

# Promoting the Historic Center – a way of obtaining the competitive advantage in the development strategy of Bucharest

Răzvan-Andrei Corboș<sup>1\*</sup>, Ruxandra-Irina Popescu<sup>2\*</sup>

**Abstract**— Urban competition strategic analysis shows that the performance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century cities' management depends on focusing on specific elements which can develop into differentiation sources. Thus, promotion and cultivation of the local spirit, emphasizing local people's community identity and membership and conserving the cultural specific of every region, all represent valid strategic options for developing cities. Restoring urban, architectural and artistically patrimony has transformed from a goal *per se* (saving old towns' centre only for their essence) into a vehicle for complex outcomes such as revitalizing historical urban centers, creating working place, developing business incubators, habitation in old neighborhoods and sustainable tourism: ecotourism, cultural and historical tourism, urban exploration. Therefore, transforming Romania into a quality tourism destination, based on its natural and cultural patrimony and meeting the European Union's standards for products and service supply is a big challenge. Moreover, achieving a sustainable tourism development, with a higher rhythm compared to other tourist destinations in Europe makes this goal even more feasible. The present paper analyses the way Bucharest Historic Centre regeneration may become a successful example for the national strategy for tourism development, by creating and boosting several realistic competitive advantages: existing natural and built patrimony, entrepreneurial climate, geographical position and easy access to and from the town centre.

**Keywords**—competitive advantage, development opportunities, promoting campaigns, strategic vision, tourism, urban regeneration.

## I. INTRODUCTION

URBAN areas have always served a wide range of functions, such as residential, society's welfare, economic, cultural. Yet, all of these functions have changed in time, reflecting society's evolution and the increasing needs of the

cities' inhabitants [9]. The public policies' interventions in the urban area were shaped especially at the end of World War II, when the intervention directions were defined. Roberts and Sykes [10] studied the evolution of the urban environment and identified five main periods in the urban area transformation, stating with 1945:

- Reconstruction (1945-1960);
- Revitalization (1960-1970);
- Restoration (1970-1980);
- Redevelopment (1980-1990);
- Regeneration (1990-present).

From 1990 onward, one can talk about the occurrence at global level, of urban regeneration policies, distinguishing the acceptance of the local community's role in implementing urban regeneration programs, as well as the appearance of the sustainable development concept. It is said that this period is the „era of city publicity” [1].

Since the '90s, governments have turned to cultural policies to diversify the local economy and in order to compensate for the loss of jobs in manufacturing industries. The focus was on strengthening the image of the city, attracting investment and establishing partnerships between the public and private sectors [8]. Evans and Jones [6], present three approaches to urban regeneration in this period: **a) regeneration of historic centers, b) cultural regeneration, c) culture and regeneration**, in which culture is not part of the strategy, but is used as a tool for achieving other objectives.

In recent years, the term “urban regeneration” has emerged as an important aspect of urban planning and design, mainly because of its economic, cultural, technological and physical benefits for cities.

Although there is no universally valid definition for this concept, urban regeneration may be defined as an “integrated action for solving urban problems, trying to make a lasting improvement to the economic, social, physical context and the surrounding environment within an urban area that requires transformation” [3].

In this context, one can establish the main objectives of the urban regeneration process [16]:

- **Economic objectives** associated with the economic revitalization of destructured areas, attracting foreign

<sup>1</sup> Răzvan-Andrei Corboș is from the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest, Faculty of Management, Department of Management, 6, Romană Square, 1<sup>st</sup> Sector, Bucharest, ROMANIA, e-mail: razvan.corbos@man.ase.ro.

<sup>2</sup> Ruxandra-Irina Popescu is from the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest, Faculty of Administration and Public Management, 22-24, Șerban Vodă Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Sector, Bucharest, ROMANIA, email: ruxandra.irina@gmail.com.

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investors, creating jobs, as well as developing entrepreneurship;

- **Environment objectives** associated with urban regeneration programs that propose innovative solutions for reducing environment pollution in the destructured areas, improving living conditions, with the awareness of society's preferences and values;
- **Cultural objectives** associated with the physical renovation of damaged structures, assuming both public infrastructure and buildings, through the definition of public policies regarding the development and transformation of urban landscape, in order to promote architectural heritage and urban tourism;
- **Social objectives** associated with improving living standards for disadvantaged groups, and people's life in general, through the refurbishment of buildings that are in an advanced degradation state, local infrastructure development and increasing social housing numbers.

