

## THE INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES AND THE URBAN RESTRUCTURING IN CALARASI AND SLOBOZIA

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**Abstract.** The transition from communism to a market economy has revealed significant changes in economic activities. The tertiary sector had a significant energy evolution over time. Privatization and government reform lead to this evolution. Industrial restructuring has generated development and regeneration of existing industrial areas by drawing new industrial sites, insertion of small industries in urban areas, but without clear integrated investment initiatives. Dynamic socio-economic activities that adapted to new conditions of market economy developed a conversion process at all levels of the society.

This paper draws a comparison between the evolutions of industry in two cities of the Romanian Plain - Calarasi vs. Slobozia. Our method relies on an analytical approach on statistical data and on a qualitative approach over the evolution of the two above-mentioned towns. The results show that greater difficulties of Slobozia in attracting investments and tackling unemployment, comparing to Calarasi, are due to a series of factors such as geographical position, evolution path of different industries, structure of school and training system etc.

**Keywords:** *Restructuring, privatization, communism, urban space, investments*

### 1. Short history of industrial activities

Regarding the development of the economic activity of the settlements along the Borcea arm of the Danube River, it can only be spoken beginning with the XVIII century, although there has been an economic life even before 1700, we can assume to have been reduced as the lack of information that we have about this domain. The written memories of travellers passing by during the centuries, the military notes, the income registers for the port taxes, the inventories, the information registered on the census, all these are considered to be strong testimonies in the description of the economic activities of these places from past times and up to present.

After settling of the harbour on the banks of Borcea arm of Danube River, Calarasi gradually transforms from a small town of ploughmen peasants, with a small commercial kernel around the harbour, into a trading town. Afterwards, at only five years from the moment of becoming a County capital of Ialomita County, according to the data from the 1838 census, Calarasi registers a active population share of 36.8% out of the total population. The active population, by activity domains, was presented as it follows: 64 farmers (15.4% of the active population); 155 craftsmen (37.6% of the active population); 196 employed in trading, transportation, officials, arts, services (47.0% of the active population). According to

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this information we notice that active population employed in agriculture is inferior to the other domains of activity altogether, this indicating the results of progress made in the economic life of the town, as well as the higher degree of urbanization. We also notice that the crafts domain occupied an important place in the economic life of the city, the needs of the local population and of the villages around being satisfied by the practiced professions.

In the town of Slobozia the situation was and still is different: the main economic issue is represented by the small number of economic activities, structured especially on the exploitation of agricultural resources. Although some of the domains are able to face the national or international competition, the small number of activities limits the developing potential. As the economy evolves, it is necessary to develop some activities centred on a high quality of the human resources, implicitly having a higher economical added value. That is why the human resources development is one of the main strategic issues. The economy of Slobozia passed during the 1989 Revolution from the socialist organization to the one based by free economy principles, starting from very generous premises in 1900, characterized by diversity, functionality and profitability. The most important domains were: the chemical industry (the Chemical Fertilizers Factory); food industry (meat industry, oil factory, milky products factory, miller and bakery, Avicola); the textile and clothing industry (cotton spinnery, handmade carpets weaving in the local industry, clothing), wood processing (furniture factories and knitting workshops); civil and industrial buildings; agriculture; whole and retail trade etc.

At the beginning of the year 1992, the active population in Calarasi was of 36,231 people, holding a share of 47.1% of the total population, which means an increasing number of the active population during the last 15 years (by 63.7%) and an increasing number of the active population in 1000 inhabitants by 24.5%. Therefore, the rate between the active population and the inactive population has modified, having 1123.9 inactive persons to 1000 active persons. On the 1977 and 1992 census, almost half of the population was employed (1977-54.7% and in 1992-43.3%), we have to highlight the increase of the social burden of the employed to provide the goods and the services need for life also for the active unemployed or the inactive. As a consequence, in 1990 there was a rate of 1221.6 inactive persons to of 1000 active persons (but only 828.1 in 1977) fact that highlights serious problems regarding the social protection programs.

