

HUNYADI, ATTILA GÁBOR PHD HABIL

attila.hunyadi@ubbcluj.ro

assistant professor (Babeş-Bolyai University, Kolozsvár)

**Subsidiarity and proportionality in
Public Works' administration:
from local, regional, and national
to inter-regional, cross-border/
transnational, Trans-European
Networks (TENTs) in Transylvania
belonging to Hungary (until 1918/20)
and to Romania (since 1918/1920)**



ABSTRACT

This study intends to identify those levels of public sphere at which the public choice seems to be optimal, according to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and depending on the scale of public works investments and the historical period, legal context. 20th century Transylvania – with an area that could comprise in it twice the Belgium's and one whole Netherlands – being part consecutively of Austria-Hungary, Romania, Hungary (its Northern part) and again Romania (since 1947 People's Republic of Romania) is a good terrain to analyze in the long term the specificities of public administration, public-private investments and the efficiency of public works in different time periods on local, regional and country level, continuing with the comparison of cross-border, trans- and international level public works based on public procurement. The durability and warrant of final product as public goods are also an actual topic, mainly because most of these public goods and historic public buildings approach their lifetime limits and need urgent restoration, nowadays their renovation frequently being financed by the local and state authorities with funds from the European Union's Cohesion or Regional Development Funds. According

to a classic Romanian public law and accountability law principle (local-regional) cooperatives had certain facilities in being involved in implementing public works on (local-regional) level without breach in the general law of competition. Based on the local roots of any cooperative and their ideal functioning according to universal principles (democratic structure, delegation of votes, autonomy inside a network or a hierarchical structure with their own supervising and coordinating non-lucrative offices, together with proper financial centers), it was a general rule and many parts in the world it still works as such, except for the neo capitalist oriented former East-Central Europe, where all the preexisting cooperative structures were dismantled and there are no countervailing powers or checks and balances on this market of public works. The historical examples (in a comparative Romanian-Hungarian or Transylvanian Saxon) will surely help in understanding the logic of public procurement policies and investments, works and the efficiency of realizing/creating public goods.

KEYWORDS

public works, public administration, development programs, urbanization, rural development, public procurement, functionalism, infrastructure, railways, road and transport networks, airports, ports, international organizations, economic and financial crisis, rural and regional development, urbanization, International Labor Organization, League of Nations, European Union, East Central Europe, European integration, diplomacy, East-Central-Europe, customs union, federation, mutuality, cooperative movement, Green International, economic and financial crisis, resilience, cross-border infrastructure.

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Romania became member state of the European Union on January 1st, 2007. She benefited before the adhesion from the SAPARD and ISPA programs, while after accession she benefits already from the third 7 years long cycle of European public funding for different priorities included in the National Development Plan structured in structural chapters and axis. Most of the programs

are destined to the renovation of formerly built public goods, public buildings. Nevertheless, Romania still shows a low level of absorption, probably due to the over-bureaucratization and saturation of administration.¹ In the following I will present several ‘good’ examples of public investments that took place in earlier periods.

SPIRU HARET AND KUNO KLEBELSBERG, TWO MINISTERS OF THEIR NATIONS IN PARALLEL

Spiru Haret developed a whole network of schools in the Old Kingdom of Romania while he fervently promoted the integration of peasantry by institutors into the cooperative movement comprising of hundreds of people’s banks in the rural area. In this regard, he followed the French model of cooperative movement where the agricultural-rural credit was partially supported by the state in order to raise the resilience of peasantry against natural catastrophes or calamities such as the Peronospora or Phylloxera that destroyed the wine-producing sector in whole Europe, but a part of the producers survived through the cooperatives by adopting other opportunities, mainly dairy production processed and then sold collectively by their common venture, the cooperative. France was a paradigm for Romania in other parts of public and state life, too, including public works and everything relying on this topic.

The dense network of rural schools built on the basis of typical blueprints in Romania had its parallel in the capital of Hungary. Here, mayor István Bárczy coordinated a wide program of school-building having extremely good results in this economically-financially fast growing, territorially widening and demographically booming capital city. Almost in the same time, in several regions, not only towns, but also rural communes, the cooperative movement went hand in hand with the building of state or ecclesiastical (elementary or high) schools, sometimes the praying and teaching open space being connected in the so called “School-Churches”.² In other places different types of cooperatives were located together with the farmers’ circle, even the youth or women association or their library in a commonly built so called Népház (People’s House). Famous architects participated in planning these works of art. Among them Ede Wigand, Károly Kós, Dénes Györgyi. The strong interrelatedness between the educational institution and the cooperatives are based on the lifelong learning program rooted in the universal cooperative principles and the dual identity of cooperative and farmers’ circle membership: they were in the same time parents of schoolchildren, the accountant chief of the local cooperative in general it happened to be the institutor, while the pastor as a moral authority used to be the president. Thus, the people finally had a proper institution, not being subordinated by

¹ In this situation, multinational companies usually gain public procurements, and a series of little companies execute the works. Yet, this phenomenon generates on a side lack of local workforce, a push towards import of workforce, while on the other side millions of citizens work outside the borders of their native country, in the meantime Romania not being able to absorb many billions of European Funds, her administration being saturated or the cities being stuffed with public works and traffic jams caused by the simultaneous works in progress seemingly uncoordinated, public works resulting in city centers and boulevards being paved cyclically each 5-10 years, bicycle routes leading from nowhere to nowhere in the plain field, while remote areas still remain without any basic infrastructure, century old buildings (schools, hospitals, bridges, etc.) failing to arrive in time to be renewed before imploding catastrophically.

² KESERÜ (2018): 135.

any other higher political authority. In general, thus, the collectivity's chariot had its fourth wheel besides the church, the school and the mayor office, an open public space that functioned spontaneously on local level, but connected to a wider network called cooperative movement, adopting-adapting the universally accepted and practiced principles. These principles include democracy in decision-making, voting rights long before peasants were awarded this political right, the right to vote and to be voted and delegated in cooperative congresses at higher fora. Concern for community, LLL or education of members, building of school, buying parceling plots for the benefit of the members were also "best practice examples" frequently adopted by cooperatives in East-Central-European context, too, inspired by the Rochdale Cooperative statutes. Their functional cooperative practice proved to be more paradigmatic than the utopian cooperative projects of Robert Owen, as William King noticed incredibly early. We can observe thus a healthy drive of cooperators towards self-government, but in strong connection with other cells of their kins. Cultural, confessional, or national identification may have had a reinforcing power in this process of networking. As a result, coalitions were concluded amongst the cells belonging to the same community of 'ethical' or 'ethnic' (ideological) values.

After the collapse of Hungary at the end of WWI, extremely narrowed by the Trianon treaty frontiers, Kuno Klebelsberg, a former secretary of state, now as a Ministry for Culture implemented a whole program of rural and urban modernization, including the building of hundreds of schools in the middle of the Hungarian Plane (*puszta*) in the benefit of the peasant populace scattered in distant homesteads.

What the cooperative or the agrarian circle meant for the peasantry, originally and formerly the guild was for the urban craftsmanship: they usually built and defended, maintained a bastion of their medieval town. Later, in the second half of the 19th century, being transformed into craftsmen's unions, they succeeded collectively in building a proper headquarters or even a pension, a canteen for the elderly or widowed kins without any state-support (see the example of Kolozsvár, where they built both), had their own choir, casino and library to their own entertainment. For the second and third fast growing strata of the urban agglomeration, the workers and the clerks (blue- and white collars) a growing need of housing raised the question of town administration involvement in this.³ Vienna was a pioneer in this respect. Budapest followed this model by proposing a greener alternative to the Viennese model: the Wekerle-estate for workers and clerks was based on an architectural program inspired by the garden cities model.⁴ The main concept of the estate was enshrined in a law conceived by the later name-giving person, prime-minister Wekerle, who supported this idea of comfortable human-scale estates for clerks and workers as well, not separated or clustered according to classes, but living together in a garden city where each family should dispose of an own little garden.⁵ This model was extended in the whole country, where so-called clerk-estates raised from the ground already before WWI,

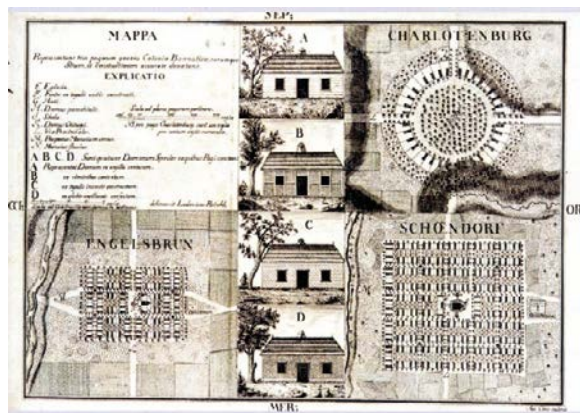
³ TAMÁSKA – KOCSIS 2018.

