

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS OF KEY ARTICLES

Petr Durdík, Prague Master Plan Draft

The social transition after November 1989 has brought an urgent need for revising the 1986 Master Plan of the capital which had lost its factual and methodological roles. The first step towards a new Master Plan was the creation of a new documentation concept, able to show evidence of the newly emerging market economy and being compatible with similar physical planning tools applied in the West.

Milan Turba, Prague: Making the Strategy for 21st Century

Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic and an important place of central Europe, is going to enter the new century under completely different living conditions from those of the previous fifty years. During quite a short time, changes affected the political system, the state and city administration, and the proprietary system. The open market appeared and the population's social structure and the way of life have changed. Prague has a good rating, a low unemployment rate, attracting tourists, business people, developers, and dynamic young people from all over the world. Prague is an interesting partner for all those who wish to develop their activities in a city of extraordinary beauty, full of capable and educated inhabitants and a lot of new opportunities. On the other hand, Prague suffers more and more from heavy traffic, air pollution, noise, outdated infrastructure, lack of housing possibilities, the inaccessibility of flats for young families, growing crime rate, and inflexible and inefficient administration. The Municipality is not always economical with its property and lacks financial means to invest into substantial projects. Prague's historic centre hardly resists the commercial pressure and the squeeze of cars and visitors. These problems must be solved in accordance with the city's long-term objectives and possibilities.

Marie Polešáková et al., Flat Construction Groundwork

The article, written as an interview, is a list of measures taken by municipalities and developers' companies before they start constructing new flats. The topics are: the planning documentation used to delimit the housing areas, the ways of acquiring plots for development zones, technical preparations and marketing activities, financing, and the completion of the construction. Both finished zones and those under various stages of preparation have been chosen as examples.

Karel Maier, Ralsko Development Strategy - Options and Experts' Opinions

The former military area of Ralsko became an "empty hole" after 1990. A study has recently been elaborated by the Czech Technical University to analyse options leading to its revitalization. Two key factors for strategic variants were tackled: strong investor-led or piecemeal revitalization and specialized "standard" use of the area / region. A workshop has been organized to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of some strategic options. The participants expressed the views of the central government, the local municipalities, and the private sector. The results of the workshop show that there is no ideal option but, finally, four common principles of the revitalization strategy could be defined: subsidization, clear objectives and their flexible implementation, continuous monitoring, and the best public involvement.

Martin Tunka, The Building Act Amendment

A furtive announcement appeared in the press saying that the long-awaited Amendment to the 50/1976 Building Act had been passed by the Parliament. At the voting in the House of Deputies, on 13 February 1998, 151 of 171 present deputies were ayes, and so were 55 of 70 present Senators in the Senate on 18 March. The Amendment to the 50/1976 Building Act will come into force on 1 July 1998.

Ernst Heer & Dietmar Scholich, Planning Systems - Planning Concepts

In 1995, a young planners' international seminar on planning concepts was held. The seminar was organized jointly by the German Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung Hannover (ARL) and the Swiss Institut für Orts-, Regional- und Landesplanung, ETH Zürich (ORL). The seminar was followed by later discussions, as the subject of planning concepts, in view of the new plans of territorial units, is considered as largely complicated and, first of all, extraordinarily important. Further in this issue we publish some detailed extracts of the papers given at the seminar ("Planning systems - planning concepts - what to do?"). The papers were supported by many practical examples.

The article, written by experienced specialists in territorial unit planning - Ernst Heer, architect and ORL member, and Dietmar Scholich, a member of ARL, brings an actual cross-section of relevant problems. The article deals especially with:

- the essential problems of physical planning in a revolutionary period of being tied up with the recent social and economic changes
- the planning systems and concepts and their options (urban networks, "hard" and "soft" concepts, etc.)
- the cooperation among different planning levels
- integrated planning concepts
- the prospects of the evolution of planning concepts

Karel Schmeidler, What Are the Development Tendencies of Cities Like?

Our cities are planning the continuation of their development. The departments of regional planning, concepts, and development, and the building authorities are looking for the right ways. City development programmes are being created, new physical planning documentation is prepared, and developers are presenting their requirements. Is there any chance for the cities to realize the visions? Which cities can break through and what are the future trends of the urbanization process?

Erich Vrtiš, Preconditions and Context of Higher Administration Units Delimitation in Czechia

By passing the Higher Administration Units (HAU) Act, anticipating the creation of fourteen Units, the first stage of completing the Constitution of the Czech Republic was finished. Some technical and methodological questions must now be taken into consideration, the application of which is necessary when enhancing and detailing the delimitation of HAU. The specification of responsibilities and the territorial delimitation should correspond to traditional operating links and the self-determination principles of the inhabitants. Selected methodology principles of HAU delimitation in the following phases are less important. The historic continuity, a clear definition of responsibilities, the priority of common interests over individual ones, the equalization of the social-economic levels of the regions, and the application of environmental viewpoints are the foremost principles. The delimitation must be based on the development potential of the regions, on their spatial urbanization forms, and on the transport diversification trends in these regions.