growth, which should be tied to public transport, thus ensuring rational infrastructure costs and better usage, especially in existing urban areas.

The preparation and implementation of more complex projects on the regional level (such as concentration centres tied to public transport) is a long-term lengthy project that demands the cooperation of a wide range of actors: the state, municipalities, investors, financial institutions, experts from various fields and disciplines, the public etc. Public participation in the preparation of various assessments of different development scenarios at debates, workshops etc., is essential. Even in Slovenia we should follow these experiences from developed countries and plan »smart growth« of urban regions. Besides massive investments in the highway network we should modernise the presently neglected public transport systems (especially the railways) and use them as the backbone for future urbanisation.

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Illustrations:

Picture 1: *Different macro structures of cities (source: Frey 1999)*

Picture 2: *Increasing urban mobility by improving the tramway network in European cities (source: TTK 1999)*

Picture 3: *Different modes of public transport in the San Francisco Bay area*

Pictures 4 and 5: *Light-rail id experiencing a renaissance in American cities. The example from Dallas: »light« and »heavy« railways meet with joined railway stations and public transport stops in the SE part of the city.*

Picture 6: *Illustration of population growth in the San Francisco Bay area (source: Wheeler 2001)*

Picture 7: *Plan for organising development in an entire neighbourhood with a light-rail station, head-quarters of a large multinational company (South part) and different types of buildings*

Picture 8: *The Portland metropolitan region, example of urban growth development. The central city is Portland. Regional and smaller urban centres and communities follow hierarchically - connections are with public transport (source: Calthorpe and Fulton, 2002)*

Picture 9: *Example of an area being filled in with rehabilitation and new growth, tied to the development of public transport (railway) (source: Calthorpe and Fulton, 2002)*

Picture 10: *Provo, the second largest centre in the region lies North of Salt Lake City. The wider area includes the Bright Young University and historical town core. An example of development of a neighbourhood with mixed use, connected to the planned railway station is shown. This is the centre of a rehabilitated area with higher settlement density and mixed use: housing, central contents, retail and offices. It integrates the existing blocks of detached housing, formed in various typologies. The central railway station id designed to connect both sides of the tracks (source: Calthorpe in Fulton, 2002)*

Picture 11: *The example of Clackmas shows the reconstruction of an old shopping centre with an expansive parking lot into a more humane type of structure. The central part of the shopping centre was maintained. Blocks of new development are equal in size to those in central Portland; parking lots are integrated into the structure of particular blocks. The backbone of the area is the line of the light rail, to which all the public spaces open (source: Calthorpe in Fulton, 2002)*

For sources and literature turn to page 44.

Nataša PICHLER-MILANOVIČ
Marjan HOČEVAR

Competitive advantages of Central European cities in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria

1. Introduction

Based on empirical research presented in the first phase of the project Comparative and competitive advantages of Ljubljana in European integration processes (Pichler-Milanovič et al. 2001) and starting points of the proposal for the development strategy of sustainable development of Ljubljana (Dekleva, 2002), we conformed that the city is competitive mainly within the national urban system (Pichler-Milanovič, 2001). We defined those factors and comparative advantages, which are important for improving Ljubljana's supra-national position and international competitive-ness in the network of European cities. The research confirmed the hypothesis that Ljubljana's competitive advantages depend not only on size, geo-strategic position, diversification of urban functions, economic strength, social cohesion and preserved natural and cultural heritage, but also conscientiousness and efficiency of the municipal authorities when drafting and implementing development strategies. At the time we didn't enough data to perform a detailed and more accurate evaluation of the supra-national position and competitiveness of Ljubljana, we did however hypothesise that Ljubljana is already potentially competitive in comparison to:

- **neighbouring cities in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria (Graz, Trieste, Zagreb),**
- **Central European capital cities (Baltic capital cities (Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius), Bratislava, Prague, Budapest, Warsaw),**
- **Capital cities of new independent states in former Yugoslavia (Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skopje),**
- **other capital cities in Southeast European countries (Sofia, Bucharest).**

Thus, one can gather that a higher rank on the European scale of urban supra-nationaiity is possible. [1] In our opinion the results of the project's first phase were a sensible and justified expert starting position, which we wanted to test with additional comparative research by focusing on Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb, the largest and most important cities in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria.

2. Supra-national assertion, competitiveness and sustainable development of European cities

During the nineties of the last century, political, economic, cultural and institutional changes, conditioned by transition processes in Central- and East-European countries and the globalisation process with accession to EU, brought about higher competitiveness between cities and regions. Simultaneously cross-border inter-urban and inter-regional cooperation (connections) stimulated competitiveness, but also preservation or improvement of quality of life in cities, within the paradigm of sustainable development.