According to Roberts and Sykes [10], urban regeneration means:

- An activity which involves the public and private sectors and the local community;
- A mean of mobilizing collective efforts, representing the base for finding efficient solutions;
- An activity that can produce considerable changes in the urban environment, in order to transform the economic, political, environment and social situation;
- A mean of identifying policies and actions for improving living conditions in the urban areas and developing institutional structures needed for preparing and implementing the respective policies and actions.

Basically, urban regeneration could represent a public policy focused mainly on urban environment dynamics, closely linked to other urban policies, or even integrating them into a single public policy, such as [7]:

- **Land policies** aimed at developing land through urban, social, environmental, economic and financial aspects;
- **Housing policy** that covers both housing related, public, social, educational services offered to the population, as well as the policy on rents;
- **Policies regarding infrastructure** that take into account transport and traffic, as well as water, electricity, natural gas provision;
- **Urban policies** which include aspects of rehabilitation and creation of public spaces and avoiding the reduction of green spaces, as well as ensuring compliance with EU standards in air quality, used water treatment, waste management, noise pollution;
- **Urban marketing policy** aimed at the city's promoting policy, cultural identity, focusing on the development potential and on promoting a brand image of urban regeneration success;
- **Local development policy** which includes issues related to capitalizing local factors that are important for the

economic activity (for example, land, skilled labor, quality of life, the required local investment).

As a result, urban regeneration works on all the components within urban area in difficulty [19]:

- The rehabilitation of the architectural and cultural heritage within the historic districts;
- Improving living and habitation conditions for citizens;
- Planning and modernizing public space, but also the environment (markets, squares, parks, urban furniture, air quality);
- Modernizing the urban infrastructure (water, gas, electricity networks, roads and public transport networks).

In conclusion, each urban regeneration project operates simultaneously on physical space in which people live (urban problems), but also on public services that people need (social, economic, environmental and cultural).

With regard to urban regeneration in Romania:

- There is no law in this area, the legislation is fragmented
- Until 2000, one cannot speak of the existence of actual urban regeneration programs, because in our country there have been only recent initiatives regarding the thermal rehabilitation of residential buildings, road infrastructure and parts of historic centers in large cities. In other words, in Romania, urban regeneration projects focus mainly on rehabilitating residential buildings and less on environmental, social and economic aspects.

## II. HISTORIC BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENT

The Historic Center of Bucharest (Figure 1) occupies an area of approximately 50 hectares, in the geographical center of the city. The area has retained its character and appearance, with many buildings of architectural and historical importance, including public buildings, churches and homes.



Fig. 1. Map of Bucharest's Historic Center  
Source: [13]

The commanding functions are the financial and commercial ones: the headquarters of the National Bank and

various commercial banking institutions are located in the Northwest part of this area, the shops are located in the Southwest, and residential buildings all throughout the South part. The building stock presents an unequal technical value, with a lot of constructions in a poor state, degraded and sustained by a utilities infrastructure that needs.

However, the area is very rich in urban and cultural heritage, which provides identity and prestige to the city – many buildings with architectural, historic and ambient significance, which have big economic and tourism potential, now only partially exploited. The land and buildings are public or private properties. Regarding the residents, currently in the historic part of Bucharest live around 9,500-10,000 people, of which approximately 5,000 are occupying living spaces without having legal residence in Bucharest.

The area has studies and projects that have already been developed and funding programs for interventions to the utilities and technical infrastructure. Very important is that there is a clearly expressed political will and interest from behalf of the city's management, to develop this area. Thus:

a) In the 1999-2002 time-frame, Bucharest's City Hall carried out a joint project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): "A Beautiful Bucharest", through which were rehabilitated ten facades of the Historic Center, two schools and the House of Marriages in Sector 3 of the city. The value of the project has exceeded one million dollars.

b) In the next period, 2003-2009, through a partnership between the Ministry of Culture, Religious Affairs and National Heritage, Bucharest's City Hall and the United Nations Development Programme, Bucharest has participated alongside 11 other cities in a program called "A Beautiful Romania [15] which aimed to develop pilot projects for restoration, rehabilitation and improving the function and image of buildings or public spaces in historic urban centers, attracting international funds or private investment to continue rehabilitation objectives. The objective of the pilot project for the city of Bucharest has considered offering a model of good practice for the rehabilitation and revitalization of the historic area (the Gabroveni Inn), while at the same time, providing advice to the municipality in implementing a strategy for demonstrating its value.