⁴ GALL 2002. 248–259.

⁵ In the ministerial justification of the law XXIX of 1908, Sándor Wekerle explained that the government's economic measures aimed to promote the universal interests of the nation and increase the well-being of the people. During the construction of the workers' and officials' colony, Sándor Wekerle implemented a new urban planning concept. His financial and urban development plan was based on the post-compromise recovery. The development of large-scale industry was revived, factories were established, and legal, educational, church, health, transport, public welfare, cultural, economic, financial and military institutions serving civil development began to operate.

but unfortunately their development halted due to the human losses of WWI. In the interwar period, huge companies, like the Renner/Dermata in Kolozsvár or the IRIS Porcelain Factory also ordered and constructed nice workers estates for their own employees.⁶ During WWII, family estates were built by the ONCSA (Fund for the Protection of People and Family) in the whole country, including Northern-Transylvania, each estate receiving a proper nursery or/and elementary school.⁷

In conclusion, I consider that these urban estates were rooted in the centuries old tradition of the Habsburg Empire including Hungary and Transylvania, as well as Bucovine since 1775, according to which formerly depopulated areas were repopulated by state authorities (e.g.) subsidized colonization, mainly in the Hungarian Bug Plane and the Banat. Here, geometrically almost perfect shapes (of circles, spider web or square grid) clustered the family house parcels among streets running in circle or radius or straightly or right angles, in the middle of the newly colonized village being built the church (1875/6), the school (1896) and the mayor office optionally with other community-oriented spot (a well, a common fountain, watering trough eventually).⁸



If we compare these Donauschwaben colonies' maps to the 20th century Wekerle and ONCSA estates, we observed that the same symmetrical forms shape the modern blue- and white-collar class' estate. The main concept was conceived by Károly Kós, a very young architect who was inspired as he avowed by the Grosser Ring (Greater Market Square) of Hermannstadt/Nagyszeben/Sibiu and the main square of Klausenburg/Kolozsvár/Cluj. Since all these public goods

⁶ GALL 2002. 308–310. The successor states, too, tried to follow this trend by colonizing workers and settling peasants in order to raise the proportion of the kin-nationals in those regions where the community belonging to the state's ethnic majority happened to be in numeric minority in cities or rural area traditionally populated by the former state's nationals (Hungarians, Germans in case of Transylvania or Banat).

⁷ GALL 2002. 419–420.

⁸ The most perfect example is Charlottenburg and Schöndorf. In this singular circle-shaped village colonized in 1771, the center was decorated with mulberry trees, the leaves being used for the raise of silkworms, the raw material being collected from peasants to be processed in the manufactures run by the Treasury in Temeswar or Arad. The self-sufficient village later became connected to the commuting railway-network densely surrounding Temeswar (the Radna-Temeswar wing deserving this village by the neighboring Beregszó station. All these are paradigmatic for the Wekerle-estate and other worker estates, too, together with the Ring- and Gürtel model developed in Vienna and adapted mainly by the Saxon towns in Transylvania and in Temeswar around the turn-of-the-centuries period.

were partially built by public administration as results of whether public works (in bigger, urban dwellings) or built in a public-private partnership, we may ask at what scale the public works are optimally organized? We can answer this with help of those notions that formerly belonged to the cooperative movement such as self-help help-to self-help as adverse/or collateral to state-help, equity and equality, solidarity, *subsidiarity* and *proportionality*, delegated powers together with the autonomy of the main grass-root-cells, their self-government, and their partnership with higher authorities. The cooperative approach to public goods realized that realized by different means: cooperatively or by public works and this takes us back to the creation of the ILO in 1919 and its programs.

SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

According to article 5 of the TEC and the TEU *subsidiarity* and *proportionality* are essential principles of the EU.⁹ My article intends to present those historical antecedents that were used and applied by the founding parents (not only fathers, but mothers, too) of the European Community as main principles and good practices leading to an “ever-closer union”, to the understanding and practicing of functional cooperation among member-states and candidate states, including their provinces and regions (whose representatives received place in the Committee of Regions founded according to the Maastricht Treaty in 1994). I observed that several principles and ethical values born and practiced inside the universal cooperative movement since 1844 were borrowed a century later by the statesmen and economists during the creation of the Council of Europe and the European Economic Community. Unfortunately, this process of borrowing was not as explicit as the borrowing of the main symbols of the Europeanness (flag, anthem, slogan, all three being borrowed by the CoE to the EEC), thus, as a consequence the new generation of politicians seem to be confused about the intrinsic core values and principles that should constitute the basis of grass root interactive democratic structure and functioning of the European institutions. Because of this lack of knowledge about the core principles such as *subsidiarity* and proportionality overwhelmed by other political panacea (national security and majority voting), the centralization of European Union goes together with the raise of euro-skepticism and as a defensive reaction against the Brussels bureaucratic super-power, the renaissance of narrow “state-sovereignism” and “economic nationalism”. A narrow-minded competition instead of functional cooperation among states and nations leads us all back to the interwar period mainstream international politics of “one for one, and all against all” style, which led the world to a rearmament, remilitarization course instead of disarmament and peace.

Returning to the evolution of European integration lasting for 75 years since the foundation of the CoE in 1949, we must acknowledge that the first 50 years seem to us more coherent than the remaining late 25 years. While the Maastricht TEU realized a three-pillar beautiful ancient Greek temple-like construction, the failure of the European Constitution resulted in substitute acts such as the Lisbon treaty. The latter is a juridical ‘ratatouille of articles’ crowding with

⁹ EUR-LEX. SUBSIDIARITY. The principle of **subsidiarity** is defined in Article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union.

self-repetition, a treaty that even in its denomination, Consolidated Version of the Treaty on EU compared to the original Maastricht Treaty (TEU) not only seems an epigon, but besides confusing everybody by the doubled renumbering of main articles, it is crowded by un-understandable, unintelligible (unfinished) sentences or clone-, doubled sentences.¹⁰ The ratatouille style excelled in articles¹¹ that make reference to subsequent articles and to doubled numbers¹² or re-renumbered articles of the TEU¹³ and the TEC alternately, making even more confusing the whole ‘legal document’.¹⁴ Nevertheless, we emphasize that *subsidiarity* and *proportionality*, as well as *equity*, *mutuality* and *solidarity* together with *self-government* and *autonomy* were and still remain core principles and main values of the universal cooperative movement, too, but in the last 20-25 years these cooperative principles seem to be subdued by power politics and centralized decision-making monopolized by the decision-making triangle of the EU, especially the Commission, while the consultation of people and the role of peripheric organisms such as the Committee of Regions or the Economic and Social Committee as *consultative bodies* is being reduced to almost having no weight at all in decision-making.¹⁵ What is interesting is that even inside the cooperative movement, similar degradation of representative democracy is observed: the management and NCOs of huge cooperatives lead the cooperative enterprises without involving the members of the cooperative.¹⁶ Moreover, in East-Central Europe the Western Cooperative Companies behave just like any other multinational corporation having no incentive to include the producers or the consumers into the core membership despite the Mission Statements and Declaration of Principles that lasted more than 100 years (1895-1995) in the documents of the International Co-operative Alliance since its foundation. Therefore, the treaties are filled with plenty of oxymorons, paradoxes regarding the role of state and the interests of nations: “The Union shall respect the *equality of Member States* before the Treaties as well as *their national identities*, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government. It *shall respect their essential State functions*, including ensuring the *territorial integrity of the State*, maintaining *law and order*, and *safeguarding national security*. National security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State. (Article 4)”. We see thus that national security overwhelmed the process of decentralization, including the self-governance of regions or regional ethnic communities having a long history of traditions and autonomous self-government. While the process of devolution started in the UK since 1997 encouraged the reappraisal of regions and regional stateless nations, the sabotage of Scottish referendum in 2014 and the violent repression against the Catalan referendum in 2017 by the Spanish government discouraged the self-determination

¹⁰ See for doubled sentences in Article 5 (former article 5 TEC *sic!*): Article 5 (ex Article 5 TEC) OJ EU C 115/18. 9.5.2008.

¹¹ OJ EU C 115/18. 9.5.2008. Article 4. 1.