In the context of inter-urban competitiveness, as a form of intermediate level of competitiveness between companies and states, we have to point out that competitiveness (until recently solely defined by economy) isn't defined only by economic or classical market factors. The important factors are above all social, political, legal, cultural, environmental, spatial organisation etc. Non-economic factors affect competitiveness and limit it with levels of public participation, motivation of actors, efficiency, stabile living standard, sustainable social development and stabile political system. The level of development of local autonomy compared to the national level - state, is also important. It applies to local legislature, identity, business habits, relations to foreigners, education system, efficiency and cosmopolitan attitudes of the state and local authorities. The goal of strengthening supra-national competitiveness of cities is therefore not only to improve affluence, but also specific local factors, which will besides better economic competitiveness enable adequate comprehensive quality of life of the individual and groups, sustainable development orientation and integration in supra-national inter-urban networks and unions. On one hand cities try to enforce globally comparable and competitive urban functions demanded by the inhabitants, companies, institutions and foreign visitors. On the other they simultaneously strive to build a different, distinct, particular and unique identity, with which they can enforce placement of various contents with supra-national significance. [2] Both demands are conditioned by cosmopolitan orientation and supra-national emancipation, while simultaneously strengthening the competitiveness of cities, and stimulate urban development dynamics, even within the framework of the sustainable development paradigm.

3. Central European cities in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria

According to the population counts within administrative boundaries of cities (or municipalities), Ljubljana (270.000 inhabitants), Trieste (216.000), Graz (240.000) and Zagreb (770.000), are medium sized cities in European circumstances. The distances between them are 100 to 200 km, with Ljubljana assuming a central position in the selected region. Ljubljana and Zagreb are new capital cities of independent states (Slovenia and Croatia respectively) and important national centres (culture, employment, politics etc.). Graz and Trieste - until recently cities lying close to the iron curtain on Europe's Eastern flank - are becoming important regional centres and starting points for cross-border connections with cities in Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary. [3]

In the early nineties, soon after Slovenian independence, Mušič (1993) was one of the first advocates of developing competitive advantages of cities, which are simultaneously a good basis for further endeavours. In general Mušič gave a positive evaluation of Ljubljana's position and possibility for participation in the cross-border urban network on the cultural and economic level, as well as the level of tourism. He emphasised the importance of the city's *openness and connectedness,* which he defined as the main competitive advantages, and stressed the fact, that the position of Ljubljana is the meeting place of three major cultures: »Romanic, Germanic and Slavonic« and two very specific cultures: »the Hungarian-Finnish and Islamic cultures«. Ljubljana has to strive for achieving the leading role in as many functions that drive modern development, as possible. One route to the role is improving international competitiveness another is surely maintaining an attractive work and living environment. The next field of competition is competing for emancipation and control, above all in the fields of supra-national financial and administrative functions, even in the sense of obtaining funds from the public (national) budget or financial independence. Targeted are available resources from the budget and investments, including resources from foreign financial funds (EU, EBRD, World Bank, commercial banks etc.). Mušič was alarmed by certain deficiencies or limits for efficient implementation of previously mentioned advantages, mainly the role of the local authority in promotion, marketing and emancipation of the city in the supranational environment and European urban network.

The goals of this research focus on improving the distinctness, competitiveness and emancipation of Ljubljana within the (Central) European urban network and especially the cross-border region Alpe-Adria. At the eve of the new millennium we tried to discern, what are the conditions in Ljubljana's particular historical competitors in view of supra-national image and urban competitiveness, quality of life and development policies (measures, programmes and projects), which are needed to improve the present conditions. The main intention supporting preparation and undertaking of the comparative research between Central European cities - Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb - is to obtain information about development problems in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria, which could stimulate strategic thinking and strengthen the role of Ljubljana on the supra-national level.

Our main interest were the opinions and attitudes of experts of various profiles from Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb, the key historical competitors of Ljubljana in the area between the Adriatic Sea, Alps and Balkans. The survey was based on the research and questionnaire prepared for the EUO project. [4] Within this framework the key questions were about development projects concerning betterment of quality of life and international competitiveness of cities and possible forms of cross-border cooperation, which could strengthen the strategic role of the stated cities in the (Central) European network. Information was gathe-

red from leading politicians, industry, retail, education, the media, culture, religious figures, voluntary and international organisations, national (public) and private sectors. [5] The goal was to ensure information concerning views and attitudes to basic questions of urban functioning and development. Their special value is possible analysis on two levels: the level of particular cities and between the cities. Thus, from selective analysis and experiences of other cities, all have better possibilities to solve their own problems and prepare development policies, measures and instruments. They can choose and develop suitable types of cooperation and joint ventures, the goal being stimulation and improving inter-city cooperation and joining into the Central European urban network. [6] This article presents some of the results of the survey concerning image and development issues in Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb. The analysis, which is presented in tabular form with all the answers from the four cities, is available in the research project's report (Pichler Milanovič, Hočevar, 2002).

4. Competitive characteristics of cities in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria

4.1 International image of the city

The main element of any city's image is its international (supra-national) role. According to the surveyed, the international image of Central European cities in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria (Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste, Zagreb), is rather uniform and affects international competitiveness especially because of globalisation and European integration processes.

4.2 International functions

Most responding experts said that the most important international functions of the selected Central European cities where those defined as university and research centre, business and financial centre and cultural or congress centre. In Graz they added that their city is an important international car-manufacturing centre, while in Trieste they saw themselves as an important transport centre (port). In Ljubljana they stated that the most important international function was culture. Their opinion was that in the international perspective, Ljubljana has the image of a cultural. Sports, entertainment and leisure centre of the wider region. Preserved nature, access to the sea, ski resorts, spas and weekend destinations were stressed. In 1997 respondents stated that Ljubljana is also an important (national) business and congress centre. Such Central European cities are, according to the majority, mainly important centres within their regions (Trieste, Graz), state (Ljubljana, Zagreb) and are not internationalised enough. Their poor international recognition and image are also a consequence of poor cooperation or lack of ties conditioned by historical, political or institutional disputes between national and local administrations.

