

SIBIU — ROMANIAN AND EUROPEAN LIVEABLE CITY

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Abstract. In almost all developing / under transition countries, people and economic agents tend to concentrate on a larger or a smaller number of cities that become true economic engines, both for their proximate areas as well as for the rest of the country. Developing liveable and sustainable cities, capable to balance social, economic and environmental needs becomes a true challenge for the authorities, city dwellers, business companies and civic society.

The present article focuses on Sibiu city, named by Forbes as “Europe’s 8th most idyllic place to live”¹. It examines the main development directions of the urban model in the context of a vivid pace of transformations in an era of a continuous economic, social, and demographic transition, trying to demonstrate why Sibiu fits among European liveable cities.

Keywords: Sibiu, liveable cities, urban development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The question we try to answer in this study is that if, in the case of a pole of economic growth from Romania, such as Sibiu city, liveability and sustainable development implies the given frame of an urban typology, or it is necessary to mix last European tendencies in the field with the national, regional features, while human dimension comes first.

The issues concerning cities, as they have evolved in the second half of the 20th century, the urban planning tests whether successful or unsuccessful, the successful urban models implemented or recommended are treated in the literature concerned with the intellectual history of urban planning in the 20th century (Peter Hall), green cities, cities for people, compact versus sprawled cities, smart cities, transportation and accessibility, sustainability and environmental preservation (Jan Gehl, Elisabeth Burton, Peter Evans).

Starting from the study of several works in the field abounding with information and facts about the urban evolution in countries totally different from Romania, as well as from the analyses, data and directions of the documents that define the policies in the field of urban development at regional and national level, I tried to find the

¹ https://www.forbes.com/2008/11/18/europe-homes-dollar-forbeslife-cx_po_1118realestate_slide_4.html [14.03.2017.]

answer concerning the directions of the urban development in terms of sustainability for a growth pole, with an emphasis on the human dimension.

The answer to this question may be useful in approaching the integrated liveable urban development while ensuring a consensus between public and private interests.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Peter Hall in "Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century", Jan Gehl in "Cities for People" or Kevin Lynch in "The Image of the City" reveal the image of the 21st century city. Such an image is completed by the case studies presented in "Liveable Cities? Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability" edited by Peter Evans.

The study of the documents that define urban development policies, both at European and national level, such as: "Spatial Planning — Key Instrument for Development and Effective Governance with Special Reference to Countries in Transition", "Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities", as well as the works issued by the local authorities (e.g. Development Guide for the Municipality of Sibiu 2014 - 2024) complete the information related to the development of urban spaces in Romania, providing many interdisciplinary, statistical data, indicators, charts, maps, and directions of development.

We have, therefore, on the one hand the model of the city for people documented by Jan Gehl, focused on the description of reality from urban and suburban centres in different cultural contexts (Europe, Asia, Australia, North and South America), with an emphasis on the inclusion of the human dimension, transport and mobility, communication, city's approach in terms of scale and senses, safety, security. He is guided by the vision of the life of a regular city inhabitant. The way he sees it, is the intimate and direct way, where the key to the quality urban planning is the human body, one's senses and mobility. Gehl proposes a fragmented method, whose stages are invariably based on the studies anchored in the 'human dimension', a colourful approach, rich in images associated with graphs and statistical tables, but whose basic concepts are reflected in the spatial planning documents.

The history of the development of the Romanian cities may not resemble with the history of the development of towns in Western Europe, in North and South America, Australia or Asia. They have not known the 'systematization' of the Communist era: entire neighbourhoods demolished or cities built from scratch in accordance with some strict ideological principles.

Although there are significant differences between the styles of Romanian cities and those in Western Europe and North America or Australia, still we may find several important similarities. Most Romanian major cities have typical European historical centres, some of them quite well preserved, so that they may constitute points of departure as part of a rehabilitation strategy 'beyond patterns'.

