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Opustené budovy v kontexte rozvoja samospráv na Slovensku.

2020. 1. vydanie [Abandoned properties in the context of the development of municipalities in Slovakia]. Banská Bystrica, SK: Belianum. Vydavateľstvo Univerzity Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici. Ekonomická fakulta, 2020, 280 s. ISBN 978-80-557-1820-0.

The public spaces of municipalities and cities are full of real estate. In addition to the land given to us by nature, that created by people should also be mentioned: residential and public utility buildings as well as water and civil engineering facilities. They are owned by legal or natural entities. Their diversity of properties, as well as the places where they are located and the time of their creation, cause the real estate market to be governed by the laws presented in the reviewed monograph.

Housing and public utility construction plays an important social and economic role in every country. The issues presented in this monograph are important for the following reasons. Firstly, by providing housing and facilities, secondly by creating demand for building materials in their construction and renovation, as well as by creating new jobs, thus affecting the economic potential of the cities and municipalities and thus contributing to economic growth.

Europe is a unique continent, as evidenced, among other things, by the fact that nowhere else in the world can you find such a variety of architectural and cultural styles. The uniqueness of the old buildings, streets and surroundings is the undeniable appearance of the cities and villages, something that can attract tourists, investors and potential residents. The benefits cannot be expressed in any numbers. Through the conducted research, the authors wanted to highlight the problem of abandonment of properties for various reasons (lack of funding for their revitalisation, unregulated legal relations, poor technical condition, etc.), as well as to propose long-term solutions that could be implemented by the cities and municipalities. Implementation can also take place in cooperation with the civic initiatives or non-governmental non-profit organisations. In the monograph, the authors use the terms: abandoned property, abandoned house or abandoned facility or property as synonyms.

The term 'abandoned Slovakia' is characterised in the publication, as the authors write on the basis of several aspects. The first was an attempt to identify buildings not only in cities, but

also in small towns and villages, which are municipalities that have a suitable infrastructure of public services that are now commonplace in other cities.

The second aspect that was considered was the ability of people to resign their plans just to somehow ensure continuity between generations in terms of being able to appreciate past experiences and use them to plan for the future.

Finally, the third aspect of the abandonment was the ability to see and deal with inequalities in the status of regions, as this is the only way to predict the loss of cultural identity.

If we want to define housing preferences related to cities and municipalities, according to Eurostat (2016), more than half of Europeans lived in cities this year. This is projected to increase to 75% in 2050. This high growth raises the question of what will happen to the small towns and villages that are an integral part of Europe and what will be their position in the new world economy.

The monograph described the problem of regional collapse from a macro and microeconomic perspective. In each of the cities or municipalities studied there are facilities from different periods of their origin, from the 11th to the 20th century. With a focus on the issues of ownership and abandonment, it was prepared as an assessment of their values and a methodology through which the level of economic potential of cities and municipalities in the future can be measured. The researchers are guided by the hypothesis that everything that is created will endure for future generations. The main objective of the monograph is focused, as already mentioned, on the issue of abandonment, which characterises the current tools for solving problems with abandoned buildings on a national and international scale and the mapping of abandoned buildings in the self-governing Banská Bystrica region. They contain information on successful renovation projects and also suggest promising solutions.

The work consists of three parts and five chapters. The first and second parts are theoretical and legal considerations and each of them contains one chapter, which in my opinion is a problematic division. The third part, in turn, contains three chapters. This part is a presentation of empirical research and describes and analyses the market for abandoned properties. The material presented shows that the model of its functioning is typical and similar to those found in Central and Eastern European countries. The authors provide concrete examples that illustrate the theoretical considerations presented earlier. These examples have been well integrated into the problems presented. This allows the reader to assess the practical application of the content presented.

It follows that the work is multifaceted and interdisciplinary, therefore it required a comprehensive approach and the participation of many experts in solving the problems studied.

The authors of the monograph are the scientific and pedagogical staff presented in the introduction of the review of the Faculty of Economics of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. They are top specialists dealing with public finance and other related areas. They are also involved in conducting research projects abroad, which makes each of them point out the problem under study from different perspectives. In summary, programmes related to abandoned buildings bring visible improvements to the social, economic and technical arenas. It promotes the improvement of the quality of life in different areas.

The Roma problem in Slovakia deserves special attention, which was included in the study. It lies in the fact that there are 500,000 Roma living in a country with a population of more than 5 million. The proportion of the Roma minority in Slovak society is probably the highest among European countries. The majority of Roma live in ghettos. In smaller towns it is usually at an end of a village, in cities they are found in specially separated housing estates fenced off by high walls. This ethnic minority also has a high crime rate. In order to confirm the hypotheses formulated, the study included 115 properties for which tables were developed with test results that include:

- the generally accepted year of the founding of a city or municipality,
- the number of inhabitants in 1991, when the first post-revolutionary census took place,
- the current population,
- the year with the highest population,
- a photograph of an object evoking nostalgic feelings or of an object already restored.

The study was conducted using three points scoring methods:

1. Classification of a municipality according to the defined types of social settlement,
2. The results of the study of the municipalities according to a simple version,
3. Results of the study according to an extended version.

Next, how the scores for each criterion were obtained in each test method will be described.

In the first method, the socio-spatial aspects of urban and rural municipalities were examined, taking into account factors such as: population, employment in industry, agriculture and services, level of education, number of flats and related demographic indicators relating to fertility, migration and age structure. As a result of the above, the following breakdown of municipalities was made: urban and rural municipalities, municipalities with high employment in industry and agriculture, municipalities with high unemployment, municipalities with high birth rates and low levels of education, municipalities with a predominance of the population of pre-working age.

In the second method, 5 factors were taken into account:

- population changes equal 20%,
- Roma concentration equal 25%
- quality of the road infrastructure equal 20%,
- shopping possibilities equal 15%,
- aesthetic appearance of a municipality equal 20%.

Taking into account the positive and negative attributes of the research site, a scale from -1 to +1 (-1 worst, +1 best) was used and then the result was normalised to the comparable ones (0 worst, +1 best).

A total of 8 main criteria were chosen for the extended analysis. These are: the criteria mentioned in the second method were taken into account, plus health care, education and culture.

Summarising the results presented in the research part, it should be stated that the authors of the monograph have fulfilled the research objective envisaged at the beginning. Particular attention should be paid to the ability of linking the theoretical issues with the practical ones. The theme of the work is original for Slovak conditions and the authors have demonstrated a truly Benedictine work within the framework of the conducted research, which can be a model for other researchers of this problem.

The thesis is concluded with an extensive bibliography containing domestic and foreign positions as well as internet sources. It is mainly addressed to practitioners, participants in the revitalisation processes, planners, engineers, ecologists, local government units with abandoned buildings and also to university students with socio-economic, urban and technical profiles.

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