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# **Rural development capacity in Carpathian Europe**



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## Introduction to the volume

The third volume in the series published within the framework of the European Rural Development Network (ERDN) is devoted to rural development capacity in Carpathian Europe. As understood here, Carpathian Region embraces Austria, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. It is a historical region in central Europe, comprising different nationalities and ethnic groups. The unique character of the Carpathian region is linked both with exceptionally valuable natural environment and cultural heritage.

Despite numerous resemblances the region is characterised by remarkable differences between particular countries and regions. The main differences are connected with economic potential, land utilization, structure of society and historical and political background.

The present publication is devoted to the problems of all rural areas in Carpathian Europe – not only those located in the mountains. It includes articles by authors from the entire Carpathian Region, except for Ukraine. One of the main advantages of the volume is presentation of rural issues in terms of problems and the spatial layout. The development capacity of rural areas is considered in different aspects from the multidisciplinary point of view. The volume includes examples of capacity analyses from the political, ecological, social, demographic, economic and technical points of view. In particular, the articles reflect on issues concerning agricultural policy of the European Union, economic development of protected areas, social stratification, demographic transformations, spatial differentiation of unemployment, development capacity of regions, foreign direct investments, food economy, land utilization and agricultural machinery.

Articles contained in the volume are intended to point out the specific conditions of the region that are critical for the development of rural areas. Some of the problems presented in the volume are common for all rural areas in Europe, while other ones are specific for a region or country. Therefore, the volume gives a possibility to integrate different experiences in dealing with problems related to rural development.

The 3rd ERDN volume is a basis for discussions at the seminar in October 2005 in Tylicz – a Polish Carpathian village. Then, it will help to formulate possible

solutions for some of the formulated problems and justify their wider application.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the authors and the referees for their effort in preparing this publication and the previous editorial board for their support and advice.

*The Editors*