

## EDITORIAL

It is a special pleasure for the Editor – in – Chief to introduce the first issue of a new online journal which offers a new possibility for the international community of professionals working in the fields of regional and rural development or tourism to exchange their ideas and research results or practical achievements. The Central European Journal of Regional Development and Tourism (CEJRDT) is an international online scientific journal publishing results of theoretical and applied research in these fields. Balanced regional development has been a top European priority with increasing importance as the subsequent enlargements of the European Union have brought about deepening regional disparities. This is particularly obvious for the Central and Eastern European regions, which have been suffering from low GDP levels often below 50 % of the average European per capita income, low living standards, and hindered investment activity. This is true – although to differing levels - for countries that have recently accessed the EU and also for those just preparing for EU accession. Tourism, building on the attractions of natural endowments undisturbed by intensive industrial development, local cultural heritage, unique gastronomy and local food products, and generally on the beauties of the countryside so different from the western part of the continent may be one of the key activities contributing to rapid development. This activity usually finds the greatest development potentials in remote rural areas which no other industries may consider suitable for their needs. Thus tourism is an essential activity generating income in backward regions and tourism-related investment support is a priority for rural development programmes. The integration of the tourism supply and demand of the CEE countries to the tourism industry of the European Union is a special challenge of the 21st century.

The objective of the newly established journal is to provide a forum for researchers of Central and Eastern European countries working in regional and rural development, or the development of tourism, to present their problems and success stories alike. Naturally, researchers of other regions interested in problems similar to those of the CEE countries are also welcome to use this medium and take part in the exchange of opinions and results. Besides researchers the journal welcomes communications from practitioners working in these fields and wishing to present their experiences and achievements.

CEJRDT is an online journal with open access to the interested community of researchers and practitioners. As seen from the first issue, the Editorial Board of the Journal is made up of Czech, Hungarian and Serbian members. The papers are published in English and German as the two main tools of international communication in the regions, but the journal intends to support national languages, allowing the publication of papers in Czech, Hungarian and Serbian languages – with English or German summaries, too. The quality and professional value of published papers is guaranteed by the strict review process coordinated by the three editorial boards and the joint scientific boards of the journal. The papers can be read in the homepage of the journal, or downloaded as printable PDF files. Authors wishing to publish their results can also find the guidelines and contact addresses in the homepage.

We hope that the authors and readers of our new journal find it a challenging communication surface encouraging their creative powers to make it lively and popular in the near future.

The Editor-in-Chief