial development of Central European cities: the case of Ljubljana and Belgrade", has been Nataša Pichler-Milanović. This cooperation has been financed on the basis of an Agreement for cooperation in science and technology between the Republic of Slovenia and Republic of Serbia in the years 2008 and 2009. The finances from this source have been limited only to support the travel and accommodation during the bilateral visits, but they offered the necessary conditions for growth of the idea of the book. Although the formal as well as majority of organizational burdens of the cooperation, preparation of the book and further fund rising have been carried out by Dejan Djordjević and myself, the credits to prepare the grounds for the cooperation go to Nataša, functioning as a symbolic bridge between her both home cities.

This book is a document of time in the life of the two cities, and contains a transection of the recent research of Ljubljana and Belgrade at the two institutions involved. The editors and the authors are well aware that the book cannot cover all the important aspects of the spatial planning and development of Ljubljana and Belgrade. However, the situation and challenges of development of the cities are addressed in a complex geographical and spatial planning manner, from the aspects of physical-geographical factors of development, positions of the studied cities in the system of settlements and centres, demographic characteristics and processes, daily urban systems, social urban geography, economic geography, transport infrastructure, spatial-functional transformations of the metropolitan areas, environmental situation, strategic planning, and geoinformatic support to planning and development. The chapters are in principle prepared in parallels, one for Ljubljana, and the next for Belgrade, addressing similar topics. Such a complex and systematic approach gives the book a monographic character, and will hopefully get appropriate place among main references on spatial development of Ljubljana and Belgrade in the beginning of 21st century.

Thanks to all the authors for all their highly valued contributions to the overall contents and quality of the book. Editors thank them all to submit their contributing chapters on time and ask them to excuse that the editing took, well, quite longer than expected. Special thanks to Tanja Koželj for her cartographic contributions, to Jerneja Milost for her patient involvement in technical preparation of the materials for the book, and to all not mentioned who contributed to the research or preparation of the book. In the name of the editors, authors and interested readers I also sincerely thank all the financers,

namely Javna agencija za knjigo Republike Slovenije, Mestna občina Ljubljana, Oddelek za geografijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani and Geografski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu to make this publication possible.

Finally, I would like to ask the readers, in the name of all the participating authors in this book, to excuse us for imperfect use of the English language. The authors take the responsibility for the translations of their original texts, and several translators have been involved in the process, but our resources did not allow us to do some harmonization of the language and style of expression. Nevertheless we sincerely hope that the message of the individual chapters, and of the book as a whole, will reach the interested readers.

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