¹² OJ EU C 115/18. 9.5.2008. Article 2 followed by Article 3 (ex Article 2 TEU). Ibidem.

¹³ OJ EU C 115/18. 9.5.2008. Article 3 (ex Article 2 TEU) compared to Article 5 (ex Article 5 TEC) that seems a vitiated reference to TEC instead of TEU. Ibidem.

¹⁴ As the first footnote of the CVTEU emphasized, the renumbering was made in a kind of random style, inconsequently to the table and to the juridical rigor: “These references are merely indicative. For more ample information, please refer to the tables of equivalences between the old and the new numbering of the Treaties.” OJ EU C 115/18. 9.5.2008. Ibidem.

¹⁵ Two protocols annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon (2007).

¹⁶ US SDA.

movements. Again, a midway remained open for Catalans, Basques, Scottish nation: fulfilling their large autonomous status with optimal strength, exercising self-government inside a larger state without heading for secession. The lack of general European national minority protection legislation (nevertheless the main core values contain the protection of minorities in general, not only the national or ethnic minorities) resulted in a civic legislative proposal-action led by the FUEN, but refused by the Commission, to enforce a Commission proposal towards the decision-making organisms: the Council of Ministers and the Parliament in this regard; finally, the case was taken in front of the European Court of Justice still waiting for a final decision. Thus, both the historical regions and the historical national minorities remain in this legislative trap: not recognized and not represented as such at any level. Thus, the member states as nation-states may oversee them, just like at European level, the Commission is forced only by law to consider the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, but that only in case on national parliaments of member-states, other lower organs not being asked, nor consulted, except the Committee of Regions. Administrative frontiers thus overcut genuine ethno-national communities, like for instance the Basques, ethno-cultural national communities not represented or listened to at any level of the European or member-state level decision-making forum.

Concerning the relationship between member-states and the EU, in its original and consolidated form of the merged¹⁷ TEC and TEU, Article 6 enshrined (contained) the main core principles: “Art. 6. paragraph 1. “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.” together with art. 6. paragr. 2., while art. 6. paragr. 3. declared that “the *Union shall respect the national identities* of its Member States”. In the eventual breach of principles mentioned in Article 6(1), a clear political and juridical procedure was previewed by article 7 (amended but not renumbered by the Treaty of Nice) in 6 clear-cut paragraphs. Compared to this clear jurisprudence, the so-called ‘Lisbon treaty’ is more elusive and confusing, mainly because of the inconsistent renumbering and reformulation of articles taken from the TEC and the TEU.

Concerning its functional toolboxes, the fourth paragraph of the same 6th article resumed that “the Union shall provide itself with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through its policies”, while the functional realization of its objectives the Union should take into account the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, thus, in this process local, county and regional authorities should have a salient role as well, not only in decision making, but also in implementation.

This article identifies those good practices or best practices that were observable in the field of materialized functional economic policies, mainly in Public Administration and Public Works that can be considered functional at different subsidiary levels: local, regional and national, later interregional and transnational (connecting two countries at least, like Austria-Hungary and Romania since 1873/1897 via Predeal-Sinaia or Gyimes-pass by railway), even trans-European and trans-Atlantic, even trans- and intercontinental (connecting Europe with Africa and Asia as conceived by the LON (League of Nations) and ILO (International Labour Office), planned and implemented in case of the E60 transcontinental road)¹⁸.

¹⁷ CVTEU 2002.

¹⁸ HUNYADI 2022.

‘FUNCTIONALISM AT WORK’: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

According to the basic principles of the 21st century cohesion programs, ecological problems can only be effectively and efficiently solved through cross-border interregional and interstate cooperation, and by connecting the transport and energy networks. However, as Jean Monnet and David Mitrany formulated, “We are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting men”, these programs and projects do not want to create any political coalitions of states, but very pragmatically, starting with city development, urbanization and rural development, they solve everyday problems. Based on the plans of Public Works Committees they entrusted these programs’ implementation to sane brains, and they aimed for ordinary benefits and palpable results. To quote again Mitrany: “A question which might properly be asked at the outset in considering the fitness of that method for international purposes is this: *Could such functions be organized internationally without a comprehensive political framework? Let it be said, first, that the functional method as such is neither incompatible with a general constitutional framework nor precludes its coming into being. It only follows Burke’s warning to the sheriffs of Bristol that ‘government is a practical thing’ and that one should beware of elaborating constitutional forms “for the gratification of visionaries.” In national states and federations, the functional development is going ahead without much regard to, and sometimes in spite of, the old constitutional divisions*”.¹⁹

The custodian of functionalism therefore emphasizes that, just as the states in the USA, so the states in Europe can participate in one sector and one concrete-pragmatic public works program and investment, without forming a political alliance or federation. Moreover, this pragmatic-functional cooperation does not necessarily result in the creation of a *political entity*. Therefore, in the case of the League of Nations, he considers it a mistake to seek a solution based on border changes (revisionism): “*If the evil of conflict and war springs from the division of the world into detached and competing political units, will it be exorcised simply by changing or reducing the lines of division? Any political reorganization into separate units must sooner or later produce the same effects; any international system that is to usher in a new world must produce the opposite effect of subduing political division. As far as one can see, there are only two ways of achieving that end. One would be through a world state which would wipe out political divisions forcibly; the other is the way discussed in these pages, which would rather overlay political divisions with a spreading web of international activities and agencies, in which and through which the interests and life of all the nations would be gradually integrated. That is the fundamental change to which any effective international system must aspire and contribute: to make international government coextensive with international activities.*”²⁰ Under international activities and programs, he meant transnational programs for public welfare, such as *public works* programs and projects that can be implemented through *public procurement and public investment*, and projects that generate public enthusiasm and create job-opportunities. All other

¹⁹ MITRANY 1943

²⁰ “Viewed in this light, the Covenant of the League is seen to have continued that nineteenth-century tradition. It was concerned above all with fixing in a definite way the formal relationship of the member states and in a measure also of non-members, and only in a very secondary way with initiating positive common activities and action. The great expectation, security was a vital action, but a negative one; its end was not to promote the active regular life of the peoples but only to protect it against being disturbed.” MITRANY 1943. 97.

programs flirting with political-diplomatic and ‘horribile dictu’ with federation, on the other hand, ended up like a straw flame, as they lacked pragmatic foundations and a functional approach and went completely against the mainstream isolationist nationalist-statist fashion. Actually, not even the pacifist and pan-European organizations aiming at intellectual cooperation have survived from that era, with the exception of one or two academic-university institutions (e.g. the Jules Rampard Institute of International Relations established by the Carnegie Foundation in Geneva).

Founded in 1919 as an autonomous organization of the League of Nations (hereinafter LoN or League), the International Labor Organization (hereinafter ILO) is one of the few international organizations still operating today that survived the League of Nations in addition to the Rome-based FAO, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, which merged in 1919, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (1888) or even the International Cooperative Alliance founded in 1895. Other professional international organizations, e.g. the International Postal Union has also existed since then, but it is not a universal, but rather a professional organization). All of these continue to operate under the auspices of the UN, which was founded in 1945, or as associated category A or B consulting organizations, maintaining their headquarters in Geneva for a long time. The ILO became an advisory body and specialized agency of the United Nations upon the dissolution of the League of Nations in 1946. The ILO not only gained importance in the promotion of workers’ rights and social emancipation, but also played a prominent role in solving the effects of the economic crisis; it came up with the introduction, financing, and coordination of transcontinental, transnational infrastructural development programs to deal with the financial crisis.²¹

The ILO developed and implemented a trans-European public procurement investment that created an infrastructure that is still used and useful in the 21st century.²² The E60 road leading from London to Istanbul and the network of its branches, as well as the modernized Central European railway infrastructure, were realized public works investments that were planned, coordinated and implemented by the ILO together with the state administration and transnational companies in the 1930s.²³ No one could and was not able to formulate an idea similar to this project, neither in scope nor in execution. All the Pan-European drafts and the proposals of the Central European Economic Conferences initiated by Julius Meinel and Elemér Hantos (Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftstagung)²⁴ remained, without exception, at the rhetorical level, nothing of these lofty plans has been realized apart from printing them on paper or debated on international venues, congresses, and conferences.