In Graz, Trieste, Ljubljana and Zagreb the respondents stated that improvements have to be undertaken on the transport infrastructure, mainly concerning international transport communications (highway, railway, airport) and accessibility to cities; internationally oriented businesses and financial services have to be promoted (congresses, fairs, business services) with cultural, tourist, sports and recreation offer, further development and supra-national orientation of universities and research and development activities, and betterment of the quality of the built environment, above all city centres and housing estates. They all stated that international emancipation, recognition and city image have to be promoted and stimulated in the wider area, cross-border, regional and trans-national cooperation quickened and foreign investors, offices and seats of multi-national companies attracted.

Table 2 shows the properties of cities, which are seen by experts as those, which can be marketed or promoted on the supra-national level to improve the supra-national position and emancipation of Graz, Trieste, Ljubljana and Zagreb in the network of European cities.

4.3 Marketing properties of cities in the Alpe-Adria region

Most respondents stated that the most important marketing property of Central European cities was: quality of their universities and R&D activities, quality of the natural environment, personal security and varied cultural activities. These are followed by specific to particular cities, such as: quality of the built environment (Graz), quality of international schools (Trieste), natural and cultural heritage (Graz, Ljubljana) and the education of training level of the work force (Zagreb). In Ljubljana the most important marketing qualities were seen as: quality of the natural environment, personal security, cultural activities, quality of the university and R&D activities. In 1997 respondents gave advantage to knowledge of foreign languages. Both groups agreed that Ljubljana's worst marketing properties were: low support from local politicians, high prices of homes, inefficient public transport, inadequate international transport connections and weak entrepreneurial culture. These properties are important and their insufficiency can hinder the city's competitiveness or achievement of internationalisation, as well as adequate marketing of its image in the supra-national environment.

In all four Central European cities in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region assessed that improvements have to be made in: quality of the built environment (city centre, preservation of heritage, architectural solutions), international transport connections and accessibility, public transport efficiency, quality of the work force (education, training, foreign language skills), entrepreneurial culture, business services and housing provision. Here support by local politicians is essential, as well as an active role of the municipal authority in city management, with a suitable system of spatial management and planning. Based on the answers to questions about international functions and marketing properties in the Central European cities in the Alpe-Adria region we can conclude that in comparison to Graz, Trieste and Zagreb, Ljubljana hosts similar comparative advantages, mainly as a cultural, sports, recreation and tourist centre, university and R&D centre, preserved natural and cultural heritage, as well as social values (low crime rate, low unemployment, social and health security etc.). Ljubljana and Zagreb also display another important marketing property; they are capital cities of independent states and seats of foreign embassies and organisations. Trieste is an important port servicing Central European countries (together with neighbouring Koper), close to global Venice. Graz (together with Maribor) has a strategic position between four Central European capitals: Vienna, Budapest, Ljubljana and Zagreb (table 3).

5. International competitors of cities in the Alpe-Adria region

European integration processes are simultaneously stimulating general dynamism, i.e. connections and competition between cities, thus fostering their potential supra-national emancipation, by marketing comparative advantages. Cities, which are incapable of adapting to such circumstances, will undoubtedly, at least in the long run, loose their present supra-national position and thus endanger further development.

In this context we wanted to find out, what cities are the most important rivals of the four Central European cities Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb, which are also the most important competitive reasons of these cities. Most respondents stated that the main competitive advantages of Vienna, the historical Central European capital city, are: size, historical image of the former Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) monarchy's capital city, concentration of varied (international) functions and activities (conferences, fairs, tourism offer, business services, exhibitions etc.) and international transport connections (airport). In Graz they saw as their competitors Linz, Ljubljana and Maribor. In Trieste they found Koper, Venice, Ljubljana, Udine and Genoa as important competitors. In Zagreb nearby capital cities were seen as competitors, i.e. Budapest, Prague and Ljubljana. In Ljubljana the main competitors are apparently nearby cities in neighbouring countries: Zagreb, Graz and Trieste, mainly because of their image, which is built on business functions and better transport connections. These are followed by Central European capital cities Prague, Budapest and Vienna, because of their size, concentration of various activities, successful marketing and international promotion, which makes them interesting destinations for numerous international investment (Table 4).

Amongst the other cities, seen as Ljubljana's competitors, we can mention Salzburg, Maribor (the second largest city in Slovenia), Belgrade, Sarajevo and the Baltic capital cities Vilnius and Tallinn. The most important rival is Zagreb. After ten years of stagnation it is becoming an international meeting point, which has asserted itself by congresses and fairs in South-eastern Europe. The more distant Prague and Budapest have since the nineties of the last century, during the transition period, become important Central European business, financial, tourism centres with foreign companies and international organisations. Trieste and Graz are important regional centres and Ljubljana's historical rivals. There cultural activities, tourism, R&D activities are being developed, natural and cultural heritage and quality of life are being preserved. In this context Ljubljana (and the other cities) should assure itself a market niche in the (Central) European urban network and change its marketing properties into competitive advantages.