Starting from these two categories of documents, and particularly focusing on the human dimension, I have attempted to describe the directions of urban development of the municipality of Sibiu, within the frame of a liveable city status, undergoing a continuous economic, social and demographic transition. The methodology used is mainly a comparative research, using tables, graphs and maps as well as statistical data and indicators relating to the local and regional population density, degree of

employment of the workforce, skills development opportunities, transportation infrastructure, patterns of duration of travel with the vehicle, the minutes spent daily on the way to work, cross-regional travel, real estate development, the price per square metre for apartments, the average habitable area, the components of quality of life.

I am also using a statistical questionnaire-based analysis, structured around 4 dimensions: order and variety, observable life, communication, use of public space, the data coming in addition to the information regarding the quality of life. If certain components are more or less tangible (e.g. criminal rate, health, accessibility and rapidity of the means of transport, air quality and water), others are downright intangible (e.g., a feeling of safety, beauty, liveliness), but their overall effect can be assessed in the light of the principle of inclusion.

3. WORLD WIDE CONTEXT

The last decades of the 20th and the first decade of the 21st century are characterised by the constant growth of the urban population. People striving for a better life for themselves and their families migrate from the rural areas to the cities and the urban settlements, in search of business opportunities, a better education, better health care services and a better living environment.

Around 53% of the world's total population live in urban areas, bringing together entrepreneurs, investors, scientists, academics, rich, middle class and poor communities. The rapid growth of the urban population brings along a growth in size of the urban settlements, but such projections are not always accompanied by successful results. In the absence of coherent planning instruments, new chaotic agglomerations will emerge that might be castigated as centres of social unrest and insecurity, potentially harming the environment and a constant threat to public health.

Starting from the concept that "Cities and urban settlements in general are the face of the future", Cities Alliance, a 1999 established global partnership of over 30 full and Associate members, such as National Governments, Multilateral Institutions, Associations of Local Governments, International Non-Governmental Organisations, Private Sector and Foundations, defines the liveable city as: "A successful city cannot operate efficiently in isolation from its environment. It must balance social, economic and environmental needs. A successful city must offer investors security, infrastructure and efficiency, and should also put the needs of its citizens at the forefront of all its planning activities".²

According to Robert W. Kates, Thomas M. Parris, and Anthony A. Leiserowitz, the most widely accepted definition of sustainability is: "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable—to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without

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Source:
http://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/CA_Docs/resources/cds/liveable/cover.pdf [18.03.2017].

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”³ Such a definition practically makes the transition from sustainability to liveability.

Peter Evans, in “Liveable Cities? Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability” treats urban liveability as a combination of livelihood and sustainability, where livelihood should not be bought at the expense of quality of urban life, while cities must sustain themselves without wasting the ecological fortune of both theirs and their surrounding territories.

In 2014, an article posted on <https://www.iso.org/news> states that a new ISO standard outlining key measurements for evaluating a city's service delivery and quality of life has just been released. ISO 37120: 2014 EN - Sustainable development of communities’ standard — Indicators for city services and quality of life is applicable to any city, municipality or local government that undertakes to measure its performance in a comparable and verifiable manner, irrespective of size and location. The information resulting from the analysed indicators give cities the possibility to compare, identify and proceed in choosing next sustainable development directions.

As people are constantly drawn towards urban settlements in search of opportunities and a better quality of life, cities, as cultural and economic centres, come to generate 70% of the global GDP. Therefore, investing in them may be a priority for many governments, but doing so in a sustainable and effective way can be a challenge – this where ISO 37120: 2014 can help.

4. WHY SIBIU

Placed in Romania’s very heart, some 215 km (134 mi) north-west of Bucharest, Sibiu city, capital of Sibiu County, is a cosmopolitan city with a tradition of more than 8 centuries, rich in culture, history and multicultural experiences.

Sibiu was the largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels built in the 12th century by German settlers known as Transylvanian Saxons. It was attested for the first time in 1191, in a document issued by Pope Celestine III. In 1321 appears under the name of Hermannndorf, while in the second half of the 14th century gets the quality of Civitas. In a document dated 1366 the name of the city is attested for the first time as Hermannstadt.

The Medieval period is characterized by a continuous economic growth, when rich and powerful guilds dominated regional trade (19 in 1376, 29 in the second half of the 16th century, and 40 in 1780). Sibiu constantly developed and became one of Transylvania’s most blooming and prosperous cities. Between 1692-1791 and 1849–65 it was the capital of the Principality of Transylvania.