In the period after the 1995 census, the situation in this domain worsened, especially as a consequence of the reduction of employed population, accompanied by an increasing number of the unemployed and of the pensioners. Significant mutations were registered in the active population on branches of activity. The most significant mutation took place between agriculture and industry, as illustrated by the graphic representation of the rate of employed active population on branches of national economy (figure nr. 1).

The number of active persons employed in agriculture diminished with 232 persons from 1956 to 1995, while the number of active employed in industry increased by 12,452 persons. The proportion of active in agriculture diminished from over a third to less than a quarter, while the share of the industry actives increased, exceeding a third of the total active of the city. In buildings, the active population number increased with 4.533 persons (approximately 13 times).

It is remarkable the registered situation on the 1990 census when over 45% of the total employed active population is registered in industry, followed hierarchically by the domains of commerce, hotels, food and other activities and services provided to the population with 19.47%, only 7.09% building actives and only 2.53% in farming, forestry and fish breeding. The active population from the non-farming branches of the economy do not

present the ageing phenomenon, there is a tendency to increase the report of adult persons between 30 and 49 years, reducing the rate of the 50 year old and older.

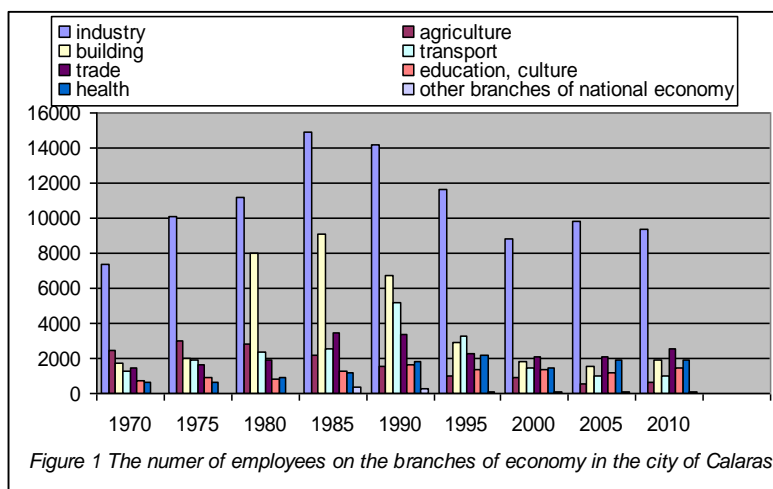


Figure 1 The number of employees on the branches of economy in the city of Calarasi

Source: The County Statistic Institute Calarasi

Comparatively to the existing situation before 1977, a small decrease is noticeable, with negative social and economic consequences on population.

Farming is correlated with ageing population and there is an increasing number of people in search for a job or unemployed. The tendencies of the next period of time make us appreciate that the busy active population will continue to diminish, at the same time with the increasing number of unemployed persons.

In Slobozia city we encounter an entirely different situation for the studied period, (1970-2010, figure nr. 2) regarding the structure of the active population on national economy activity branches. In 1990, the economic activity share continued to be hold by State-owned capital companies, the private sector reaching a share of 5% of the economy of the city (represented almost exclusively by the retail trade). Due to the restructuring and the privatization of the industrial units between 1995 and 2000, Slobozia remained the most important industrial centre in Baragan. Regarding the employed population in Slobozia, what holds our attention is the majority of the actives employed in services, the group of industry workers being situated on the second place, especially in the manufacturing industry as the centralized statistic data from the National Statistics Institute show. The difference between the number of the industry workers in 2000 and the other years of the studied period of time is reflected by the temporary shutting down of the activity of commercial company Amoil S.A., the biggest industrial unit in the area. Along with the industrial branches based on manufacturing the farming resources in Slobozia have also developed ready-made industrial units and wood processing units. Though the number of activities is not diverse enough, (especially towards high added amount products), this leads to the fact that the main strategic directions and administration priorities must become the investment attraction along with supporting the local investors.