c) In February 2005, the Capital's Town Hall together with the Municipality of Sector 3 have banned access and traffic of all vehicles in the Historic Center, and in this way, to protect the heritage of national value.

d) In 2006 the Historic Center Rehabilitation Program was released for public debate, the design and construction contract was awarded through international public action to a Spanish firm: Sedesa Obras y Servicios SA. The contract covered the design, execution, completion and addressing any faults in the infrastructure of the pilot area between Lipscaeni Street (Figure 2), Splaiul Independenței, Victoria Avenue and I.C. Brătianu. The most important aim was to create a cultural

route that starts from the current headquarters of the National Library, crosses the Stavropoleos Street and reach Șuțu Palace. The contract's value was 24,74 million Euros (7,3 million Euros from EBRD, 2,8 million from the Dutch Government, the rest of the sum was provided by the Capital's Municipality) and stated an execution time of 18 months (August 2008).



Fig. 2. Lipscaeni Street from Bucharest's Historic Center - year 1929 (first above) and 2008 (second above)

Source: [20]

e) In spring 2007, when the infrastructure work had started, archaeological discoveries have surfaced, requiring specific conservation work and valuing. Archaeological studies throughout the area were conducted by interdisciplinary teams consisting of specialists from different institutions in the field (Bucharest's Museum of History, Romania's National History Museum, the National Institute of Archeology, etc.). But these studies have postponed the actual starting of rehabilitation work.

f) In January 2008, the General Council of Bucharest approved the supplementing of the program's budget with 9,7 million Euros. But in 2008, claims increased and the Romanian company Sedesa LLC suspended all activity because of nonpayment for the already conducted works. The municipality refused to pay because they were inconsistent, and those involved could not justify them. The contractor did not comply with the contract and had expanded into other areas that were not in the plan.

g) In September 2009, the municipality terminated the contract with Sedesa, and currently the two parties are at the Arbitration Court.

h) The year 2009 was the launching year for the Sustainable Development Plan of Bucharest 2009-2012, and the regeneration of the Historic Center is one of its priorities [13]. In stating the development vision, Bucharest's Historic Center takes shape through a series of competitive and comparative advantages: the existent cultural, natural and architectural heritage, entrepreneurial environment, geographical position and good accessibility from the capital's center.

The Urban Rehabilitation Strategy of the Historic Center in the 2009-2012 time frame is mainly aimed at restoring the area and stimulating investment by public and private owners in building refurbishment, and as objectives [13]:

- Restoring the current building stock;
- Modernizing and rehabilitating the area through public utilities (modern streets, water, drainage, natural gas, thermal energy, phone lines, electricity);
- Removing vehicles from the sidewalk by creating underground parking lots, which will release pedestrian routes for leisure;
- Creating new passage ways;
- Rehabilitating and decorating the public traffic arteries in the area;
- Improving living conditions and welfare in the area by attracting investors;
- Facilitating the modernization and rehabilitation of buildings which leads to an increase in the area's attractiveness for tourism.

According to local authorities, for achieving these objectives some specific policies must be formulated in order to facilitate the coordination between the actions of important actors involved in this process (community, private sector, government agencies, international agencies), such as:

- *The policy regarding development control;*
- *Historic Center Promoting*
- *Sectoral development policies* comprising of:
  - 1) the policy regarding utilities and public services;
  - 2) the investment policy (referring to the funding given for the rehabilitation of the Historic Center area);
  - 3) the rent policy (regarding commercial spaces and housing);
  - 4) the institutional development policy.
- *Regional policies.* Regarding the formulation of development policies on intervention areas, the Historic Center is divided into 10 areas (Figure 3): *Area 1* – mainly commercial area, *Areas 2, 3 and 6* – Office areas – financial centers, *Areas 4 and 5* – development of office areas, *Areas 7, 8 and 9* – mainly recreational, culture and entertainment areas, *Zone 10* – residential area, *Zone 0* is a commercial corridor, located along the major traffic arteries and commercial streets.