“Like Sighișoara and Brașov, it has a distinctly Germanic feeling. Sections of the medieval wall still guard the historic area, where narrow streets pass steep-roofed 17th century buildings with gable overhangs before opening into vast, church-dominated squares such as Great Square and Little Square.”⁴

³ Robert W. Kates, Thomas M. Parris, and Anthony A. Leiserowitz – “What Is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values, and Practice” at <http://www.environmentmagazine.org/Editorials/Kates-apr05-full.html> [20.03.2017].

⁴ *Source:* <http://romaniatourism.com/sibiu.html> [28.03.2017].

Many national (reported to the present day territory of Romania) or international events happened in Sibiu which takes pride in premieres in the field of innovation, engineering, education and culture, such as the establishment of the first Romanian hospital (1292), library (1330), attested school (1380), chemist's shop (1494), paper mill (1534), book printed in Romanian language (1544), beer factory (1717), first newspaper issued in Transylvania, first museum opened in Romania and in the South East Europe (Brukenthal Museum 1817), first Romanian-owned bank (Banca Albina 1872), first Zoo (1929) a.s.o.

Following this line, in 2007 Sibiu becomes European Capital of Culture, the first city in Eastern Europe receiving this title.

The historical centre of Sibiu represents the greatest medieval urban ensemble in our country, with numerous very well-preserved remnants from that period, from public buildings and dwellings to defence walls and towers.

Having the ability and experience to mix tradition and multicultural identities with new and visionary ideas from various fields, Sibiu city experiences a new development in the first decade of the 21st century, having the capacity to implement the new urban tendencies while placing it among the most competitive locations in regional, national or international level. It is a dynamic city oriented towards Europe and the values it upholds.

The 2003 Sibiu City Development Guide (Das Leitbild der Stadt Sibiu/Hermannstadt), issued by the Municipality of Sibiu was the first document of the kind in Romania. It was perceived as a long term innovative project, promoting a set of values and principles and defining the main strategies for the local development. 10 years later, a new Guide was issued covering the 2014–2024 period, where the main directions of progress are outlined following the urban sustainable principles existing on the European agenda.

In terms described by "Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities", Sibiu faces various challenges and opportunities, assuming a sustainable urban development based upon a constructive cooperation between the various economic, social and environmental dimensions.⁵ (<http://www.rur.ro/download/1183>)

While sketching the portrait of Sibiu, seen as a Romanian and European integrated city, the 2014-2024 Development Guide becomes a useful tool facilitating the communication between the local and regional urban actors.

4.1 History, Culture, Entertainment and Tourism

But what makes really Sibiu one of the most liveable cities in Romania and even in Europe are its people, spirit, history, monuments, and national or international cultural events. People all over Romania and from world-wide come to Sibiu for a cultural holiday or even for a week-end.

Due both to its European character and its European spirit, Sibiu was the first city in South-Eastern Europe to receive the title European Capital of Culture in 2007, together with Luxembourg.

⁵ Cf. <http://www.rur.ro/download/1183> [11.05.2017].

The generous public spaces mainly situated in the Old Town as well its performance halls hosted over 2,000 events, very diverse in type: performing arts, film, photo, architecture, visual arts, literature, music, heritage, conferences. Starting with 2007, Sibiu gained more and more visibility, facing a constant development in the field of culture, as well as in the economic field, even infrastructure, being one of top 10 Romanian tourist attractions. Sibiu is an exceptional cultural location, renowned at a European and international level due to its museums, its traditional cultural events, due to the effervescence of its present-day cultural life.

Theatre performances in Romanian and German language, puppetry, mime and non-conventional shows for children and teenagers, classical music concerts and educational concerts for children and teenagers, organ or thematic concerts represent the weekly cultural offer in Sibiu, dedicated to different age groups and intellectuals.