After 1995 in Slobozia, a dominant share is held by the tertiary sector regarding the structure of human resources on national economic activities. The economic functions and its geographic position, the possible relations inside the territory claim the consolidation of the functions and of its part in the south-east region of the country to assure the serving level

expected to a County's capital as well as realizing a balanced polycentric urban network. The biggest number of employees works at this hour in services, the rate of industrial workers occupying the second place, especially in the manufacturing industry according to Slobozia Statistic Institute.

Slobozia city is and will continue to be the main industrial producer of Ialomita County, industry development being connected directly to the access to the local natural resources (more specific the farming resources).

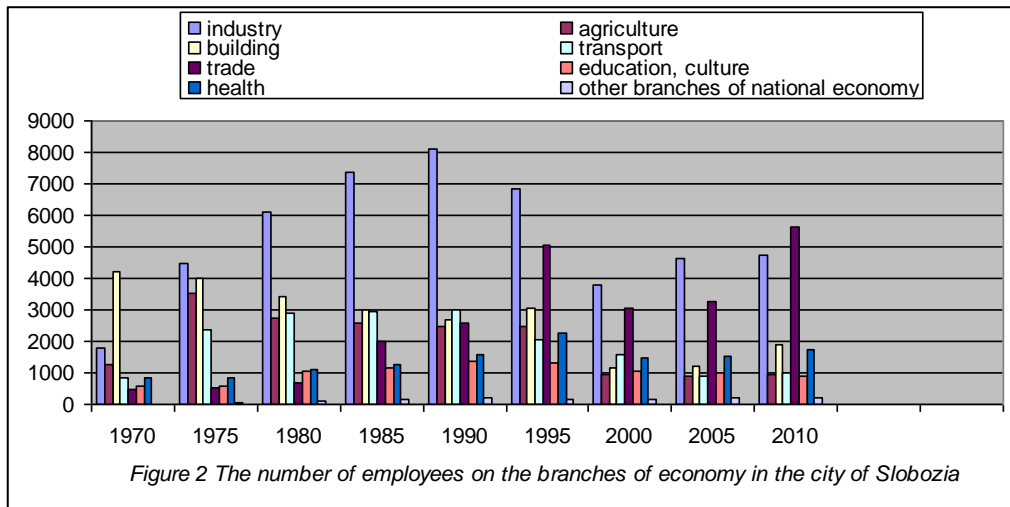


Figure 2 The number of employees on the branches of economy in the city of Slobozia

Source : The County Statistics Institute, Ialomita

## 2. The analysis of the urban reorganization process

When passing from the old totalitarian regime (that governed for about half a century) to the democratic political system after the 1989 Revolution, the urban restructuring had its impact on the evolution of the local communities from the two cities, Calarasi and Slobozia, by managing with the adapting difficulties to the advanced societies. The analysed towns, Calarasi and Slobozia, have a balanced dynamics that naturally adapted to the market economy conditions holding a significant part in the local development context. The urban restructuring process has been felt in all domains of activity, inducing a shared evolution. Because of its continuous particularity, we can consider that the urban reorganization is still going on in present days as all the urban malfunctions, functional, structural, can be diminished and corrected by efficient management from the local deciding members as well as each resident of the urban space and of its community. The transition from the communist system to the market economy highlighted a significant dynamics regarding the evolution of economic activities. If during the communist regime the primary sector was the one with a significant evolution, after 1990 farming was outrun by the secondary and the tertiary sectors. The two towns' industry was the one to contribute to the reorganization of the urban space through the filter of its new organizing, functioning and achieving methods.

While in 1984, in Calarasi, population working in industry represented 33% and 29% in constructions, afterwards the report radically changed, the percentage of the active population in the two mentioned areas seriously diminished, in favour of other branches and economic domains. A great number of industry or building workers increased the number of the unemployed for a long period of time. After the December 1989 revolution the state

commerce, food and industrial trades, suffered essential modifications. The old state units, I.C.S.A.A.P. and I.C.S.M.I., changed into commercial companies becoming Solaris S.A. and Indcim S.A. As the first one privatized through the MEBO method (shares bought by the employees) but soon disappeared, failing in finding its place in a transitional market economy, the second seems to have found solutions for continuity.