6. Quality of life in the cities of the cross-border region Alpe-Adria

Based on the respondent's answers concerning quality of life in the four cities (Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste, Zagreb) we can confirm the hypothesis that there are problems common to all cities, especially traffic, environment, services and institutional ambiguity. They differ in scope, but certain problems are inherent only to particular cities. Badly managed urban traffic, too many private cars and lack of parking spaces, insufficient international transport connections, pollution caused by traffic, refuse management, poor maintenance of buildings, lack or poor maintenance of green areas, inadequate offer and quality of infrastructure services, inadequate public awareness, inadequate legislature, regulations, fines, inefficient spatial management and planning system, inadequate support by local politicians and indistinctness, were the most often mentioned problems in the four Central European cities. In Ljubljana and Zagreb there are additional problems, which are consequences of conflicts and democratic, political, economic and institutional changes from the nineties of the last century (expensive homes, inadequate housing provision, unemployment, weak purchasing power, institutional deficit etc.). These problems can be hindrances when promoting the city's international image and marketing properties.

6.1 Quality of life (housing)

In Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb most respondents stated that the most important problem in living (residential) areas was poorly managed traffic, seen as lack of parking spaces, traffic congestion, poor management of the transport system and inadequate public transport connection. The next problem pertains to the environment, namely noise (a consequence of traffic), lack or poor maintenance of open, green and recreation surfaces in the city (Trieste, Ljubljana, Zagreb) and refuse disposal (unorganised collection, dilapidated dumps, water treatment plants) in Ljubljana and Zagreb. Social problems are serious in all the cities, above all increasing social differentiation, ageing and diminishing number of younger age groups (Trieste), unemployment, low income and high costs of living (Zagreb). In Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb high costs of apartments and inefficient maintenance of (older) housing stock, were also seen as problems. Housing shortage is a problem in Ljubljana and Zagreb, which is a consequence of changes in provision and privatisation of social housing carried out during the nineties of the last century. In Ljubljana and Zagreb the respondents stated that infrastructure services were outdated and that particular housing areas lack recreation and sports grounds. They also mentioned institutional problems, such as inefficient municipal authority and spatial management and planning system (issues of illegal building, dispersed settlement, *post ante* legalisation etc.). The sequence of problems in Ljubljana was as follows: high costs and lack of housing, poor traffic management, poor maintenance of open and green surfaces in the city and inefficient municipal authority and spatial management and planning system. We can conclude that most of the issues with highest influence on the quality of living areas in the city, were seen with equal bearing by all respondents in all the cities; an exception is Zagreb, which is still subject to economic problems, is still affected by consequences of the war and economic sanctions from the nineties of the last century, it hosts refugees and has other social and institutional problems. Most of the proposed measures for improvement the present condition relate to traffic problems and accessibility, housing provision and maintenance of living areas.

6.2 Quality of urban services

Most respondents in Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb stated that the quality of urban services was conditioned by institutional problems and general problems of urban servi-

ces, such as bureaucratisation and poor management of services, high costs, national monopolies in public services, lack of investment, poor facilities in particular urban areas and poor cooperation between providers of communal services or agencies. Traffic management was mentioned once again with poor organisation and management being stressed, which causes daily congestions, lack of an integrated transport system and deficiency of parking places. The next field, seen in Graz and Trieste as the cause of poor quality of urban services, was inefficient management and insufficient provision of services for the elderly (health care, home visits, homes for the elderly and protected homes etc.). In Ljubljana and Zagreb lack of services tied to the quality of the living environment were stressed, above all refuse management, maintenance of public and open spaces in the city, poor public awareness and informedness.

When evaluating problems with highest influence on urban services, respondents from Graz, Trieste, Ljubljana and Zagreb stated similar attitudes. The first were problems with communal services and activities (management and quality of services, facilities in particular areas, poor cooperation between different services etc.). Possible solutions of problems concerning these problems were seen in the implementation of institutional measures and actions, solving traffic and accessibility problems and environmental protection (Ljubljana, Zagreb). These measures were specially mentioned: improved management of services, reform of municipal administration, increased cooperation between communal services, efficient and simple laws and regulations, improved public awareness and informedness. Other proposals pertain to limiting private car use in particular areas (mainly in the city centre), stimulating inter-modal types of traffic, improving management methods, larger investments in public transport, provision of new parking spaces. In Ljubljana and Zagreb proposals for solving problems concerning the environment were: better refuse management, efficient and simple laws and regulations, improved public awareness and informedness, as well as adequate sanctions and fines.

6.3 Quality of the natural environment

Respondents in Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb stated that factor with highest influence on environmental quality were: air and water pollution, noise, inadequate refuse management and lack of public awareness. Pollution of air and noise are mostly consequences of inadequate urban traffic, water pollution is caused by dispersed settlement, suburbanisation on the city edge and (un)planned expansion of urban space, as well as dilapidation of the waterworks and sewage networks. Traffic management is one of the most important problems concerning environmental quality in the four cities, the next are large quantity of private cars (noise, air pollution), lack of parking spaces and badly organised traffic system. In Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb most respondents mentioned poor quality of the built environment, above all in the city's centres (old and un-refurbished houses), housing estates (maintenance and rehabilitation) and uncontrollable suburbanisation process. They stated that quality of the natural environment in cities is endangered by lack or insufficient maintenance of green and open spaces, pedestrian zones, sports grounds and children's playgrounds. In Zagreb they also mentioned institutional problems, above all quality of execution and lack of investments in services, legal obstacles and inefficient municipal authority.