The prestigious Forbes magazine ranks Sibiu on the 8th place of the list containing "the most idyllic places to visit", in 2014 The Huffington Post included Sibiu in the list containing "The most charming cities in Europe you'll want to visit", the city being mentioned in numerous articles of the most important newspapers in Europe and the US. Michelin awarded Sibiu a quotation of three stars (Green Guide Stars), the maximum quotation and the highest awarded to a city in Romania⁶

Among the international events hosted by Sibiu, we have to mention: The International Theatre Festival dedicated to performing arts - the third largest theatre festival in Europe (annually, in June, initiated in 1991), the International Film Festival Astra, Sibiu Jazz Festival, Fairy Fashion Week Sibiu, national and international ethnic festivals. All such events represent a genuine celebration of the city, involving theatre halls as well as non-conventional spaces, but most of all public spaces. In 2019 Sibiu is preparing to be the Gastronomic Capital of Europe.

Top sports events in Romania are also hosted by Sibiu: The Tour of Sibiu, the most important bicycle race in South-Eastern Europe, Red Bull Romaniacs considered to be the toughest Hard Enduro motorbike race in the world, Sibiu Rally – a highly appreciated and interesting car race from the point of view of its routes and Sibiu Open, a tennis tournament which enjoys a growing quota.

The organized events target various categories of population, bringing in the public space both young and old, residents and non-residents, which enjoy the lively cultural life. The organized events target various categories of population, bringing in the public space both young and old, residents and non-residents, which enjoy the lively cultural life of Sibiu.

⁶ Source: http://www.turism.sibiu.ro/index.php/en/10_lucruri [29.03.2017].



Figure 1: **Medieval Festival in Sibiu – Past and Present**

Source: Personal Archive.

For 2016, the National Institute of Statistics registers an increase of the foreign tourists' number visiting Sibiu County⁷, each visitor spending at least one night in Sibiu city.

1. Bucharest – 1,104,515 tourists (+11.35%);
2. Braşov – 178,721 tourists (+12.93%);
3. Sibiu – 142,854 tourists (+29.23%);
4. Timiş – 101,048 tourists (+10.48%);
5. Cluj – 100,391 tourists (+13.39%).

4.2 Benefits of the Natural Environment

The region of Sibiu benefits of favourable natural characteristics. It is a region rich in water bodies and rivers, where forests, parks and greenbelts act as a permanent source of fresh air, fighting against industrial pollution and counteracting the heat island effect of built-up areas. Nature provides the necessary open space for city dwellers.

Abundant in flora and fauna the outskirts of Sibiu city counteract traffic noise and improve the general 'liveability' of the city. Sub Arini Park or Dumbrava Forest

⁷ *Source:* <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-21713676-harta-interactiva-cati-turisti-straini-vizitat-romania-2016-statistica-fiecare-judet.htm> [15.04.2017].

represent green oasis for Sibiu dwellers, that enjoy walking or cycling surrounded by nature.

The fact that Sibiu is located in an area less vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes or floods, is also a plus concerning 'liveability'.

In figures, people are rather satisfied with Sibiu city air and water quality, pollution index being low and very low: Pollution Index: 14.66; Pollution Exp Scale: 27.52 E.g. the figures in European cities almost similar in size, such as Basel, Switzerland are: Pollution Index:26.57; Pollution Exp Scale: 41.62.⁸

Index	Value	Level
Air Pollution	12.50	Very Low
Drinking Water Pollution and Inaccessibility	0.00	Very Low
Dissatisfaction with Garbage Disposal	28.12	Low
Dirty and Untidy	25.00	Low
Noise and Light Pollution	21.88	Low
Water Pollution	9.38	Very Low
Dissatisfaction to Spend Time in the City	3.12	Very Low
Dissatisfaction with Green Belts and Parks in the City	25.00	Low

Table 1: **Perception of Pollution in Sibiu, Romania**

The program monitoring the quality of the air performed by Sibiu Regional Environmental Protection Agency reveals that there are no problems with gas pollutants, whose level is "well below the limit values".⁹

Starting with 2010, special actions were also taken by local authorities concerning garbage segregation and collection; Sibiu is among the first cities in Romania to follow the principles imposed by the European Union.