After the year 1990, most of the old economic units was transformed into commercial companies, some of them continuing their activity, others re-orientating or specializing on certain products, while others disappeared from the market. We mention some of them here without keeping a certain succession: the former Paper and Cellulose Factory became Comceh S.A.; the former factory of building materials became Prefab S.A.; the former meat commerce factory became Cicas S.A.; Iron and Steel Aggregate Work Group became Siderca S.A. (this one no longer exists today); the former County Company for the Revaluation and Redeeming of Reusable Materials became Remat S.A. and it was privatized in 1998; the former County Base for Technical Material Supply became Comat S.A.; the former Calarasi station of Heavy Equipment for Buildings Galati became S.U.G.C.T. S.A.; the sugar beet Industrial Factory became Zahar S.A., nowadays the factory being shut down; the former State Farming became Agrozootehnica S.A. Mircea Voda; the former Clothing Factory became Catex S.A., later Serca S.A.; the former Buildings Private Company became Confort S.A.; the former Milk Industrialization and Commerce became Lacto-Star S.A.; the former Bakery became Prodpan S.A.; the former wine factory became Veritas S.A., afterwards the company being sold and not producing anymore; the producing co-operative Borcea became S.C. Socom S.A.; in the former silos near the port was formed Cerealcom S.A. Calarasi.

Along with the old economic units, transformed into commercial companies (we mentioned some of them) in almost all the activity domains private capital companies appeared, some of them being recognized not only on the local market but also on the national and international market. The great number of commercial companies, especially after 1991, managed to absorb a part of the unemployed human resources from the state capital companies. It is important to notice the fact that most of the economic agents are specialized in commercial activities related to food or industry. The great number of Ltd ("SRL") companies specialized in commercial activities led to the setting up in Calarasi of many *en gross* and *en detail* warehouses, the city returning to the well-marked commercial aspect from the interwar years.

### **3. Social consequences of the urban reorganization**

One of the major consequences of the dissolution of industry is represented by the evolution of the unemployment rate, explicit shown by the number of employees. Unemployment, as an integrated element of the post-socialist reality, generated a new way of life that underlined the difference between social classes tending to poverty. During the last decades, we notice that unemployment has been characterized by a complex evolution with regressive or noticeable tendencies depending on the conditions specific to transition. This situation is very well represented in Calarasi by statistic information related to this aspect, which registered employees in the period between 1960 and 2005. Even if, referring to the number of the unemployed, in the legislation of Romania was introduced the statistic indicator for the working market only after 1990, the existing data forces us to analyse only the unemployment rate evolution after the year 2001. It has to be mentioned that the statistic indicator for the working market is represented by the unemployment share. This indicator was settled in accordance with OUG nr.75/2000 in which is defined as in art. 1 (2): "the

unemployed share in the total of the working resources is a statistic indicator, monthly calculated expressed in percentage and determined by the report between the registered number of unemployed and the total population with ages between 18 and 62”.

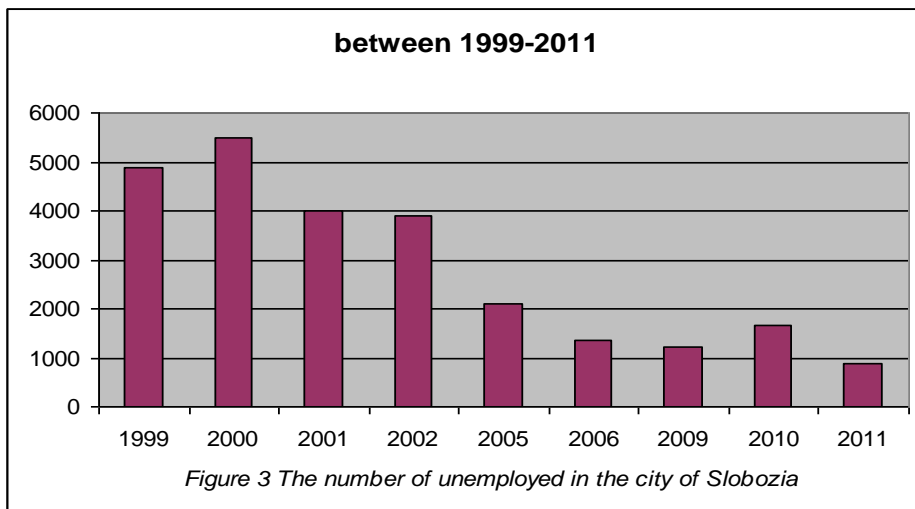
Table 1 The evolution of the number of the unemployed in the period between 2001 and 2007 in Calarasi