Proposals of measures and activities are mostly directed towards the introduction of measures concerning maintenance and improving efficiency of maintenance measures, better traffic management and traffic calming (private cars) in certain parts of the city, introducing modern environment friendly technologies, with diminished effects on the environment, adequate refuse management, access to (environmental) investments, more green surfaces in the city and improving public awareness and partnerships between the public and private sectors, when solving the mentioned problems, as well as implementing proposed measures and ensuring conditions for achieving goals of sustainable urban development. According to respondents in Ljubljana, improvements to the quality of the built environment will be possible by comprehensive rehabilitation of the city centre, control over urban spatial development, maintenance of the housing stock and partnerships between the public and private sectors. In Zagreb the respondents said that institutional problems are important and the proposed measures apply to cooperation between the public and private sector and municipality, the spatial management and planning system in the wider urban area, heavier fines and sanctions.

6.4 Quality of the business environment

The largest share of respondents in Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb mentioned institutional problems, above all inefficient municipal administration, inadequate support from local politicians in solving pertaining problems and limitations, legal obstacles and overpowering influence of national government on local decisions in the city. The next often stated problem was tied to business culture in the city, mainly inadequate international business ties, lack of international business culture, lack of private (foreign) investments (Ljubljana), lack of cooperation between economic sectors in the city, weak support of entrepreneurial development and businesses. Traffic and accessibility were also mentioned, mainly insufficient international transport connections, inefficient traffic management, followed by human resources, above all lack of (specialised) education and qualified work force, poor foreign language skills and inconsistency in local economic policies. Respondents in Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb stated that even services are a problem, which have effects on the quality of the business environment (high prices of property and (in) accessibility to land, insufficient infrastructure and lack of business services). In Ljubljana the respondents stated that the city (and country) were too small for larger business investments, but they can however have a flexible market niche. In Zagreb the main problem is the country's economic condition, which is affected by a decade of isolation, caused by the wars in the Balkans and high service costs for foreign investors. In Graz some respondents mentioned the lack of a strategic urban development concept, above all its inadequate internationalisation. In Ljubljana the lack of an adequate international image, distinctness and city marketing, have to be stated, since they are important elements in acquisition of investment and strategic partners or offices and headquarters of foreign companies and international organisations.

The majority of respondents stated that the main problems affecting quality of the business environment in Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb were inefficient local (municipal) authority and insufficient support by local politicians, inconsistency in local economic policy (strategy of economic development), lack of entrepreneurial culture and business

services, insufficient international transport connections and inflexible labour market. Proposed measures and activities are mostly directed towards ensuring multi-sector approaches and more active role of local authorities, solving the mentioned problems and implementing proposed measures, as well as ensuring conditions for the implementation of concepts of internationalisation and competitive urban development. Almost all the proposals emphasise the need for stimulating cooperation between various economic sectors in the city and between local politicians and the business environment, improving international transport connections (highway, railway) and urban traffic or transport strategies, diminishing administrative obstacles in business operation, stimulating foreign investment and entrepreneurial initiatives. Business services have to be improved by ensuring higher competitiveness and offer of an educated or qualified work force. In Ljubljana and Zagreb they stated that improvements have to be made in conference, telecommunication, business and communal services, hotels, restaurants, property market, financial investments and flexibility of the municipal authority, all of which are needed to implement plans, strategies and development programmes.

7. Development projects and inter-urban co-operation in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region

Most respondents in Graz, Trieste and Zagreb [7] decided that the most important projects from the last decade, which *improved the quality of life* in the cities were as follows: rehabilitation in the city centre and urban neighbourhoods, new green,, sports and recreation surfaces, new shopping centres (on the city edge), investment in education and R&D activities, cultural events, better transport infrastructure etc., and those, which were important for the quality of life of local inhabitants and the city's image.

According to many respondents, the most important projects for improving the *competitive advantages* on the international level were those, which were directed towards improving the (physical) image of the city (e.g. built environment), including renewal of architectural heritage in the city centre, new and renovated hotels, restaurants and shops, transport accessibility (highway, airport), improvements in entrepreneurship, cultural and tourist offer, as well as quickened scientific cooperation and connections (international projects, conferences, seminars etc.). Independence and status of capital city were already mentioned (Ljubljana, Zagreb). The goal is to attract as many foreign visitors as possible, investment from the national budget and EU funds (e.g. programme URBAN in Graz and Trieste, PHARE CBS, INTERREG), thus creating added value in the city's budget.

Most support the necessary continuation of all stated activities and investment, with emphasis on specialisation, which can be achieved by:
- cultural events - happenings, tourist offer, further promotion of scientific cooperation, better transport connections;
- entrepreneurship (market niche) - Graz (automobile industry), Trieste (port activities), Zagreb (business centre for South-eastern Europe);
- quickened internationalisation and promotion of cities.