As defined by the founding fathers and its theorists: functionalism excelled according and thanked to David Mitrany and Jean Monnet, mainly in the interwar and the post-war period, under the aegis of those supranational organizations that existed that time, starting mainly under the aegis of the International Labor Organization and its Office (abbreviated as ILO). Two personalities, in fact the most famous functionalist thinkers, Jean Monnet and Mitrany were very close to these commissions. Monnet – as few know about it – was at that time Deputy

²¹ MACARTNEY 1925

²² BADENOCH – FICKERS 2010. 47-77.

²³ SCHIPPER 2009.

²⁴ GODEFROY 2018.

Secretary-General of the League of Nations during the Eric Drummond era (between 1919 and 1924) during the first half of the Drummond-decade/ Together with David Mitrany, professor of economics of Romanian origin at the London School of Economics, they were present at the founding of the now forgotten institutions within the League of Nations. Besides these two short-lived commissions, a Pleiades of international organizations founded in Geneva well before the Versailles Treaty system worked together with the post-Versailles period organizations, which all together can be considered the predecessors of the international organizations and European institutions. In a narrower European and East-Central European teleology, a crisis-resilience and redressement think tank was also founded under the name of C.E.U.E. This commission was created inside the League of Nations based on the General Assembly decision on the proposal of the French Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand, under the name of Commission d'Étude pour l'Union Européenne. This *Study Commission for the European Union* held its first meeting with 27 member-state delegates in 1930.²⁵ Later it constituted even an East-Central European section (Committee) next year under the name: Comité Permanente d'Études Économiques des États de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale (abbreviated: CPEEECO) that functioned also since 1931. These international organizations, committees bore not only in their name the "European Union" syntagm, but also the main ideas and principles that would be reborn two decades later in the form of ECSC and EEC during the fifties. Based on their lifework and their theoretic writings and practice, we can reevaluate the importance of these early commissions. Probably their ineffectiveness stimulated both thinkers and practitioners, Mitrany and Monnet to be more severe regarding political delegates and deputies of the member-states in the early period of the Coal and Steel Community when they decided that a High Authority should be independent of any and above all national government. The former inefficiencies of the League organisms compared to the more functional ILO may have influenced them in this seemingly illuminated absolutist centralizing direction.

Public administration and public works based on public procurements are based on long traditions in each country, yet the transnational functional projects remain less known in historiography. Nevertheless, the main public works also remained in shadow until recently in public knowledge, mainly because of revendicative public policies of successor states oriented towards contesting and concurring the realization of former multinational empires, denigrated as "prison of people" in case of Austria-Hungary (by Benes during WWI). Yet, if we measure the weight of public works and their effectiveness, we can assert that Austria-Hungary had a very efficient public administration and public services reached almost every remote area proportionally to the microregion's importance for economy or society, of course. As the central-European analytics proved, the Saint Germain and the Trianon treaties broke up a large, centripetally organized economic union into small, amputated parts reunited with other parts of the successor states (Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia) that were not able to integrate these areas in the short two decades of the interwar period. Of course, each of the successor states made efforts in this direction, but given the almost holistically organized system they inherited from the former Monarchy, including its legal system, the Judicial Institutions, the Hospitals and Clinics, education and transport-communication networks, the capitals and governments of the successor states put

²⁵ CEUE 1930.

emphasis on elevating the other, more remote parts of their states, in the same time period channeling their population's surplus towards this ethnically different, but economically more prosperous new provinces, at least in case of Romania.²⁶ Nevertheless, Romania had also a strong tradition of public works, mainly under the reign of Carol the First, the country's first king, originated from Sigmaringen from the House of Hohenzollern, who brought during his royalty architects and engineers from all over Europe to build a modern state. The Romanian Kingdom had good economic and financial, but also cultural-intellectual, research and university relations with her neighbors, mainly Austria-Hungary, Germany, Belgium, France and the British Empire, since the successor of the King had an English born wife, the later Queen Mary, while the intelligentsia studied at universities mainly in France, Germany and Austria-Hungary. Just like Russia, Romania had a very modernist elite who followed the Western paradigms in each field of public life, including public works and administration.

In the following I will present some representative examples of public works and several private-public investments that were based on public procurement at different levels: local, regional, national, or international with study-cases taken from Romania or her provinces that belonged prior to WWI to Austria-Hungary including programs run by ethno-national communities or ecclesiastical institutions autonomously without state-help or state-support. Nevertheless, a benevolent self-taxation could help these projects: whether the banks and cooperatives contributed with 1 or 2 percent of their profits to a common fund sustaining a common Economic-financial review and another 1 percent to sustain the cultural literary association, whether the Israelite communities contributed with their not only symbolic 'shekel' to sustain national programs. Some of them contributed to local rural development or urbanization, others to the development of road or railway infrastructure, a few of them to interregional or cross border/transnational infrastructure.²⁷

Public works categories include at ascending level of territorial scope:

- at local level:

- rural development: homestead, farm colonies, schools, infrastructure, people's house, cooperative headquarters, Social and public services cooperatives²⁸

- urban development investment: green belts, green areas, parks, public lighting, gas plant, sewer and drinking water network channel, street paving, asphaltting, hydropower plants, water towers, public transport, public kitchen, people's house, garden cities, suburbs, Boulevards (kőrutak, sugárutak, Ringe und Gürtel), estates for workers or clerks (Tisztviselő- és munkástelepek): Kőváry estate in Kolozsvár/Cluj, Wekerle-estate in Kispest, Budapest, Hangya and FAKSZ colonies, later, since 1940/41 ONCSA estates, colonies,

- at local village level: from the point of view of private-public investment we can talk here about two important investments: (ecclesiastic or state) elementary schools and polyvalent People's houses.

²⁶ LIVEZEANU 1995.

²⁷ HUNYADI 2019. The trans-European networks also had their antecedents in the interwar period, and were destined to reach intercontinental (African, Asian regions) scopes, too, but WWII inhibited and halted that outreach.

²⁸ DÜLFER 1994. 750-754. In the USA there are 11,000 Social and Public Services cooperatives which represent the biggest co-op sector in terms of number of firms. Financial Services rank second, followed by Utilities, and Commercial Sales and Marketing.

The church community mainly built elementary schools out of their own resources and a large building inscription was painted on the front of the new building advertising that for example the Lutheran-evangelic church built and sustained this institution (Evangelische Volksschule, Ev. Elemi Népiskola). In other cases, the state also constructed and sustained elementary schools in villages, communes, in this case a simple inscription being on the frontside of the building: Állami (Elemi) Népiskola. In Transylvania, usually, the school was built immediately in the neighborhood of the church (see the case in Holdvilág, Kerc, Kisdisznód, Vermes).

The People's houses were used as headquarters of the dairy, consumer and credit cooperatives in the same time, in different rooms, sometimes giving place also for a service flat in favor of a clerk family; these buildings also housed the youth association or other ecclesiastical society, having a library-shelf as well, but more and more often a stage was also built in a larger hall as a place for community events. Several People's Houses were projected and built between 1907–1914 in Transylvania, mainly in Hungarian and Saxon villages (by architects Ede Wigand and Fritz Balthes). Sometimes the Agricultural Ministry subventioned 10-20% of the building costs, but the main part was funded together by the local associations, cooperatives, coownership, the common (közbirtokosság), and the ecclesiastical community.

- at town/municipality and/or county level: town hall or/and county hall, bridges, roads: macadam, asphaltting of streets, roads. In several towns the Vienna and Budapest development model became paradigmatic for their own development.²⁹

- at regional level: commuter railway, local interest railways (around Arad, Temeswar), mining colony with public services (see the Zsil/Jil-valley mining zone in Austria-Hungary, then after WWI becoming part of Romania)

- at national level: road and railway network, airport network, artefacts: bridges, tunnels, viaducts, fluvial and maritime ports, Danube-bridges (several were built by the state during the thirties in Romania).

- transnational level: state border crossing points, crossborder transport infrastructure, customs house (I give examples of crossborder railway connection plans and motorway/public road customs service offices planned along the E60 road)

- at interregional level: Trans-Pyrenées, Trans-Alpine tunnels, railways, cross border bridges and river channels, especially after former connections were dismantled by force of Trianon Treaty (bridges across the Maros-Mureş River in the Banat, railway downsizing between Belgrad and Budapest, formerly, before the Trianon treaty in function)

I believe that this transcontinental project³⁰ can be paradigmatic in its quality and transnational scope even today when the EU Cohesion Fund finances the construction of trans-European (TEN-T) transport channels. This early historical good example of mutual consultation and coordination between the development programs of neighboring states should also be emphasized, as some Eastern European neighboring states find it difficult to coordinate the rhythm of their large infrastructural developments even in the 21st century, agreements seem to be very difficult in the case of cross-border rail or road routes. The Great Depression of 1929 had many causes and consequences, which will not be detailed here. Among the constructive legal remedies, however, the states and international institutions introduced to mitigate and deal with the

²⁹ See more on Transylvanian urban development and public works here: FAZAKAS – FERENCZI – FODOR – GÁL 2021.