Year	Number of unemployed	Share of unemployed (%)
2001	3640	7,06
2002	2096	4,03
2003	2135	4,34
2004	1096	2,20
2005	892	1,77
2006	520	1,02
2007	354	0,69

If we take a look to the total number of employees in the period between 1990 and 2000 we can state that this number diminished extremely, from 39,850 persons in 1990 to 20,787 persons in 2000. Therefore, over 19,000 employed persons were dismissed in the above-mentioned period, this leading to one thing only: high share of unemployment. Figure no. 1 shows the evolution of the unemployed between 2001 and 2007 where it can be easily noticed the fact that the unemployed number diminished in an extremely alert rhythm, a fact that conducted to diminishing the unemployment share of the population with ages between 18 and 62, from 7.06% to 0.69%, (the registered value in 2007). Since 2009 the economic crisis offers a negative impulse to unemployment, which registers a significant increase as a consequence to some companies decreasing competitiveness.

As figure no. 3 shows, regarding the number of the unemployed in the town of Slobozia in 1999-2011, we can specify that during the studied period the number of unemployed was reduced. The years 1999-2000 have registered the highest rate of unemployment (more specific 8% in 1999 and 18% in 2000). This fact is strongly correlated to the temporary shutting down of activity of the commercial company Amonil S.A. (519 employees were dismissed), the biggest industrial unit in town; also, massive dismissing during this period took place at the following: SC Comping 1,459 employees, SNCFR 649 employees, Cristal SA 129 employees, Suinprod 290 employees, Lactirom 700 employees. The monoindustrial system in Slobozia literally crashed. Starting with 2005 the number of the unemployed began to decrease due to the fact that foreign capital was invested. This insured new jobs for the population, part of the unemployed population migrating abroad or in the rural area. Also, the development of the private sector determined the appearance of much more products and services, the continuous creation of jobs, the sector absorbing at the end of 2005 approximately 13,000 employees of the total 17,000, most of them working in the sectors related to farming, followed by industry, commerce, buildings, services etc. It has to be reminded the fact that in Slobozia there is no institution specialized in continuous formation, training or professional reconversion of people who graduated from different forms of compulsory education or high schools and on the working market there is a low absorption of graduate students for the human resources. The County Agency for Training and Employment is the only institution providing training and professional reconversion programs to the unemployed as well as to the currently employed.

For the success of a modern local economy, increasing the quality of the human resources, promotion, generalization and consolidation of the entrepreneurship culture is vital and it has to be noticed the need of the training services contractors for support from the local administration.



Source : The County Statistics Institute Ialomita

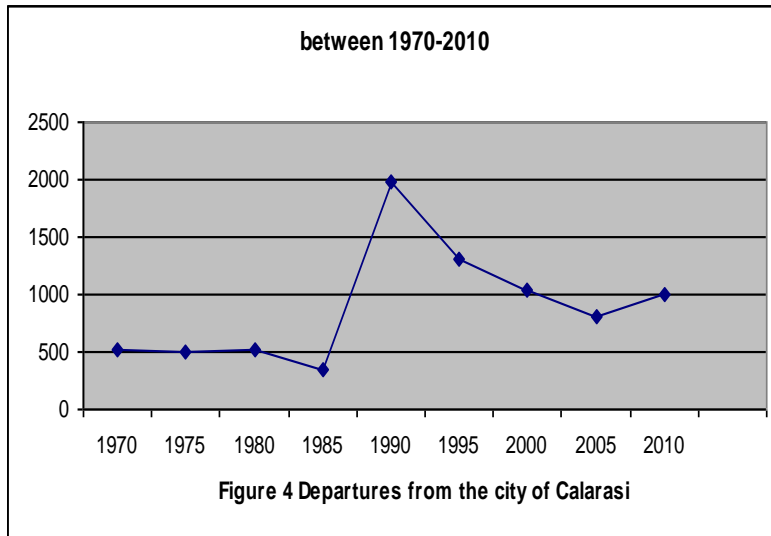
#### 4. Economic consequences of urban reorganization