During the time when the survey was conducted, Ljubljana and Zagreb still didn't have devised strategies for development and supra-national emancipation, or (marketing) concepts for promoting the city. They also lacked relationships with cities in their near or distant neighbourhood, but came up with them eventually. The most often mentioned aspects of inter-urban cooperation were economic (economic exchange, financial investment, cooperation between larger companies and commercial chambers, joint actions on foreign markets etc.), scientific and research (education programmes, courses, conferences, seminars, joint projects), cultural (thematic exhibitions, concerts, festivals) and better transport accessibility (highway, railway), but administrative (inter-city) cooperation was lacking, such as common measures, instruments, counselling and harmonising spatial management and planning on the (cross-border) regional level. From these answers we can conclude that the locale of Ljubljana has to be improved, above all by stimulating entrepreneurial culture, banking and insurance, improving business services, cultural and tourist offer, international (supra-national) city image and improving transport connections and accessibility.

All respondents were convinced that more intensive cross- border co-operation between Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb with cities and regions in Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia would stimulate the competitiveness of the cities in Europe. With the exception of Zagreb, in European circumstances, all the cities are medium-sized. Joined into a network they can become an important leading actor for the entire Alpe-Adria region in European integration processes. The most suitable method of inter-urban cooperation, which could improve the competitive advantages of Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb, in comparison to other Central European cities or larger cities in the EU are:
- stimulating cross-border cooperation between neighbouring cities and regions (Trieste/Koper - Ljubljana/Zagreb - Graz/Maribor) and promoting mutual connections and cooperation on joint (EU-) projects;
- institutionalisation of (new) cross-border European (development) regions (North Adriatic, Styria etc.);
- common vision and development strategy for cross- border development regions, urban network in the Alpe-Adria region, joint programmes and projects in economy, infrastructure, education and research, culture, tourism, environment and spatial management;
- marketing and promotion of the cross-border Alpe-Adria region between global Venice and Vienna.

Implementation of all these proposals is the task of local, regional and national administrations, which should be supported with aid or financial backing from the EU, as well as the will, desire and needs of local inhabitants for such activities or connections.

8. Directions for improving supra-national settings [8], competitiveness and quality of life in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region

After the qualitative concept and inter-city analysis about competitiveness, position and (non) cooperation between Central European cities in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region, carried out in 2000-2001, we undoubtedly proved that Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb were mutually competi-

tors. Hereby we have to emphasise the need for resolving such a condition in weaker fields. The research presented independent expert opinions of particular leaders and not officially accepted attitudes, which are written (institutionalised) in development strategies. This means that they aren't binding and that from them an action programme for implementation of assessed potentials or advantages couldn't be prepared, including implementation instruments, i.e. measures, programmes, projects and financing methods. It is however an interesting overview of the people's ideas and attitudes concerning competitiveness and sustainability of cities, possibilities for cross-border cooperation between cities, regions and EU member states as well as Central European candidates. [9]

The chosen Central European cities are according to the respondent's opinions important regional (Graz, Trieste) or national centres (Ljubljana, Zagreb), but they haven't been substantially internationalised. Under the new conditions of European integrations they also feel the need for improving distinctness, competitiveness and marketing advantages. Once again most of the respondents confirmed the hypothesis that most of the cities competing with Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb lie in EU or Central Europe, within the cross-border Alpe-Adria region, or more precisely, between the Adriatic Sea, Central Europe and the Balkans (Milano-Munich-Vienna-Prague-Budapest-Zagreb-Venice) and the four cities themselves. Until 1991 none of the cities in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region had the status of capital city. After independence Ljubljana and Zagreb gained this important function, which is also a comparative advantage over Graz and Trieste. According to the opinions.of numerous respondents, the most important international competitive advantages of Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb in Europe are quality of life - manageable city size, preserved natural environment, heritage, education and scientific programmes, qualified work force, tourist attractions, conference activities etc. These are simultaneously comparative and competitive advantages of the whole cross-border Alpe-Adria region, which could gain in value with possible stimulation to inter-urban cooperation and joint projects, possible marketing and global promotion of the region. The respondents stated that the features needing immediate improvements were the transport infrastructure, above all international transport connections (highway, railway, airports) and traffic in cities. International orientation of business and financial functions should be stimulated (congresses, fairs, business services) and the quality of the work force improved (education, qualification, foreign language skills). The offer of culture, tourism, sports and recreation should be improved, further development of universities and R&D activities stimulated and the quality of the built environment bettered, above all the city centres and housing estates. Supra-national orientation and distinctness of cities in the wider area have to be improved and supported and cross-border regional and trans-national cooperation stimulated, thus attracting more foreign investment, offices and headquarters of international organisations. Active support from local politicians and the role of municipal authority in city management are important, as well as adequate spatial management and planning systems.

Based on the stated opinions, Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb are cities with similar development problems. Certain problems in Ljubljana and Zagreb, which are undergoing transition, became very clear from the results of the research. The respondents had similar ideas, i.e. that the mentioned problems have to be overcome and quality of life pursued, which is one of the most important competitive advantages of the cities in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region and simultaneously an important element for strengthening the cities marketing properties. The latter's goal is to improve supra-national competitiveness and distinctness within the sustainable development paradigm.

In all the cities improved *internationalisation* is desired, contrary to larger cities (capital cities) in the wider influential area (Vienna, Budapest, Prague) or regionally and functionally important centres (Munich, Venice, Salzburg). Measures can be compared, meaning that the surveyed cities can participate in the design and enforcement of adequate development strategies and instruments on the inter-urban, as well as trans-regional level. Translation of knowledge and experience is important mainly in solving global problems, such as environmental preservation, integral transport, sustainable urban development, democratic, transparent and efficient governance etc. For such actions resources could be obtained from EU financial funds. Besides a clear vision of development for each particular city, a harmonised development strategy for the whole cross-border Alpe-Adria region has to be devised, with a list of common projects needed to achieve the set goals for mutual promotion and emancipation in Europe and the World. All respondents agree that intensive cross-border cooperation between Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb would quicken supranational competitiveness and locale of these cities. Joined into a network they could become leading actors for the whole cross-border Alpe-Adria region in united Europe.