³⁰ LONAG COL 167. VALSINGER.

devastation of the financial and economic crisis have very rarely been the center of attention in economic historiography.

- at transcontinental level: Trans-Siberian railway, Trans-American road and railway network, E60, under the auspices of the LoN, financed after public procurement and implemented by different companies from Europe, TEN-Ts³¹

- at intercontinental level: E60 projected via Istanbul to Cape Town and Bombay but unfinished because of WWII

If we look at the mainstream of American tourism prior to WWI, we can observe that the most Eastern destination in Europe's tourism were the cities of Budapest, Sankt Petersburg, and Moscow. In the interwar period this may have changed but not too much, in favour of Romania and Yugoslavia instead of Soviet Russia. This change is proven by the direction of the E60 via Oradea, Cluj, Bucharest to Constanța, continued the sea towards Istanbul. These trends were halted by WWII and restarted lately, only after the reconstruction of Western economies with the help of the Marshall Fund coordinated by the OEEC, mainly by connecting the traditional tourist-frequented region of Europe: the Alpine region via the railway and public transport tunnels and road networks, finally by the Channel-Tunnel connecting France and the United Kingdom. The Schengen agreement (1985) stimulated the free movement of persons between the member states of the EEC, since 1993 rebaptized EU, two years before the postponed entering into force of the Schengen Treaty (1995).

At the end of the twenties, French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, and soon Prime Minister himself, held many lectures and published about the "European Union" as the honorary president of the Pan-European movement. After his statements before the French House of Representatives (July 16 and 31, 1929), his most important speech on this issue was the economic unification of Europe, which he delivered at the opening ceremony of the 10th General Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva on September 5, 1929, a month and a half before the Wall Street crash/collapse.³² This speech resulted in countless echoing and approving articles throughout Europe, as finally an influential diplomat, the pacifist who had brought down the Briand-Kellogg Pact a year earlier, defined economic reconciliation (reduction of customs duties, removal of trade barriers) and economic cooperation as prerequisites. All sane politicians, economists and statesmen interpreted the basic principles and proposals of the functionalist speech delivered 2 years after the World Economic Congress as the most solid (economic) foundation. However, the hand of fate broke this initiative in two ways, which ultimately only had one or two processes left in the trunk, and the European Reconstruction Plan (better known by its publicist name "Marshall") (1947/48), adopted by the American Congress barely two decades later, was unfortunately relegated to the background. and was forgotten.

Briand's speech on the economic union of European states on September 5, 1929, before the General Assembly of the League of Nations, could not achieve its goal: it was not written down, nor was it elaborated in detail. His original strategy was reversed in the Memorandum, putting the proposal for political unity, which by all indications was unfeasible, in the foreground, and relegating economic cooperation to the background.³³ The majority of responses to the ques-

³¹ HUNYADI 2019

³² LONAG R 3589 50/19816/19816 Projet d'union fédérale européenne. Mémorandum.

³³ SCHIRMANN 2000. 55-61.

tionnaire accompanying the Memorandum sent to European governments complained about this, stressing that they would have preferred to undertake a gradual, economic and commercial rapprochement to a *deus ex machina*-type high-diplomatic (“hard-power” type), but an unacceptable union, thus this project also collapsed due to public opinion and nationalist conditioning of states.

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In the same line of thought, we must mention Edouard Herriot’s book in Paris in 1930 (*Les Éditions Rieder*), which reflected on the same problems.³⁴ First of all, regarding the clarification of the idea of European coopération, on page 54, in point I. a), his first question is this: “Faudrait-il viser à étendre la coopération européenne au delà du champ économique dans le champ politique? Should we aim to extend European cooperation beyond the economic field into the political field?”³⁵ This question became important in the context that both the World Economic Conference held in 1927 and the governments of European states formulated similar attitudes and recommendations. They were very skeptical of any political goal, whether it was a federal government or a unitary state on a European level, or separate entities within a larger entity somewhat similar to what existed at the time within the British Commonwealth.³⁶ The following questions raised by Herriot and addressed to European governments in his book raised the question of the geographical, or more precisely geopolitical, boundaries of European cooperation: does it include Soviet Russia or Turkey (points II. a. and b), and in the third (III.) point he addressed the forms of cooperation with the following potential players a) the British Empire with its autonomous dominions; b) colonies or dependencies of European states not endowed with autonomy, provided they have representative governments, or c) areas controlled by metropolis states; d) USA and other parts of the world. Regarding the coordination of European cooperation, Herriot is the IV. point, he also raised the question/proposal whether it would be useful to hold regular summits/meetings of foreign ministers in Geneva under the auspices of

³⁴ HERRIOT 1930.

³⁵ HERRIOT 1930. 54.

³⁶ HERRIOT 1930. 54.

the League of Nations, where issues of European cooperation can be discussed and debated (it is not difficult to recognize in these proposals the composition of the later Council of Foreign Ministers of the EEC and then the EU, and to think of the European Council, informally convened for two decades, but regularly convened from 1972, as a meeting of heads of state and government).

Another weakness of the Briand Memorandum on the Federal Union of Europe was that European states were ultimately afraid of losing some of their economic sovereignty to a higher power/authority, as Sir Arthur Salter, chairman of the Economic Commission of the League of Nations, points out. On the other hand, on the international agenda, Briand was personally aware that a specific regional customs union would threaten the universalism of the League:

“The policy of the European Union, which is supposed to be the first bond of solidarity between European governments, actually represents a concept that is completely opposite to what once defined Europe: the creation of customs unions, which seek to eliminate customs internally, but at the same time put up a stricter barrier to on the borders of the customs community, that is to say, they should actually be a means of fighting against states outside this union. The creation of such a procedure would be incompatible with the principles of the League of Nations.”³⁷ Nevertheless, under international law it would have been possible to create regional organizations. Indeed, the League of Nations Pact (unfortunately, the charter included in the Treaty of Versailles was not called a Charter) did not prohibit regional agreements and arbitration, but the apparatus of the international organization did not really encourage their creation.³⁸

Sir Arthur Salter added further critical comments to this paradox of theories as follows:

„ It was unfortunate that the perception of the “United States of Europe” often took an anti-American form. In fact, however, its obvious meaning was total free trade within Europe, the Zollverein of the countries of Europe. The problem was that “the Zollverein was often preached, not infrequently attempted, but never carried out, unless the conditions for an overwhelming political motive and an extremely close political association were (would have been) between the countries involved.”³⁹ As we know, only World War II’s devastation and the early Cold War Soviet threat provided the framework and opportunity for this cooperation among Western European countries, otherwise, except for the customs union between Belgium and Luxembourg from 1921, no other customs union were established anywhere until the BENELUX association of 1944/48. On the other hand, there were prototypes of customs union in the Habsburg monarchy (from 1850), which also preceded the happy times of peace, and in the Zollverein period quoted here verbatim (from 1833 to 1964, until the association of Bavaria). The customs union plan attempted by Germany and Austria, burdened with debt and reparations, in 1931 was foiled precisely by French grandeur and jealousy, and the following year, the Central European replica aired by Tardieu was thwarted by the jealousy of the other three European powers, and it was doomed from the start due to the incompleteness of the French plan. Nor was it conducive to taking the aired Central European cooperation plans seriously the deliberate omission of Germany from Tardieu’s Central European customs union. Germany losing its colonies became,

³⁷ LONA R3589. Les premiers Européens.

³⁸ THÉRY 1998. Art. 21 of the Pacte: “Les engagements internationaux tels que les traités d’arbitrage et les ententes régionales comme la doctrine Monroe, qui assurent le maintien de la paix, ne sont considérés comme incompatibles avec aucune de dispositions du présent Pacte.”

³⁹ SALTER 1933. 91-92.

due to German economic geographical proximity, slightly, but again increasingly strongly not only latently influencing Central Europe in the field of foreign trade, (not to mention the self-isolation and Hungarian phobia of the Little Entente states, which halted any cooperation with the Hungarians).