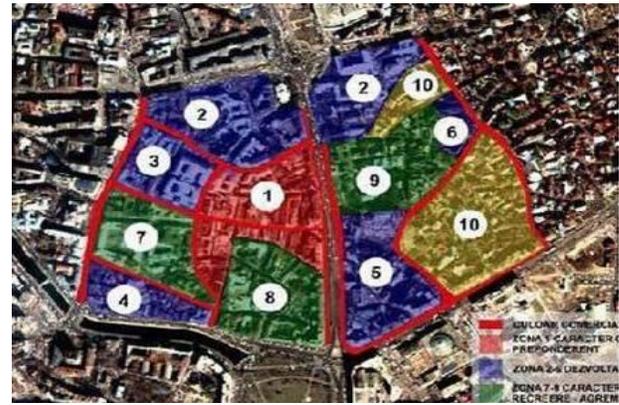


Fig. 3. Map of intervention areas within Bucharest's Historic Center

Source: [13]

For each separate area, development policies must lead to preserving their essential character, to the renovation of the existing building stock and to stimulate investment and locating those functions/activities that gives the place specificity and value.

The Conservation Strategy of the Historic Center has also taken into account the recognition of those specific functions that may lead, on the long run, to increasing the attractiveness of the area and potential for investment and tourism. This process started from four different perspectives on the site and includes, therefore, four components [11]:

1. The site from the point of view of its specific character: the Historic Center could point out its own cultural value and by its example, it could promote the importance of preserving the cultural heritage.

2. The site as an area: the historic area must generate and maintain a primary infrastructure compatible with its status and its position in the center of the capital.

3. The site as a services provider: the area must provide base services at a quality that meets the public's requirements.

4. The site from the entertainment and leisure activities point of view: the area needs a series of attraction points for its potential visitors.

There are two major issues which may used to understand this rehabilitation process of the capital's Historic area, which are:

- Recreating the character of the past, but with modern facilities, stimulating economic and social activities and maintaining an important part of Bucharest's archaeological and architectural legacy;
- Encouraging the restoration in the area and stimulating investments made by public and private owners in modernizing the buildings.

The Sustainable Development Plan of Bucharest 2009-2012 [13] initiated a series of priority projects needed for the regeneration of urban areas, also affecting the Historic Center, which are quite interesting in terms of the subsequent results:

a) *Rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in the Historic Center of Bucharest.* The project consists in the rehabilitation

of basic infrastructure in a pilot-area framed by Lipscani Street, Victoria Avenue, Splaiul Independenței, Halelor Street, I.C. Brătianu Boulevard, as part of the municipality initiative to revitalize this historic area, which will include building restoration and measures to stimulate economic and social activities. The estimated costs of this project amounts to approximately 9,5 million Euros, of which 8,5 million Euros will be co-financed by the EBRD and 1 million Euros will represent the contribution of Bucharest City Hall.

b) *Rehabilitation and upgrading of urban furniture in the Historic Center of Bucharest.* The project aims at [25]:

- Shaping, at city level in general, and for the Historic Center in particular, a quality image of space and configuration, in compliance with European standards;
- Ensuring the needed furniture and establishment of technical and urban condition for laying out the pieces of urban furniture;
- Evaluating the necessary urban equipment that would meet the needs of community development;
- Making an impact assessment regarding the citizen, made by the solution adopted for developing the network of urban furniture items.

The results of this pilot-project will be materialized in:

- Obtaining a quality image for the public space:
- Developing prototypes for key elements of urban furniture – information boards, public transportation stations, press distribution points, public toilets, fountains, food stands, street signs, trash cans, containers for recyclable waste, places for selling flowers, bicycle rack, benches, decorative paving, telephone booths designed differently depending on the characteristics of the area and in relation to historical and art monuments in the vicinity.

The estimated costs of this pilot-project will be of 10,000 Euros.

c) *Restoration, expansion and functional remodeling of Gabroveni Inn.* The Ministry of Culture, Religious Affairs and National Heritage (MCPN), in partnership with the Center for Cultural Projects within Bucharest's Municipality (ArCuB) and the United Nations Development Programme Romania (UNDP) will implement the Gabroveni Inn restoration project (Figure 4)<sup>3</sup>.

This project's main objective is to offer a good practice and professional excellence example for rehabilitating the Historic Center of Bucharest, to provide once again the public the access to a cultural center with mixed functions. The center

will include a multipurpose auditorium of up to 200 seats, with respective annexes, rehearsal space for theater, music, ballet with its respective annexes, accommodation and technical facilities. To the public component of the future building will be add the restoration of the monument's pedestrian passage connecting Lipscani and Gabroveni Streets, a cultural and tourist information point, workshops or meeting rooms, annexes, commercial premises to recover the traditional character of the area and the commercial passage.