9. New urban development strategies in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region

Cities in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region are competitors and all already have prepared new development and supra-national inter-city cooperation strategies. The aim is supra-national emancipation and a position in the European urban network in the EU enlargement and integration process. EU programmes and projects are accelerating cross- border cooperation, however often it remains in the deliberation phase and is waiting for political decisions to be taken by actors on the national and local levels. Some of the central questions that can be raised in the context of complicated and very delicate issues, which are being dealt with in this research are, how do cities solve their problems, which development strategies are they preparing, how can they be differentiated and how are they being implemented. Graz has a completed development strategy (2001), which includes cross-border cooperation and international links, mainly towards South-eastern Europe. According to the respondents even Trieste would like to affect greater influence on cities and regions in central and South-eastern Europe, however the city is run by players that are preventing its more active political and administrative cooperation with other neighbouring cities. In Ljubljana the strategy (Dekleva 2002) emphasised sustainable urban development and improvements in quality of life of the local population or competitiveness, but doesn't contain strategies for supra-national emancipation of the city.

An interesting common feature is that all strategic definitions, without exception, emphasise advantages concerning

connectability, in the sense of crossroads and adding to the geo-strategic position in the wider area. All cities are seen as bridges, either between the East and West or North and South. This means that from the start all the cities gamble on a somewhat unconvincing competitive advantage, which is thus relativised and can be assessed only as a kind of *deja vu* formal attitude. The comparative review of new development strategies in Graz, Trieste, Ljubjana and Zagreb points out certain key actions (directions) for future urban development in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region and wider (Central) European area in European integration processes:

- improving the supra-national position and role within the (Central) European urban network (promotion and supranational emancipation of the city);
- quickened marketing of the city's competitive advantages and marketable qualities;
- improving the quality of life in the city (housing, traffic, environment infrastructure services, employment, education) following the sustainable development paradigm;
- *flagship* projects (and investment in specific development projects).

10. Guidelines for improving the supra-national position of Ljubljana in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region in united Europe

Because of globalisation processes, European integration, Slovenian independence and the reform of local self-government, the position of Ljubljana has also changed during the last decade. The municipal authority was given the new position of connecting node between the public and private sector, national and local institutions, inhabitants and other actors in the city, as well as cooperation with both competing and cooperating cities on the national and European level. Ljubljana has the leading role in preparation and implementation of goals and visions of strategic development leading to a successful, efficient and sustainable city. These are normative goals, which need political consensus and should be brought into practice immediately. From the results of the survey we can expect Ljubljana to develop not only as the capital city, but also as an important Centraleuropean city. Supra-national emancipation and competitiveness are nevertheless hindered by certain obstacles, which cause uncertainty. Ljubljana is still relatively small and more or less only a »national« centre, when compared to Budapest or Prague for example, which have already grown on the supra-national ladder. Therefore the city essentially needs integration and cooperation of various municipal institutions with the national administration level (development coalition). Improvements are needed in all aspects of accessibility and infrastructure, as well as the quality of the built environment, urban design, variety of employment opportunities, modernised business services, preserved social cohesion and environmental qualities. Interests of the public and private sector have to be suitably integrated. Thus the development of a coherent multi- or inter-sector strategic policy of future urban development could be achieved, operating as a promotion factor on the supra-national competition field. Implementation of such a strategy would gradually improve the quality of life of all citizens. Improving competitiveness with differentiated and varied offer of supra-national events is also important for Ljubljana, because it implies a high quality business and living environment. New identity, international locales and recognition of Ljubljana still have to be achieved by bringing to life strategic programmes and projects.

Ljubljana is a member of numerous international and regional organisations and networks, but the active effects from such cooperation and established links with particular cities is substantially below expectations. We believe that presently there are too many with protocol and formal ties, and few with content. Such ties, which could have real and more long-term results. The prevailing principles of supranational connections, cooperation and competing cannot ensure the translation of knowledge and experience from West European, nor from Central- or East European countries, which are of great importance for Ljubljana in this post-transition and post-modern times. Obviously dedication to selected networks or organisations will be necessary and the conceptualisation of further activities with a detailed programme carried out, which will achieve political and professional support and consensus. Ljubljana still doesn't have accurate and unquestionable instruments that could distinctly and simultaneously efficiently cater to municipal, national and supra-national interests. Cooperation with other Central European cities in the Alpe-Adria network, above all in science, education, 'culture and tourism offer tied to transport accessibility to preserved nature (mountains, spas, the sea, travel destinations), is a challenge and basic condition for stimulating competitiveness and the strengthening of own advantages, not only in the immediate neighbourhood within the Alpe-Adria region, but also in united Europe. The orientation of Ljubljana's connections should surely be more creative, ambitious and cosmopolitan.

