

**How much nature can we have in our cities? – Third edition of the workshop organized by the Society for Urban Ecology – Chapter South Eastern Europe at the Faculty of Geography**

On August 31, 2016 at the Faculty of Geography (University of Bucharest) the Society for Urban Ecology organized together with the Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies the third edition of the international workshops under the title *Nature Conservation and Urban Development – How to manage together?*.

The workshop benefited from the participation of 35 experts in the fields of conservation biology, urbanism, geography, biology and environmental sciences, representing the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, prestigious research centers from the University of Bucharest (Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies - [CCMESI](#), Interdisciplinary Center of Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics – [CICADIT](#), Center for Integrated Analysis and Territorial Management - [CAIMT](#)), universities (*Ion Mincu* University of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Craiova), research institutes (National Institute for Research and Development in Constructions, Urban Planning and Sustainable Spatial Development URBAN-INCERC, Biology Institute of the Romanian Academy, National Research-Development Institute for Environmental Protection – INCDPM), Romanian Spatial Agency - ROSA and the consultancy company [Multidimension SRL](#). At the workshop has been participated the students of Integrated Environment Impact Assessment master program.

The workshop was attended by the president of Society for Urban Ecology, Professor Jurgen Breuste (Germany) and by one of the members of the Executive Committee, Henri Garay Sarasti ([ECONAT Bogota](#), Colombia).

Two main themes of discussion were present in the workshop schedule: *the relation between Natura 2000 sites and urbanization* and *limits of cities and nature*. The president of the organizing committee, Professor Cristian Ioja underlined that cities often regard nature from a destructive perspective, being interested in a large consumption of ecosystem services generated by natural areas from the peripheral spaces (including Natura 2000 sites) and rejecting initiatives of reintroducing nature or developing green infrastructures.

Professor Jurgen Breuste (University of Salzburg) chaired the first section of the workshop which included scientific contributions regarding the relation between Natura 2000 sites and urbanization, with case studies focused on the European Union, Romania, Colombia or Austria. Considering that 95% of inhabitants from the EU are living less than 20 km from a Natura 2000 site it is imperious to maintain a balance between the use of ecosystem services benefiting cities and activities of biodiversity conservation. This balance should be ensured through a harmonization of territorial planning and conservation objectives, and an active collaboration between stakeholders at all levels. Mr. Emilian Burdușel from the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forest underlined that the approval and enforcement of management plans for Natura 2000 sites in Romania is expected to determine significant positive impacts in the control of biodiversity threats and increasing the ecosystem services supplied to cities.

The second section of the workshop was chaired by Assistant Professor Mihai-Răzvan Niță, president of Society for Urban Ecology Romania, and approached the complex relation between nature and urban settlements, answering questions such as the ecosystem services and disservices in cities, integration of natural and semi-natural elements in urban planning and developing methods for complex analysis of urban green infrastructures. It was underlined that the management of urban areas should always consider that natural elements are frequently man-made, regardless of the level of intervention in recent times. Using the Văcărești area as a case study it was remarked that nature has to be seen in cities as a factor contributing to the attractiveness and competitiveness, with little success coming from the promotion of utopic models in which the disservices generated or perceived by residents prevail.

The last section of the workshop was organized by Professor Cristian Iojă and included a field trip in the Tei and Circului urban parks, focused on the relation between urban green areas and the users, as well as evaluating the impact determined by projects of urban development.

The workshop continued between September 1 and 4 with a thematic field trip focused on Natura 2000 sites from Dobrogea and the Danube Delta, and the modalities in which their management can include the adaptive principles of sustainable territorial development.