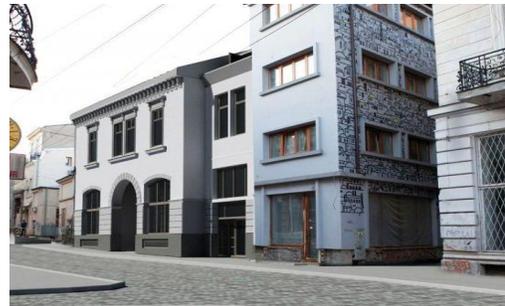


Fig. 4. Gabroveni Inn today (row 1) and in the future – rehabilitation proposals (rows 2, 3 and 4)

Source: [14, 15]

The investment project rises to 5 million Euros (of which 2,55 million Euros is a grant, a national co-financing of 450,000 Euros supported by the Ministry of Culture, Religious

<sup>3</sup> Gabroveni Inn restoration is made with the support of a grant from the European Economic Space (EES) Financial Mechanism, through which three EFTA donor countries – Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein – allocated to Romania a nonrefundable financial assistance valued at 98,5 million Euros for the 2009-2011 time-frame for financing project in key sectors for the country's economic and social development, among which the conservation of cultural heritage. Norway is the main donor in the European Economic Space (EES) Mechanism, with a contribution of approximately 99% in this program's budget.

Affairs and National Heritage, while Bucharest's City Hall supports the 2 million Euros difference by completing the works and making an extension on the Lipscaeni Street plots).

An important aspect is that the projects will create jobs not only in the implementation process, but also after this, through its functionality.

d) *The TransCentral Urban Bucharest (TUB) Project - travel Alternatives in downtown Bucharest* was launched at the Annual Architecture Competition in Bucharest placed between 17<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2007, and is the result of a collaboration between 14 architecture bureaus and considers a route with a total length of 9,5 kilometers, addressed to pedestrians and cyclists and connects the most interesting areas and public spaces in the city center. The purpose of T.U.B. is to better organize the center of Bucharest and to release new central areas onto which be planted trees and green space [17]. The T.U.B. will be the center of Bucharest, redesigned as a "large house with rooms" assigned to a specific field, with different destinations to fulfill the expectations of all residents and tourists, who will communicate with each other by hanging bridges.



Fig. 5. Transcentral Urban Bucharest Project: transforming the city center into "rooms" and catwalk crossing the Dâmbovița River

Source: [23]

So, the T.U.B. project brings into question two new concepts [23]: urban rooms and walkways for pedestrians and cyclists. As a result, the project foresees the realization of 15 urban rooms: the historic room, which will be represented by the historic center, the entertainment room, located in Union

Square, the academic room, which will represent the area between the Faculty of Architecture and the University, tourism room, established in the Amzei market area, the ambiance room, the area between Icon Garden and Arthur Verona Street, the attic room, which will connect the Brezoianu and Izvor areas. Also, the classical culture room, the traditional mystic room, the contemporary culture room and the alternative culture room will be created (Figure 5).

Also, it is also aimed that the intersection between Regina Elisabeta Boulevard and Academy Street be traversed by a glass passage, and behind Bucharest's City Hall be built a cultural mall. Victoria Avenue will be transformed into a promenade and shopping area.

The total value of the project is unknown, but the funding can be obtained from European sources or from the local budget.

e) *The rehabilitation of the "Old Court" Voivode Palace<sup>4</sup> within the Historic Center of Bucharest* provides the conservation, protection and revitalization of the "Old Court" Royal Palace, and transforming it into a museum complex. Also, raising the level of attractiveness is wanted, through different marketing activities of the area and a sustainable and market oriented revitalization.

The general objective of the project is making an attractive cultural and tourism urban space, functionally and spatially integrated. As specific objectives are proposed the following:

- Attracting the largest possible number of visitors by identifying the "Old Court" Voivode Palace as a cultural and tourism beacon within Bucharest's historic center;
- Creating a public square with multiple functions: loisir-tourism, social host for public cultural and tourism events, historic and cultural;
- Creating a quality urban space, a link with other major public objectives: the Old Court, Saint Anton Church, Manuc's Hostelry, I.C. Brătianu Boulevard;
- Promoting the cultural and tourism potential presented by the "Old Court" Voivode Palace area.

The actual rehabilitation action of the "Old Court" Voivode Palace consists in (Figure 6):

- The rehabilitation of the "Old Court" Voivode Palace;
- The rehabilitation of the Turkish Bath;
- Urban improvement of Saint Anton square through: inserting urban furniture, decorating the Royal Church, decorating the fountain in the Saint Anton square and establishing an information point for the area.