In view of the presented starting points and conclusions from the first and second phase of the project one of its concluding goals is therefore a concept of long-term internationalisation of Ljubljana. It should be based not only on improving international competitiveness and preserving or strengthening sustainable urban development, but also on saturating locales or connecting activities with supra-national character. Important steps in this direction are the proposed strategy of sustainable development and spatial development concept of Ljubljana, as well as the new planning legislature, spatial management policy and settlement concept on the national level, which is based on the concept of stimulated urban development and international recognition of Slovenian cities. The Ljubljana urban region is presently the only region in Slovenia, which is capable of competing and cooperating with larger towns, not only in the Alpe-Adria region, but also with Central- and Southeast European capital cities, as well as other cities and regions of EU member states. The new regional agency of the Ljubljana urban region, established in 2001 and the regional development programme, which is in preparation, are two institutional novelties, whose goal is to stimulate competitiveness of the wider city area, supra-national position and recognition of Slovenia's capital city worldwide.

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Explanation

The article is based on results of the ongoing project Competitive advantages of Ljubljana in the European integration process (phase 2), 2001-2002. The goal of the project is to define advantages and deficiencies of Graz, Ljubljana, Trieste and Zagreb in the cross-border region Alpe-Adria, which will be carried out by an opinion survey concerning position, problems and measures needed for improving the present conditions and a review of development strategies and planning guidelines for the particular cities. The project is being undertaken by Nataša Pichler Milanovič, M.A. (Urban planning Institute) and dr. Marjan Hočevar (Faculty of social sciences). The project is co-financed by the Department of culture and research, Municipality of Ljubljana. The results of the first phase of the project were published in an article written by Nataše Pichler Milanovič in Urbani izziv, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2001, pp. 69-85.

Notes

[1] More about parameters of the European scale of urban supra-nationality and the position of Ljubljana are in Hočevar, 2000, pp. 181-211.

[2] More about the relation between opening the city (supra-national) and ensuring distinction (urban identity) is in Hočevar, 2000, pp. 42-49 and Healey et al., 1995, pp. 45-63.

[3] So far substantial research about issues and changes during the nineties of the last century in Central and Eastern European cities have been undertaken. Most comparative analyses between Central European countries and candidates for accession to the EU were done on the national level. They are mainly indirect and mostly concerning issues of comparative advantages (see: Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., Szeleny, I. (eds.), 1996 and Enyedi, G. (ed.), 1998). Comprehensive and surveilable inter-city research approached from contemporary inter-disciplinary and development aspects dealing with this issue - to our knowledge - hasn't been attempted. Some research about comparisons of Ljubljana with other EU cities were carried out (see: Hočevar, 1995, 2000; Stefanovič, Pichler Milanovič, 1997) or (potential) competitive advantages of Ljubljana with other cities in the Alpe-Adria region (Mušič, 1993). So far comparisons of Ljubljana with other rival cities - Central and East European capital cities, cities in the Alpe-Adria region or capital cities of states emerging from former Yugoslavia haven't been done.

[4] European Urban Observatory Network (1995) Final Report to the European Commission; Stefanovič, V., Pichler Milanovič, N. (1995-1997) Inclusion of Ljubljana into the European Urban Observatory, Urban Planning Institute, Ljubljana.

[5] The questionnaire is an open-type survey and was carried out in Trieste, Graz, Ljubljana and Zagreb between 2000 and 2001. The questions and answers are partially comparable to results of the survey carried out in the EUO project (Athens, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham, Brussels, Berlin, Lille) and survey amongst leaders in Ljubljana (1997). In 2001 our respondents in Ljubljana were representatives of embassies and cultural centres, leading managers of the largest hotels and certain foreign citizens permanently or temporarily residing in Ljubljana. Above all we were interested in the opinions of foreigners in Ljubljana, which were compared to opinions of local leaders gathered from the survey in 1997.

[6] Parallel to our survey an essayistic survey titled Views on Ljubljana (31 essays) (see Kos et al., 2000), commissioned by the Municipality of Ljubljana, was being conducted to support the Concept of spatial development of the Municipality of Ljubljana. Both showed weak internationalisation of Ljubljana and the need for measures and instruments for improving the distinctness and international image of the city.

[7] We have to mention that many foreign citizens, (temporarily) living in Ljubljana, didn't answer this question, because they weren't adequately informed about development projects in Ljubljana during the last decade.

[8] When defining the urban locales, we start with the characteristics of structural transformation influenced by globalisation processes. In the widest framework this is the transformation from industrial (fordistic) city, tied to hierarchies of territorial systems within nation states, to post-industrial (post-fordistic) cities, which to varying extents integrate into supra-national inter- and trans-urban flows, which have been going on since the eighties of the last century. Factors of the globalised post-industrial transformation of urban networks amongst other affect changes in content and form of physical structures, as well as social aspects of spatiality of cities. One of the main characteristics conditioned by urban transformation is selective re-urbanisation, especially in Europe, which is the immediate reason for increasing the significance of events and locales in cities. More in Drewett et al., 1992 and Hočevar, 2000, pp. 133-147.

[9] The analysis of urban development strategies, measures and instruments, in conjunction with the opinion survey amongst leaders (and citizens) of Central European cities, is the next step in the preparation of expert guidelines for further formulation of a development strategy for the urban network in the cross-border Alpe-Adria region. In the third phase of the project we will compare Ljubljana with other Central European capital cities.

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Table 1: *The international image of cities in the Alpe-Adria region*
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