Once diminished the industrial activities and implicitly the shutting down of the state companies, also diminished number of employees and increased the number of unemployed (dismissed in successive stages). Transforming the old state companies into commercial companies took a long time and the new founded units absorbed only a part of the unemployed. This situation led to the appearance of emigration trends among the population of Calarasi and Slobozia. According to the statistic data referring to the number of leaving and coming of people living in Calarasi we will only follow the evolution of the emigrants (establishing residence abroad). For a better graphic representation of the departing dynamic see figure nr. 4.

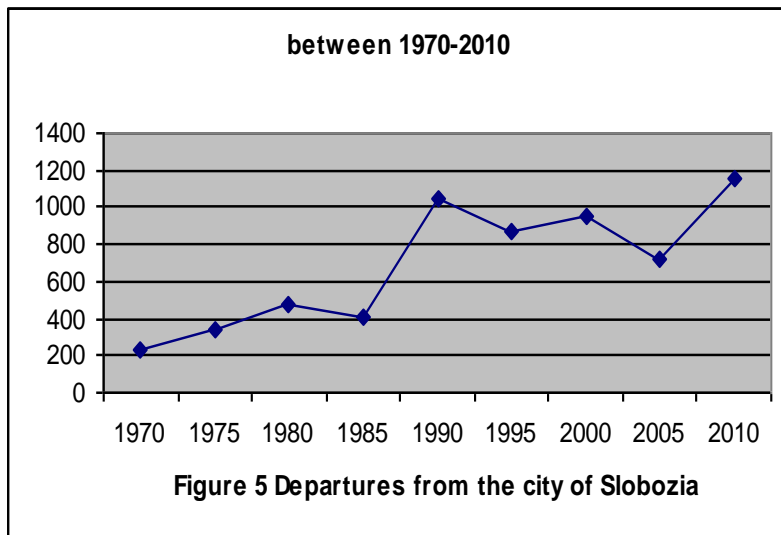
According to the two graphic representations of Calarasi (fig. 4), Slobozia (fig. 5) we notice the high number of emigrants before 1990, when the number reaches 1973 people in Calarasi, and 1,048 people in Slobozia. During the next years, the number of the leaving persons registers a significant decrease, reaching 810 persons in 2005 in Calarasi and 726 in Slobozia. This can be explained by the revival of the industrial activity, the appearance of new investors and implicitly the foundation of new working places. During the period 2005-2010 a new growing tendency of emigration is noticed, but this wave is the natural consequence of the national politic situation, as, after joining the European Union, Romanian citizens gain a greater mobility inside the European countries and implicitly the possibility of looking for better paid job to raise their living level.

Another economic consequence of the “dissolution” of industry is represented by the investment potential of the two cities, referring to available human resources and to the existing land as well. In the town of Calarasi there is an excellent infrastructure available for industrial development. Of great interest is considered to be the geographic position of the city, taking into account the companies that export about 60% of their production and are interested in serving the most important market in Romania – Bucharest area. On the other hand, the city holds the entire range of means of transport and all the necessary utilities. If any buildings or lands remained unused after the dissolution of industry, those minuses became

advantages and contributed to the increasing potential of the town. Nowadays, Calarasi continues to attract important foreign investors. By taking a look to the industrial area of the former Iron and Steel Aggregate Work Group, we notice the investments: Tenaris Silcotub, SC Lemtrans Prod Com SA, Martifer and Siad.