A month before Briand's speech, Mihail Manoilescu, the former Undersecretary of State for Romanian Finance, later the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, published an article entitled "Statele Unite ale Europei" (United States of Europe).⁴⁰ His article was skeptical of idealistic approaches, but in the economic field he listed several arguments in favor of European cooperation, especially with regard to the construction of the European customs union. In this regard, the German government also maintained this, emphasizing the positional advantage of the Western European metropolis states that possessed vast colonial territories together with their vast colonial resources, while compared to them, the Baltic, Scandinavian, or the Balkan states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland and, finally, Germany did not have (or have none left) such a hinterland. This fact made it very difficult for the customs break and the elimination of customs walls.

The following year, in 1930, G. Tașcă, Romania's minister in Berlin, published an article with a similar tone about the so-called "Economic Foundation of the United States of Europe".⁴¹ In it, he emphasized the difficulties of forming a consensus on a common and unified tariff of the states that make up the potential union, as well as the arguments about the problems and difficulties of distributing customs revenues between member states. In the same article, the author referred to the ongoing Estonian-Latvian Union and the chances and potential of the customs union of the Little Entente, to which Poland could have joined. However, all of this was fulfilled in the last decade of the twentieth century, even then only partially (that is, not in the form of a customs union, but in the form of CEFTA, the Central European Free Trade Agreement). Nine decades ago, however, the French (Pawłowsky) opposed the Austrian delegate's (Breja) proposals regarding the Austro-German customs union for political reasons. It was recognized in principle that a possible European Union should be created, but this should be centered around a hub consisting of the Benelux countries, Germany, and France, and only after that, concentrically, the customs union including France and Germany can be supplemented by the accession of others. The opposite direction and initiative was therefore uncomfortable and unacceptable for the Western powers. It is striking that the following year, in 1931, the Curtius-Schoeber (German-Austrian customs union) plan was indeed rejected and destroyed by the Hague International Committee (by 8 votes to 7).

As argued by Manoilescu and Tasca, Salters emphasized: "The commercial and customs policy of the European states is so central and a key element of their general policy, and the revenue from customs constitutes such a central and significant part of their income, that they could hardly accept that a common political authority should decide for the whole of Europe what (external) tariffs should be imposed, to determine the manner and proportions of the imposed duties and tariffs. All of these powers would give this potential supranational authority as much or more power than the national governments of all countries. On the other hand, it would practically reduce the latter to the status of self-government/local authority."⁴² The expert prediction half a century ahead

⁴⁰ MANOILESCU 1929.

⁴¹ TAȘCĂ 1930.

⁴² SALTER 1933.

seems to be confirmed if we consider the long-term reluctant EU partnership of the United Kingdom, which joined the EEC in 1973, then we consider the impasse regarding the Irish-British customs border after the actual secession in 2020 after the Brexit referendum in the light of Salter's reasoning. However, it should also be noted that as long as the Western capitalist states were relying on / usurping the resources of their colonies, they were not forced to compromise with each other in Europe, and at the same time as decolonization, due to the threat of the Cold War, they felt forced initially to first sectoral and then more general customs union reconciliation during the 1950s and 1960s. European founding fathers (Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Paul-Henri Spaak, Altiero Spinelli) who were already active in the twenties and thirties and professed Christian-democratic and socialist-liberal values as statesmen maybe that wouldn't have worked either. However, the combined effect of the three factors listed above (loss of colonies, external threat, solidary and experienced, politically stable, strong statesmen) was absent in Europe in the 1930s, just as the fourth factor was not present either: the USA and a military alliance that would provide the necessary capital for reconstruction, as well as a suitable security policy environment for the gradual, step-by-step creation of the ideal "European Union". If we look at the human factor, the Briand-Stresemann tandem ended with the early death of the two, and the Pan-European and other similar movements were only able to produce a spiritual-intellectual effervescence, and personalities with a functionalist orientation were pushed to the periphery even within their own countries (Hantos Elemér) and they were very often disavowed by their own governments. Finally, the Supreme Council of the League of Nations, since the representatives of the colonial states were the voice in it, was not too interested or at all interested in weakening the organization, which was already bleeding from many wounds and standing on clay feet, even by supporting the creation of regional groups of countries.⁴³

Meanwhile, the Central European cooperation plans published a little later between 1931 and 1933 (the plans of Benes, Maniu and Tardieu, the British constructive plan) were, by all indications, just diplomatic sounding speeches intended to scatter dust, even in writing, these documents were formulated and remained only in a sketchy, convoluted form, but at the same time, each time one of the great powers regularly vetoed it, but it is no wonder that none of them yielded results, or even started at all.⁴⁴ Even the Little Entente was not able to go beyond the military-defense alliance and complement it with any more comprehensive and reciprocal economic agreement. Instead, all the Central and Eastern European states successively left behind the French influence that was midwived at the time of its creation/expansion in Versailles and entered the assembly line of German foreign trade interests.

At the level of the League of Nations, turning back on general disarmament, it gave the opportunity for general equality of arms, In the end, the international organization was also powerless against the aggressive behavior of Japan, Italy and Germany, the arms embargo and economic sanctions dwarfed compared to the resources of the occupied (Masuria, Ethiopia) and recovered (left bank of the Rhine, Saar region) territories and their associated prestige, and the powers classified as aggressors stepped out (or excluded) from the League of Nations.⁴⁵

⁴³ LONAG MOTTA 1931.

⁴⁴ BARIÉTY 1997.

⁴⁵ SCHIRMANN 2000. 55–61.

Within the framework of the League of Nations, the Green International and the Conferences of Agrarian States, which were created at that time, managed to cooperate on a somewhat more functional and practical level in the search for and finding small solutions in the field of recovery from the world crisis., de they competed fruitlessly and fruitlessly to obtain the preferences (preferential tariffs) of the Western and colonial powers, especially in the midst of the impossibility of disposing of their agricultural surplus. Western states also faced the crisis of their agrarian population, so they mainly sought to favor their colonies and reserved their favors for their own agricultural sector.

Only one path remained untouched: the functionalist approach. According to the quoted discourses of Romanian-born British David Mitrany and Aristide Briand and Stresemann, this meant that tangible goods (public goods) had to be offered to the citizens, the Europeans, such as the development of roads, railways, communication infrastructure and tourist services. Another viable alternative to public works were the designing of green garden cities or grey concrete suburban agglomerations. Its facilities where anyone can meet citizens of other nations, through railways and roads, transport channels that connect nations and cross borders, instead of building high trade walls, tariffs and customs or worse, they would propagate hatred and mistrust between nations on a cultural, educational, political level. Based on the American model and previous pragmatic proposals, new programs and public works projects were started and implemented mainly under the auspices of the League of Nations and the ILO (in partnership with professional organizations) and with international/transnational financial support (BIS- Bank of International Settlements).

As we have already presented the lesser-known story of the construction of the trans-European transport channel⁴⁶, this time we mentioned the institutions, international bodies, committees and brainstorming ideas that were active players in these programs implemented throughout the European continent in the 1930s, two decades before the European Coal and Coal Community or EEC, which was finally established in the 1950s. The formula of the European Union appeared for the first time in 1930 in the official name of an international/transnational body, in addition to various forms of literary and journalistic articles of the 19th and 20th centuries. In the past, however, the formula United States of Europe was not uncommon either, and it echoes in the name of a magazine and in the title of many articles. Other institutions gathered under the umbrella of the League of Nations also used this term continuously.

THE STUDY COMMISSION FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PERMANENT ECONOMIC STUDY COMMITTEE OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

In such not exactly friendly circumstances, two trends remained in the direction of recovery from the depression after the global economic crisis. One is the solution-finding and crisis-investigation work process of the C.E.U.E. and its Central European Delegate Assembly, the other is the launch of trans-European investments developed, financed and coordinated by the ILO and the League of Nations, which are proving to be much more functional and effective.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ HUNYADI 2019.