<sup>4</sup> The Old Court is the first royal court in Bucharest, rendered nonfunctional after the fire in 1718 and the earthquake in 1738. The Royal court is composed of a palace (the Voivode Palace), a church (Annunciation Church known later as the Old Court or Saint Anton Church), homes with reception halls, the royal chancelleries, stables and gardens. At present, the ruins of the Voivodal Palace have become a protected archaeological site, and even a museum is arranged: the Old Court Museum. The total area of the Old Court is of approximately 10.000 square meters.

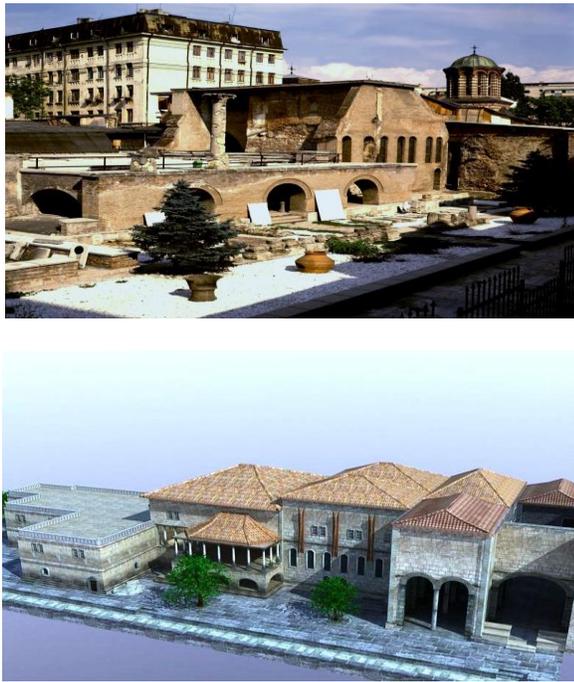


Fig. 6. The Old Court ensemble from Bucharest's Historic Center – present and future  
Source: [18,21]

The project will be implemented by local government through the Urban and Metropolitan Planning Centre of Bucharest, but will also be involved the central government, autonomous administrations and NGOs. No data is known about the value of the investments to be made in the complex. According to the Sustainable Development Plan for Bucharest 2009-2012, in 2009 only a competition was held regarding architectural solutions for the "Old Court" Voivode Palace, but no data is known on the actual start of the rehabilitation work.

i) In *early 2010*, the Capital's Mayor declared that, by the end of the year, it intended to complete all the sixteen streets in the Historic Center, including utilities, street furniture and public lighting. In April 2010, a part of the Historic Center streets were 90% completed. In these circumstances, many building owners began to renovate the buildings, so it already started to notice a visible revival of trade and a tendency to readjust to the new look of the streets, from the owners of those homes and businesses.

### III. PROBLEM SOLUTION

After the infrastructure will be fully rehabilitated, the next step is creating a unique space in which history is leaving its mark and the surroundings will speak for themselves.

To achieve all these objectives there should be outlined the following *proposals*:

- **Facade restoration.** After the buildings' facades will be restored so that architecture becomes one of the biggest attractions, we fully support the initiative of the General

Mayor of Bucharest, to protect all archaeological findings and cover them with glass and light them. In this way the Old Center will bring another point of attraction and there will be felt and a combination of old and new.

- **Events.** In our opinion, there should be frequently hosted events in the Old Center: jazz concerts, themed events related to the past, with vintage costumes, organizing winter and Easter parties. It should become a tradition that each month greatly interesting events were organized, so that the Old Center would attract both youngsters and mid-aged people, tourists, and not least, investors willing to invest in pubs which are already open in the area.

- **The Old Center – a place suitable for educational programs for children and not only.** The Old Center should support educational programs for children eager to learn history and crafts that are long forgotten (such as pottery, hand embroidery, wood carving, painting, etc.). Every Saturday we propose that educational programs are organized, that will determine parents to send their children to spend their free time socializing and learning useful things

- **Street theater.** In all the Old Centers of European cities are held several street theater representations, which often attract more than the theater itself.

- **Romanian Film Festival.** After years of hard work, Romanian movies began to be appreciated at their true value. Why shouldn't they be viewed in a much as possible... Romanian setting? And where better than in the Historic Center?

Next, we present the tools that we consider appropriate for promoting.

*"The Bucharest around you is changing"* represents a campaign that announces the intention that of making some changes in the Old Center. Additional information is not given, only the slogan is announced in order to create a mystery effect. The public will become anxious, incited, willing to know more and more.

There will not be an age target.