Source : County Statistics Institute Ialomita



Source : County Statistics Institute Ialomita

On the other hand there is the possibility of “Greenfield” investments type, as the ones in Romply Prod and in Saint-Gobain Glass Calarasi. The great number of available working women allowed the development of investment in the clothing sector. In this respect, we will schematically represent the most important foreign investments in Calarasi. Taking into account only the major foreign investments in Calarasi, after 1990, we can state that the



town attracted investments totalling over 150 million euro followed by the appearance of over 2000 new jobs, added to another 1000 jobs.

Slobozia has a great advantage when about attracting foreign investors and not only for the fact that it is situated in the central area of Baragan, at the crossing of two road and railway paths, national and European, which crosses the town from east to west and from north to south on a direct connection across the Danube with the south and southeast Europe. Despite all this, the local incentives offered to the foreign investors (among which: reduced local taxes, assuring utilities and local public infrastructure, licensing support for lands, authorizations from the authorities) still cannot attract important investors.

Comparing the two towns, we can state that after the 1989 revolution, during the last 15 years, Slobozia was avoided by the major investments, the main projects of investment, financed from the local budget and partially from the state budget, being implemented by the local Council of the town and by the Public Finance Ministry. The greatest private investments were those of banks, before their privatization. It seems that Slobozia does not manage to attract foreign investors, in comparison to Calarasi.

## **5. Consequences of the urban reorganization**

Through its effects on both towns, Calarasi and Slobozia, urban reorganization led to the appearance of cultural consequences. Roughly speaking, this fact determined the transformation of the former professional industrial high schools into theoretical or economical high schools, which allow the training of future employees according the market's demand. For a better understanding of the cultural effects on the cities, we compared the population structure on training levels between 1992 and 2002 (chart nr. 2) in Calarasi. According to the registered data from the census of these years, it can be noticed a remarkable increase of the number of trained persons in only ten years. The training needs to be accompanied by other measures such as: reorientation of educational institutions to the new economic, social, and cultural realities of the area, continuous increase of the number graduates and reduction of the age of the population frequenting these classes.

Following the population number for the educational level strictly, we notice important differences between the two years. Therefore, in 1992 11,405 persons of age 10 and older graduated a primary school, while in 2002 only 10505 persons of age 12 and older graduated the same type of school. In gymnasium (mid-school) were registered different values: 17,383 persons in 1992 and only 15,146 in 2002. About the graduated population of high schools we can state that the graduates number in 2002 (17,379) is clearly superior to the graduates in 1992 (14,678). A number of 1,029 people was registered as the difference between the graduates in higher levels of education, though long or short (3,282 persons in 1992 to 4,311 graduates in 2002).

The same situation was registered in Slobozia, as it is the most important educational centre in Ialomita County, as the development of the educational network and as the quality of the educational activity. As we only had access to the 2010 data about the population structure on educational levels (impossible to draw comparisons), we can state that in 2010 in Slobozia lived a number of 3,686 persons with long term superior studies, 176 with short term superior studies, 2,020 college and foreman graduates, 13,527 high school graduates, 8,332 graduates from professional and apprentice schools, 11,399 mid-school graduates and 6,878 with primary studies. The number of students registered is 8,320, out of which 7,266 in primary and gymnasium schools, 3,859 in high schools, 511 in arts and crafts schools, 317 in colleges and 7 in superior educational institutions.

The period of transition to the market economy determined profound mutations in all the domains of the social life, and therefore in the public sector. The general change in the Romanian society and especially in the public and administrative institutions is long complex process that needs first of all a performing public management which can be realized with the participation of well-prepared officials in the specialized domains and in public management, with a new vision of the importance of public institutions in the Romanian society. This was the main argument to justify the foundation by the Calarasi County Council and Charente-Maritime Department (France) in 1992 of an institution that activates to help training and increasing the information degree of officials in the local public administration. Thus in 1992 in Calarasi was founded FORDOC Institute- suggestive for FORMation and DOCumentation. Through the suggested objectives – the achievement of development and training activities for the officials in the public local administration – this Centre was able to enter afterwards in the national network of the regional continuous training centres for the local public administration. Due to the changes that took place in the economy of the city of Calarasi, in order to train the inhabitants, a training institution for adults had to be brought up. Therefore it was founded R.C.P.T.A. – The Regional Centre for Professional Training for Adults, realized with the help of Canadian partners represented by the Canadian Community Colleges Associations, was inaugurated in May 2005 and still activates in collaboration with the National Agency for Human Resources. Inside of this institution adults can attend qualifying classes or professional re-qualification disposing of modern technology and authorized trainers and at the end of classes they receive nationally recognized diplomas. People in search of a job or the registered unemployed can attend classes for free. The others in search for professional training can have class for a tax. We mention a few of the jobs one can train for: manufacture, builders, operator, validation and data processing, waiter, food seller, food trader, non-food trader, hair stylist, manicurist-pedicurist, baker, cosmetician, pastry, trainer.