4.3 Demography and Economic Growth

Similar to an average-sized European city, Sibiu faces the problem of maintaining a balance between an economic environment capable of withstanding competition with larger cities and sustainable urban development, which gives the measure of liveability.

For the period 2002-2012, the city's demographic evolution is rooted in European trends, being observed a decrease in the number of inhabitants, more in the range 2001-2006. As of 2011 census data, Sibiu has a population of 147,245, a decrease from the figure (154,892) recorded at the 2002 census. After the year 2006, it is recorded a positive balance of the internal migration, even under the conditions of a negative migration growth, with an increase in the number of employees by 6% for the same.

⁸ Source: Numbeo.com accessed 2017: The Pollution Index is an estimation of the overall pollution in the city. The biggest weight is given to air pollution, then to water pollution/accessibility, two main pollution factors. A small weight is given to other pollution types. Pollution Exp Scale is using an exponential scale to show very high numbers for very polluted cities, and very low numbers for unpolluted cities. Therefore, to calculate formula it uses the exponential function to calculate the index.

⁹ Source: <http://www.ziare.com/sibiu/stiri-actualitate/sibiul-n-are-probleme-cu-poluarea-gazoasa-la-pulberi-sunt-probleme-2951212> [25.03.2017].

This evaluation demonstrates that Sibiu becomes an attraction for the labour force from other parts of the country. On the other hand, the demographic situation analysis at the peri-urban location level indicates a growth in the number of inhabitants in these areas, developed as extensions of the town, either as residential zones (South) or industrial zones (West). The average monthly nominal gross earnings place Sibiu 4th in Romania's top 10.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	1,396	1,761	1,845	1,902	1,980	2,063	2,163
Bucharest	1,908	2,507	2,506	2,721	2,902	3,022	3,148
Timis	1,405	1,767	1,834	1,923	2,034	2,158	2,324
Cluj	1,489	1,772	1,882	1,897	2,012	2,153	2,287
Sibiu	1,320	1,659	1,766	1,836	1,917	1,964	2,123

Table 2: **Average Monthly Nominal Gross Earnings in Lei (RON)**¹⁰

Some niche sectors that require a specialized labour force (optical instruments and apparatuses for measuring, control or precision) developed. The human capital, young and well-trained, is attracted in Sibiu by the existence of foreign investors and entrepreneurs. The truly viable businesses have successfully weathered the 2009 year financial and economic crisis, demonstrating competitiveness.

An indicator of economic growth is the budgetary dependency on the level of local communities versus the central budget. Between 2007-2013, the share of own incomes in relation to total revenue stood at over 65%, a value significantly above the average located municipalities with a population greater than 201,000 inhabitants.

The descending trend of the unemployment rate, where Sibiu rate is way under the national one (3.7% to 6.8% in 2015 and 3.51% to 5.8% in 2016), also demonstrates these assertions.

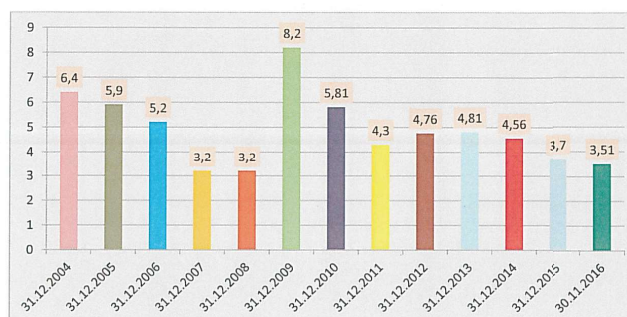


Figure 2: **Unemployment Rate in Sibiu between 2004 and 2016**¹¹

4.4 Quality of Life

Starting from the idea that the quality of life in urban areas is the result of a conglomerate of factors affecting all the inhabitants of a town, regardless their age,

¹⁰ Source: www.insse.ro [28.03.2017].

¹¹ Source: <http://www.sibiu.anofm.ro/descarc/statistica.jpg> [28.03.2017].

most funds from local budgets have been allocated to primary education, investments in health and social work, public transport or infrastructure.