#### Instruments:

- **Online:** a website will be created that will contain only this slogan, new and old photos of Bucharest. On this Internet page, the interaction will be only with the users, who will be involved in different competitions to motivate curiosity. "What are you thinking when you say the Bucharest surrounding you?", "Proposals for a more attractive Bucharest", etc. Each week a decorative object will be posted in order to make the audience think about the Old Center. And the debates will be held online: "Who has seen first clue?", "What is it?", etc.

- **Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter. Attracting the users of these websites by creating accounts that have direct references to the official website. On Facebook will be released games, the so called quizzes: "What kind of craftsman could you be?". "In what period would you prefer to have lived?" etc.

- **ATL:** TV ads, radio ads.

- **BTL:** promoters, drop mail, direct mailing. Thus:

(1) Every weekend there will be promoters dressed in vintage costumes walking on the main avenues, greeting people in a politely manner and telling them that soon “the main avenue will move into the new Bucharest near you!”.

(2) During the working week, in the rush hours, a gentleman and a lady will sit in a vintage cart in the center of a big intersection. They will say nothing, motionless, dressed in vintage costumes.

(3) We will surprise people with spam messages in their email addresses and small souvenirs in their mailboxes so as to awaken their curiosity to know what happens to Bucharest... where is it moving after all?

For three months, the curiosity of the target population will be awakened by involving them in all the activities organized, in order to make them to feel part of a great change. And after three months, will be revealed....

### **„Old Bucharest”**

After the three months of intensive promoting, the city’s inhabitants will discover the “big secret”. The Historic Center changes and it dedicates entirely to attracting the maximum number of visitors and investors, and by this mean, will shortly become a favorite destination for the foreign tourists too. The “Old Bucharest” campaign transposes Bucharest into the past and shows what the Old Center represented in the past for Romania’s capital.

### **Way to promote:**

#### **A. Online**

a) The *website* is the base of a promoting campaign [5]. Although a lot of information can be found about this area at present, the Historic Center does not have an official website, that would provide translations in the most important international languages about the place’s history, past and present attraction points and all that this area of Bucharest

The official website will have to be constantly updated with all the cultural events taking place in the Historic Center, with invitations to workshops, to exhibitions, plays, etc. It can provide faithful users different ways of maintaining interest: discount cards to various places in the area, at various events, modified photos with the “Once” Bucharest.

b)  **Blogging.** Blogs are an important source for promoting the area and thus, to promote all events supporting the formation of the best possible image for the Historic Center. According to ZeList [24], a website dedicated to monitoring the phenomenon called blogging, there are 44,000 blogs registered in Romania. The community of bloggers in Romania is so close that most certainly would agree to maintain a referral link to the official website and to the events organized in the old part of Bucharest.

#### **c) Social Media**

• *Facebook* is one of the best tools of promoting, because there are *over a million users in Romania* [22] that use

regularly this website. 99% of these are aged between 19 and 35 years old.

The Old Center currently has a profile on Facebook, but not being an official one, is only used for advertisements made by various pub owners in the historic area. It is not interactive, there are no discussions open, and the presence of any administrator is not felt. The official account of the Historic Center on Facebook could host and kick-off interactive discussions, based on the events that would be held, could host photos and all users would be kept informed with all the news; all of these with the referral to the official website where Facebook users will be guided to access for more information and different features.

Also on Facebook there are the so called quizzes through which users could see a photo of themselves wearing vintage costumes or what historic character they resemble with etc.

As a communication tool with the public can say that Twitter is a top preference for online promotion. According ZeList [24], in Romania there are only 30,000 accounts on Twitter. Currently, there is no account on Twitter to refer to the Old Center. A Twitter account could attract potential investors primarily because this area is accessed mostly by business people who realize that online promotion on Twitter.com is a very important source.

• *Twitter.* As a tool for communicating with the public, one can say that Twitter is on the top of the preferences list for online promoting. According to ZeList [24], only in Romania alone there are 30.000 Twitter accounts. At present, there is no Twitter account that makes reference to the Old Center. A Twitter account could attract primarily potential investors because this domain is accessed mostly businessmen who realize that online promotion on Twitter.com is a very important source.

• YouTube is one of most popular video sharing systems in the world. YouTube has over 1,5 million users only in Romania, with various ages, belonging to various social and cultural backgrounds. At present, one can find many movies on YouTube with the Old Quarter, a positive aspect, including foreign-language movies or documentaries made by foreign reporters. All these movies should be found on an official YouTube channel. In addition to existing video clips, there will be posted videos in order to promote the festivals which will take place.