On the other hand, at a national level, the university education system varied and gave the opportunity to the private university or regional distance education centres to be founded. In this context were founded in Calarasi the following: the Popular University PV HANES; University of Bucharest-CREDIS University College; Economic Studies Academy Bucharest – University Economic College Calarasi; Spiru Haret University - Territorial ID Center Calarasi; Titu Maiorescu University- Territorial ID Center Calarasi; University Agricultural College Calarasi; Sanitary post-superior school Calarasi.

In Slobozia the primary and mid-school network does not cover enough the educational needs. It cannot be said the same thing about the high school area whose educational structure is not oriented on the market and partially covers the needs of the working market. This is also available for the superior education present in Slobozia through subsidiaries of prestigious universities: Economic Studies Academy Bucharest in Amara with the faculties of commerce, tourism, banks and finances, in opened system learning, law and economic science from Gheorghe Cristea, Bucharest and teachers college from Ovidius University in Constanta. In comparison with Calarasi, there are no specialized institutions in training or professional reconversion in Slobozia for the graduates of compulsory or high school education, the only institution offering training programs for the unemployed as well as for employed persons being the National Agency for Human Resources.

## **6. Conclusions**

This study was made on the levels of Calarasi-Slobozia towns and it comprises local particularities of general elements found at national level. In the general context of the

national economy after 1990, when the state companies were abolished and until the foundation of the private companies, the analysed towns had a remarkable decline, at the economic level as well as at the social level, in comparison to the period before the '90 when they had an intensive industrial development. Despite all that, some clear differences can be noticed between the two cities from the economic point of view and the foreign investments point of view; the two towns' potential is remarkable and had the power to attract important investments, a fact that insures a general development in the future, appearing to be well marked in Calarasi.

Nowadays, the level of foreign investments in Romania raised. Calarasi has an excellent infrastructure for the industrial development. The geographic position of the town represents a great interest for companies that export about 60% of the production and are interested to serve the most important market in Romania, the Bucharest area. The city of Calarasi has been abandoned during the last 20 years. Some things are changing in Romania: the level of foreign investments has increased and at the same time the need for an infrastructure. The unique potential of Calarasi continues to attract important foreign investors. If we observe only the industrial area of the former Aggregate Work Group we notice the investments: Tenaris Silcotub, SC Lemtrans Prod Com SA, Martifer and Siad. The remaining land stands for the potential of the region and can only become a fact by attracting new foreign investors. Also, it is known about Slobozia the fact that it is a knot of commercial and economic interests that determine the foundation of premises for the development of the region and the creation of services and utilities infrastructure that will save the potential investors from the investment burden in infrastructure. But, up to this moment, it has not gained from major investments, the main investments, financed from the local budget and partially from the state budget were implemented by the Local Council (public roads modernization, extensions of utility network, foundation of ANL buildings etc.) and by the Public Finances Ministry. Thus, the priority domains for the development of the two cities are totally opposed: the priority for Calarasi being the foundation of new industrial branches or the modernization of the existing ones, the development and focusing of the existing industrial branches, the creation and insurance of an attractive background for investors and the foundation of an industrial park with high technology, while in Slobozia the priority domains are: the stability of the young human resources with a high specialization by continuing the building ANL program, the development of small and medium companies and the development of superior education etc.

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