The quality of life in the urban environment depends directly on the quality of living. Beyond housing typology, attention to public space or supply of services and facilities in neighbourhoods play an important role in this equation. Sibiu benefits from a quality of living and public spaces well above the national average, with a positive impact on the quality of life.

4.5 Real Estate

The tendency of development of Sibiu is in line with the dynamics of the real estate that has characterized urban Romania in between 2005-2009: private residential developments in peri-urban areas, which have mainly used the unoccupied lands. Four axes are proposed which adjusts a development from the Centre to the periphery. Both individual and collective housing are developed.

In contrast to Cluj city, the place with the most expensive real estate in Romania as per <https://www.imobiliare.ro>, with an average of 1,260 euros/square meter (March 2017), in Sibiu the housing price remained steady lately, especially as more developers began to build real estate projects, increasing the supply of new homes.

Most apartments, especially those built by professional developers, have affordable prices, ranging from 24,000 euros - a studio of 36 square meters, complete with balcony, and nearly 50,000 euros - a two bed-room flat of 83 square meters.

There is a constant increase in habitable surface per person, currently at 19.2 m²/person. Although it exceeds national average of 15.4 m²/person, this value is still below the average European, located between 35 - 45 m²/person.¹²

At the same time, there are some vacant areas, former industrial sites, military or railway, now privately owned. Therefore, following the main European tendencies of limiting city sprawling, class segregation and the expansion of the sub-urban areas, alongside with the development of the peri-urban residential areas, local authorities support the development of a compact and multi-functional city by:

- Stimulating the development of new residential areas, services and facilities in the city, within the city, as an alternative to its expansion on vacant areas, located mainly in the town;
- Supporting a balanced mix of activities in the central area, primarily by maintaining housing and employment in the historic area;
- Capitalising the former industrial, military and railway vacant areas, existing in the city by functional conversion.¹³

¹² Source: http://www.sibiu.ro/docs/ghid_2014_2024.pdf [15.03.2017].

¹³ Source: http://www.sibiu.ro/docs/ghid_2014_2024.pdf [15.03.2017].

4.6 Education

The educational offer of Sibiu is much diversified, being one of the first cities in Romania that offers secondary school graduates the possibility to study in the dual system, public and private.

Founded in 1990, 'Lucian Blaga' University of Sibiu is a public university, with 10 faculties and departments (5 when founded). Sibiu city educational offer is completed by the existence of 'Nicolae Balcescu' Land Forces Military Academy, a public higher military education institution integrated within the national education system, and two private universities The Romanian-German university and Alma Mater University.

The rich upper-level institute educational offer, both public and private, bring in Sibiu more than 25,000 students/year, thus increasing the number of city dwellers in need of accommodation, transportation, medical care, and cultural life.

4.7 Health Care

In comparison with the EU average of 3.7%, 10.4% of Romanians state they had unmet medical needs due to cost, time or distance. The informal payments widely charged increase costs and represent one of the main reasons for the limited access to health care, particularly for low-income patients. Access to health services is hampered by a lack of medical staff, too. Concerning healthcare professionals, between 2002 and 2012, the number of doctors working in the city of Sibiu increased by 26%, reaching 917 doctors/100,000 inhabitants. The city operates as a regional pole, 75% of all doctors in Sibiu County acting in Sibiu. Referring to the data available at the level of 2012, the number of active doctors is above the national average, but below the European average.¹⁴

The existence of 7 hospitals, as well as a slight increase in the number of the medical staff compared to the national rate, determine the average citizen to have a better opinion concerning health care services in Sibiu. At the questions defining the quality of life in terms of health care, such as: skill and competency of medical staff, speed in completing examination and reports, equipment for modern diagnosis and treatment, accuracy and completeness in filling out reports, friendliness and courtesy of the staff, responsiveness (waiting times) in medical institutions, and convenience of location, the answers stating satisfaction vary in between high and moderate.¹⁵

4.8 Public Transportation and Infrastructure

In a city, transport and mobility give the measure of the quality of life of its citizens. People are moving towards opportunities, be their working place, the headquarters of a business, schools, sanitary units, a recreation place or home. The shorter the time spent in traffic, the longer the time spent in one's own benefit. Motorized transport with a personal car is not a solution, because it involves on the one hand

¹⁴ Source: http://www.sibiu.ro/docs/ghid_2014_2024.pdf [10.03.2017].