⁴⁷ LONAG R3589-R3594. Study Commission for the European Union

Pursuant to Article 21 of the Pact of the League of Nations (Pacte de la SDN), on September 23, 1930, the Study Commission for the European Union (Commission d'Étude pour l'Union Européenne, Study Commission for the European Union) was established based on the resolution of the General Assembly, delegates from 27 member states held their first official working session.⁴⁸ Within a year, a sub-unit/department for East Central Europe was created within the C.E.U.E. and has been operating since 1931 under the name Comité Permanente d'Études Économiques des États de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale (abbreviated CPEEEECO), Permanent Economic Study Committee of East-Central Europe. In May 1931, the CEUE discussed the economic crisis already raging in Europe and ways to overcome it, including agricultural problems, production and commodity exchange problems, the possibility of economic non-aggression, while the more specific questions were referred to four expert committees and discussed in more detail. The C.E.U.E. together with the East Central European Permanent Economic Research Committee (CPEEEECO) tried to find and show alternatives for the East Central European agrarian states. Similar to the conferences of the Eastern agrarian states taking place at the same time, the recommendations and suggestions of these studies were all “dead letters” and remained fruitless, mainly due to the universal/global crisis and the economic egoism of the Western states. Romania, on the other hand, received loans to offset its negative balance of payments. League of Nations experts led by economist Charles Rist were delegated to the side of the Romanian government to supervise the government's economic and financial policy. At the same time, the modernization of Romania's infrastructure (located in the territories acquired in 1918, added to the Old Kingdom) and its integration into the trans-European transport channels started, comprising the completion of the Romanian branch of the E60 London-Istanbul road and the plans and blueprints for the large-scale modernization of the Romanian Railways were prepared at that time (the latter, however, with the exception of the Administrative Palace of the Romanian Railway Company, which was already covered between 1946-49. they were only partially implemented in the midst of socialism, e.g. electrification of the Ploiești-Câmpina-Brașov railway section, despite the fact that in the first half of the thirties, in addition to the blueprints, their detailed cost plan was already on paper). The C.E.U.E. established two sub-committees to assess unemployment problems and a credit sub-committee to oversee public works programs at European level, proposed by ILO Director-General Albert Thomas in his memorandum. He submitted his plans to the ILO Council in April 1931, and later the C.E.U.E. Study Committee. In the second half of 1931, Thomas added the proposals of Francis Delaisi to his plans, and at the beginning of 1932, the “Comité fédéral de coopération européenne” was officially established around Delaisi and Emile Borel, which collaborated with the League of Nations' Haas Committee on Public Works Programs.⁴⁹

The construction of the European motorway network as part of the European Public Works was planned by Albert Thomas, director of the ILO, and Francis Delaisi. The Road Committee of the League of Nations operated between 1921 and 1938, working closely with international and national Touring Clubs, developing grandiose plans together with them. According to the plans, the London-Istanbul trans-European road has designated Calcutta in the eastern direction

⁴⁸ C.E.U.E. 1930.

⁴⁹ GUÉRIN 1996. 70–75.

and Capetown in the southern direction, gaining extraordinary effervescence and enthusiasm among automobile enthusiasts and in front of the modernity-loving public.

It is a fact that the use of automobiles spread primarily among business owners, aristocrats, and entrepreneurs, but politicians and statesmen did not despise the comfort provided by automobiles either. Just like horse racing in the 19th century, in the 20th century, especially between the two world wars, automobile rallies and competitions gained countless fans.. Omnibuses appeared and became widespread in the cities, and transport companies operated more heavy-duty vehicle fleets because of the boom in goods transport and consumption. In parallel with all this, the “de-dusting” of the roads in the city centers and larger cities has also become an increasingly common expectation: cobbled, yellow ceramic-brick-covered streets, asphalted roads first appeared in Western European cities and capitals, then in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. in Temeswar) as well. Macadam (crushed gravel roads and dusty roads), gravel and dirt roads remained characteristic only of the second-, third-, and fourth-rank roads. But also in this area, for example, the “big dust” rally race on the Cluj-Erdőfelek roof round-trip route was considered spectacular, at which, in addition to bank managers from Cluj (e.g. László Bocsánczy), counts (Béldi), large landowners (Mocsonyi) and representatives of the gentry, the young Prince Nicolae, who graduated from Eaton in England, often appeared and competed (after the death of his father, King Ferdinand, between 1927 and 1930 he was a member of the Council of Regency). Unfortunately, League loans did not have a sub-program developed for urban development, but the sections of the trans-European causeway crossing cities also put a lot of pressure on the city, from the point of view that the city management tried to adapt to the development (mainly in Szeged, Hungary).⁵⁰ The local history of this large continental, transnational project is unfortunately mostly unknown, but the local newspapers and magazines still hide a lot of interesting things, so it’s worth turning the page and looking for the relevant newspaper or magazine articles, often decorated with photos (“Where there is no road, the cars are taken through the tunnel by train.”, as the article illustrating Switzerland⁵¹ showed) and caricatures.⁵²

Romania received financial support for the modernization and development of its railway infrastructure: this project benefited the entire economy, including agriculture, since warehouses, grain depots/silos had to be built (according to the plans and cost plans) at railway crossings or seaports reached by the railway .

THE PUBLIC WORKS IN HUNGARY AND ROMANIA FINANCED AND COORDINATED BY THE ILO AND THE LEAGUE

After the First World War, Romania acquired new territories from Russia and Austria-Hungary, together with these new territories, Romania as a successor state inherited long railway networks and rolling stock.⁵³

⁵⁰ ATMAT. 1934. 5. 12-13. Nemzetközi elismerés kormányunknak és a Magyar Touring Clubnak.

⁵¹ ATMAT. 1934. 3. 6. Ezeregy szépségű Svájc.

⁵² ATMAT 1932. August; 1934. 11. 14-15; 1935. 10. sz. 241.

⁵³ ER 1943. 53.

	Area km ²	The population of the state/province in 1938	Length of railway network	Length (km) of railway line per square kilometer	Length of railway line per thousand inhabitants in km
ROMANIA	295049	19750004	11375	0,039	0,576
Old Kingdom	137903	9833161	4094	0,030	0,416
Bessarabia	44422	3147646	1218	0,027	0,387
Bukovina	10442	917445	595	0,057	0,649
Transylvania (including Partium and Banat)	102282	5851752	5468	0,053	0,934

Romania had to integrate these networks and maintain the 12 thousand km long network. Both passenger transport and freight transport increased in volume: at the end of the 1930s, Romania had 5,000 passenger and 64,000 freight wagons. Traction was provided by 3,482 locomotives and 223 railway coal cars.⁵⁴ In connection with this quantitative boom, when cargo transportation almost doubled in 15 years, 1923-1938, from 2476697 thousand tons to 4380335 thousand tons, and the profit jumped from 1846656 thousand lei to 8068374 lei, the Romanian Railway Company had to implement investments and improvements in order to improve the quality of the network and services. Romania had the opportunity to receive an international loan guaranteed by the League of Nations. The Romanian Railway Company sent the project documentation to the Secretariat of the League of Nations in order to win the grant with its application documentation. These plans reveal a lot about the situation of the Romanian railway network between the two world wars, including the location and condition of stations, warehouses, tunnels, bridges and works of art located along the lines, in the vicinity of main stations, intersections or river-sea ports.

The Romanian government requested and received League loans to rebalance the balance of payments and the household, overseen by an international commission led by the French economist Charles Rist. During the reconstruction program for the modernization of Romania's national railway network: it received loans and involved ILO experts in the planning process. During this period, the electrification of the busiest section was also planned: the Câmpina-Predeal-Braşov line, but this finally took place only thirty years later. They also planned to buy electric locomotives (16 vehicles). The C.F.R. The administrative palace of the Romanian Railway Company, even though the plans had already been submitted to the League of Nations, was only completed at the end of the 1940s (it has been standing ever since, because it was placed on earthquake-proof, rolling foundations), with a budget estimated at 300 million Romanian lei. The archived collection of detailed blueprint volumes and cost plans presented to Secretary General Sir Eric Drummond through the Royal Embassy of Romania accredited to the League of Nations provides an opportunity to explore every detail of this national public works program supported by international funding. The maps illustrating the Romanian railway network also included the cost plans in chapters: a) the lines to be electrified (there is no data on the estimated cost), b) with the bridges to be

⁵⁴ ER 1943. 62-69.

built, which will cost 1.55 billion lei, c) the network dealing with displays, data transmission and data centralization, cost 860 million lei, d) the administrative palace for 300 million, e) the grain warehouses (silos) to be built at junctions and ports are included in the project files submitted by the Romanian government with an estimated cost of 440 million lei. The total cost of all this was estimated at 24 billion lei, i.e. 732 million gold francs, and the public works were planned for at least 10 years and would have employed 50,000 workers per day. The scope/proportion of foreign products and foreign labor was estimated at 25-30%.⁵⁵

On June 13, 1933, the Economic and Monetary Conference of the League of Nations discussed the problems and international issues that had been observed in connection with public work. Here, the League's investigative committee submitted a report to the Communications and Transit Organization's committee dealing with issues related to public works and national technical equipment. It gave detailed lists of public works programs and classification according to how useful they are in terms of absorbing unemployment, contributing to the development of large areas, and in terms of providing the technical tools necessary for national economic development; it was emphasized that in most countries it is absolutely necessary to expand the drinking water and wastewater systems on a large scale. The countries for which these programs, several of which involved international cooperation, were: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ In this group of countries, only the electrification of the Campina-Brassó railway section from Romania is among the projects to be supported/financed. The detailed rationale for the 280 million Swiss franc program included the reduction of unemployment, the improvement of communication between different parts of the country, the acceleration of works promoting international traffic, the plan for new railway sections connecting Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland is also included with detailed cost plans, blueprints, on the attached maps also highlighted.