#### **B. Above the Line (ATL)**

There are many advertising agencies specialized on ATL passionate of culture and history. However, there are many local brands that would like to invest, to become sponsors of various activities in the Historic Center, just as the Timișoreana brand had done.

The steps that must be followed for realizing an ATL promoting campaign are the following:

- Looking for sponsors and collaborators (Șapte Seri, B52, etc.);

- Contracting an advertising agency for creating and implementing an ATL advertising campaign;
- Creating an attractive logo;
- Developing a database with people from the mass-media and people with leading positions or representatives from public relations and communication departments of private companies;
- Creating complete and attractive presentation materials of the Historic Center
- Executing prints, TV ads, radio ads;
- Giving interviews to the mass-media;
- Implementing programs addressed that target all age categories;
- An strong communication of all the programs, activities and events organized, or at which it participates;
- Practicing promotional prices on special occasions: Children Day, UNIFEST, Student's Week.

### C. Below the Line (BTL)

There are some tricks to draw attention on to the activities that take place within the Old Center, with a minimum of efforts: Drop mail, door hangers, billboards are just a few ways that would require low investments, but they would bring great satisfaction and would attract international media attention. The public would feel flattered if it would receive personalized invitations to events which would take place in the near future, and all that would happen would be that they would become curious and would make time for a stroll through the Old Center.

To conclude, a campaign that would link with the past image of the Historic Center, supported by well planned promoting and branched on target groups is the solution for this area to be highlighted internationally, so that foreign tourists see Bucharest as a cultural destination of maximum interest.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Historic centers have a significant specific character, bearing the mark of the initial period – the founding of the city or, often, a succession of steps which represent its whole life. Often, this specific character of historic centers is decisive for the city's personality. Rome, Florence, Prague, Paris, Moscow; to a large extent, in Romania, Suceava, Iași, Sighișoara, Brașov owe their personality to their historic centers.

The most appropriate solution in the intervention process in the historic centers is the way of harmonizing conservation requirements with satisfying the current needs of life [4].

Image and identity can be aggregated based on three concepts: quality, aesthetics and safety [2]. This image can be further strengthened by promoting compatible events, defining popular culture, the culture of jazz, events organized in-house or outdoors, based on studies regarding the cultural products with added value for the area, their form of presentation and their appropriate level of noise [12].

As a landmark, the historic center can be Bucharest's real chance, because of the area's uniqueness and hypothetical potential. But hypothetical because in reality, the buildings' degree of degradation is quite advanced, access is difficult, and many areas give the impression that they have been abandoned. However:

The Historic Center means **fun**... there are coffee houses, bars, clubs, restaurants, pizzerias, a variety of music, culinary styles. At present, the Historic Center has the largest offer of places like this, where spending free time really means relaxation in its true sense.

The Historic Center means **the past**... there are genuine historical monuments that do nothing but talk about the history of a people, the Romanian people.

The Historic Center means **opportunities**... The Historic Center has a collection of unique shops in town. The keywords are: art, hand-made, unique. Vintage, pop, manga, styles not addressed anywhere else can be found here. Just so as not to talk about real estate opportunities. In the Historic Center one can find only unique properties, the only ones that may provide organic growth even in this period.

Through the Old Quarter, Bucharest will become a city worth seeing, a collection city for those who love to travel, a city on the must see list, a city that will be in the top spot in the competition between cities.

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**Răzvan-Andrei Corboș** obtained his PhD title in management in 2005, within the Academy of Economic Studies, Romania. He has a bachelor degree in Management (2000) and a master in Organization Management in the European Union integration context (2002).

He is a Teaching Assistant within the Faculty of Management (Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies) and performs a postdoctoral stage within the program „Performance and excellence in postdoctoral research in Romanian economics science domain”, coordinated by Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. His current research interests are related to strategic diagnosis of organization and sales management.

**Ruxandra-Irina Popescu** obtained her PhD title in management in 2005, within the Academy of Economic Studies, Romania. She has a bachelor degree in Management (1999) and a master degree in Strategic marketing (2009).

She is a Lecturer within the Faculty of Administration and Public Management (Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies) and performs a postdoctoral stage within the program „Performance and excellence in postdoctoral research in Romanian economics science domain”, coordinated by Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. Her current research interests are related to urban marketing, brand and competitive urban systems.

Dr. Popescu is also member of the a Regional Science Association International.