¹⁵ Source: <https://www.numbeo.com/health-care/in/Sibiu> [30.03.2017].

the existence of this mode of transport and, on the other hand, it leads to an increased consumption of energy and increasing emissions of greenhouse gases. Consequently, following the global European trend, the local authorities have put emphasis on the development of a more efficient public transport while capitalizing on the spaces for people.

Sibiu developed around the central market of the old city which has regained its role as Agora. The central area has become more attractive, fuller of life; it is a meeting place, accessible to all social and age categories, participants in the cultural life of the city. The area is reconfigured in favour of pedestrians and non-motorized traffic.

Bicycling in Sibiu is a tradition that has been embraced by most of the new inhabitants of the city. If at the beginning of 2007, they were only 2.5km of bike tracks, in 2013 bicycle tracks totalling 62.5 km, with widths between 0.8 – 1m, were marked. At the same time, there are 150 parking places in the city.¹⁶

Strolling is favoured by the existence of the old town streets, with a medieval air, guarded, right and left, by the historical heritage buildings.

4.9 Infrastructure

Modernising urban infrastructure became a priority after 2004 when Sibiu was selected as the 2007 European Capital of Culture. The rehabilitation of streets in the newly redeveloped areas, building up two new bridges over Cibin river, the improvement of road maintenance by engaging private sector companies under multi-annual performance-based contracting, developing the international airport are only a few of the accomplishments of local authorities in the field, achieved by accessing European funds or as granted long-term loans by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

4.10 Safety and Crime Rate

The 2015-2016 liveability scores provided by The Economist Intelligence Unit were weighed down by terrorist attacks affecting Belgium, Brussels – 22 March 2016 or France, Paris – 13-14 November 2015, while the mass and police shootings in the United States, lowered the liveability scores of cities in these countries. Detroit and Paris were among the most negatively changed rankings of 2016.

Fortunately, Romania has not similar experiences. The low value of the specific crime rate in Sibiu, 48.51% compared to the national rate (333.23 to 686.79)¹⁷, as well as zero terrorist attack registered in Sibiu substantiate the sense of security felt by its inhabitants.

¹⁶ Source: http://www.sibiu.ro/docs/ghid_2014_2024.pdf [10.03.2017].

¹⁷ Source: <http://www.evaluatororderisc.ro/wp-content/uploads/Coeficienti-criminalitate-2016-la-nivel-national> [29.03.2017].

5. CONCLUSIONS

Urban development is a task of the whole community, where each individual's plurality of decisions makes its mark on the city. The image of a city is given by the extent of its capability to adapt to the increasing competition at a local and regional level, conditioned by globalization, diversification of production, communication and information.

The directions of a city present and future development are the result of the active participation of all urban actors, such as, but not limited to: public administration, companies, non-governmental organizations, cultural associations, citizens.

Preserving and putting into value Sibiu historical inheritance and cultural tradition is doubled by the local efforts to adjust to people's needs for better housing, education, health and social care, business, living in a healthy environment and enjoy a good quality of life.

What makes Sibiu liveable is the positive answer given to its citizens' needs in terms of opportunities and accessibility. Affordable housing, a clean environment, green belts provided by Sub Arini Park or Dumbrava Forest, a public and private educational offer continuously expanding, an ascending entrepreneurial climate, safe streets and a low crime rate, but especially a very generous cultural offer, rich in events appealing to all kind of people, are Sibiu strong points. The exploitation of the built and the natural heritage provided the city a national and international brand that can attract investors and valuable human resources.

Infrastructure, redevelopment of residential areas, reducing the deficit of facilities, increased public space with accessibility for children, elderly people or people with disabilities are on the agenda of the local authorities in the very next future.

Last European urban tendencies of limiting urbanization class and regional segregation are mixed with the regional features, while concern for human dimension comes first. Still, liveability cannot be treated apart the sustainability equation.



Figure 3: **Strolling in Piața Mare Sibiu 2016**

Source: Personal Archive.

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