The same League committee nominated the following for support among other East Central European projects: Austria: programs for the modernization of long-distance routes (estimated at 95 million Swiss francs), Bulgaria for flood protection and river control, road and bridge construction (1.3 plus 11 million), Estonia for road and bridge construction (8.1 m), Hungary's national road reconstruction program (35 million), Latvia for construction of roads and bridges (98.5 million) and railway lines (33.4 million), Poland various hydraulic works in total 113,9 million worth, construction and development of roads and bridges (186), railway lines (CHF 155 million), telephone cable system (78 m), electrification works for Poland (116 m), Romania has submitted a tender request for the grandiose and complex investment estimated at 280 million Swiss francs. Yugoslavia proposed projects in 4 topics: improvement of the road network (137.5), railway lines and the Danube bridge (50.5), port of Belgrade (10.2) and development of state railways (180 million). However, not all work programs were deemed "payable" by the committee: only the project dealing with the electrification of the Câmpina-Braşov line (worth 15 million) remained on the final list from the Romanian program, yet, it finally was finished lately, in 1969.

Based on the early implementation of the Haas Commission on national public works, on February 13, 1934, the third Standing Advisory Committee of IFLONS evaluated the effects of

⁵⁵ LONAG COL 159.

⁵⁶ LONAG P 96. International Federation of League of Nations Societies. f. 5

these public works in each country. They addressed the members a questionnaire in a circular letter (Appendix 3 No. 130), with the intention of drawing attention to the effects of national or international planned economic actions (public works, social and industrial programs) adapted to the world economic and financial situation, since their aim was the recovery after the economic and financial crisis and the reorganization of the economic sectors. Members were sent a questionnaire containing 5 thematic groups of questions, in this order: A. Financial control and international debts, B. Public work, C. Agriculture, D. Social and industrial programs, E. Balanced production and consumption, or other forms of national planned economy.

The collection of documents sent to the Secretary of the League of Nations and the ILO contains a variety of financial and technical plans:⁵⁷ It was planned to build 26 new railway sections, with a total length of 1304 kilometers, the construction budget of these lines was 18 million lei. In the plans for the new lines, the emphasis was on emphasizing the connection between neighboring nations and states: the Palotailva – Dorna Vatra line was designed to facilitate transport from Transylvania to Bukovina and finally to Poland and even the Soviet Union. From Karánsebes–Resita, another planned line connected an industrial mining zone with agricultural and food markets, and at the same time connected the southwestern part of Romania to Yugoslavia via the Banat.

Renovation of other sections and electrification of some sections were planned. The plan included 63 bridges, bridge piers and viaducts worth 100 million lei. Some of the projects were never implemented and never completed. A single, but the most grandiose project was almost realized before the Second World War, the construction of the administrative palace of the Romanian Railways, which was only completed at the end of the forties. The starting date for the electrification of the Campina-Brassó line was constantly delayed and was only realized during the period of socialism (1959-1965/69).

Among the projects, in addition to the rehabilitation of bridges and tunnels, there is also a plan for the construction and development of a network of logistics centers: warehouses in the neighborhood of main railway crossings and in river or seaports. On the map of the planned silos and warehouses on the infrastructural map of Greater Romania, it seems strange that these new silos are in the so-called Old Kingdom and some in Bessarabia, but none of these silos were projected/planned for the western provinces, i.e. Transylvania or Banat. Regarding the latter province, it should be noted that at the beginning of the 18th century, some sections of the Béga River were ingeniously transformed into a navigable riverbed, primarily for the purpose of transporting grain, Bánság was also a rich agricultural province of Habsburg Empire at that time. The canal is operational and navigable even in the 21st century. Regarding Transylvania and its railway transport infrastructure, it should be noted that before the First World War, the main railway junctions and marshalling stations (e.g. Tövis, Piski) were supplemented by (cooperative or private) warehouses, railway sleeper wood soaking plants, and ice factories. (Nagyenyed/Aiud). Banat and Erdély is a good example of the fact that all of these were equipped with secondary operational winged railways, were in the immediate vicinity of the triage / marshalling station, and were connected to the main lines by switches, facilitating the bulky unloading and loading of goods. The consumer cooperatives in the area unloaded the colonial and industrial goods (coffee, sugar, lamp oil, agricultural machinery) with carts and transported them from

⁵⁷ LONAG COL 159. 9A/4195/1599.

these warehouses to the village consumer cooperative, while the other more distant cooperatives ordered and received their goods by train, paying at the nearest station with a postal check according to their order before ordering or after receiving the goods. Thanks to telegraph services and reliable post offices, everything went precisely and smoothly.

At the beginning of the thirties, the modernization of roads continued throughout Europe (LONA Geneva COL 167). The initiative of the transcontinental route was cherished by the International Tourism Association of Touring Clubs.⁵⁸ At the annual general meeting of the International Tourist Association held in Istanbul in June 1930, the British Automobile Association proposed the organization and management of the great trans-European road, not by building a new one, but by improving the existing road network. The following year, in 1931, at the conference held in Vienna, the main proposal already included the route of the planned transcontinental route: from London - via Dover and Calais by fast ferry – continuing via Brussels-Cologne-Nuremberg-Passau-Vienna-Budapest-Szeged-Belgrade to Sofia arriving to Istanbul. At this conference, Czechoslovakia lobbied for the inclusion of Prague, but the Czech proposal would have meant a longer distance and more difficult terrain to cross, so it was rejected primarily for the above reasons, but secondly because of the implacable and well-argued lobby of the Hungarian Club. The main argument was that the Hungarian state had already renovated and modernized a huge part of the section between the two capitals: Vienna and Budapest, so that it could receive more traffic than planned for the transcontinental route, and what's more, the Budapest-Szeged section was already included in the three-year plans of the Hungarian government. In these circumstances, the conference accepted these strong arguments. Furthermore, at the insistence of the Romanian government, the main axis to the east was supplemented with a branch (bifurcation): through Szolnok, Nagyvárad, the cities of Transylvania and the Carpathians, reaching the Prahova Valley oil field, Bucharest and finally the port of Constanța. Thus, this successful lobbying activity remained memorable for the Hungarian public, but the performance of Romanian economic diplomacy also deserved praise. It was achieved that the trans-European canal crosses Romania almost completely diagonally, thus relieving the Romanian budget, yet carrying out national road modernization that coincides with a European road, with international public procurement and contractors (Swedish Road Construction Company) according to universal standards. The Czechs lost the argument, but the geography and hydrography did not favor their position either.

The basic principle was therefore to supplement, renovate and modernize the existing road network of the countries crossed by the European road by expanding the roads and placing them on a solid foundation. The conference soon planned and directed the adaptation of the European road arteries from London to Istanbul to the requirements of high-traffic road traffic. The main lines were adopted by the General Assembly, while the cross-border routes were determined by the national authorities: Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey. The 3,117 kilometers planned at the time from London to Istanbul via Dover, Calais, Brussels, Liege, Aachen, Cologne, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Passau, Linz, Vienna, Győr, Budapest, Kecskemét, Szeged, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Nis, Sofia, Edirne to Istanbul still exists today. Returning to the Budapest branch, eastward from Budapest via Szolnok, Ártán, Nagyvárad, Cluj, Brasov, Bucharest, Constanta, 907 (now 1132) km, a total of 2883 (+225) kilometers from London to the Black Sea, a total of 3195 (+225) kilometers to Istanbul.

⁵⁸ SHIPPER 2009., TÓTH 1995. 103.

The plans included the further development of this transcontinental artery to India and South Africa. But in the meantime, this grandiose project required the unified coordination of certain states to conceive and implement the work. On December 18, 1934, the International Touring Tourism Association proposed to the Hungarian government the initiation and coordination of an international conference of interested governments, and as a result, the conference was convened in Budapest on September 10-14, 1935. Among the notable guests of the Ministry of Trade and Transport of the Hungarian Government, the following were invited to the conference: the Secretariat of the League of Nations, the Consultative and Technical Committee on Communication and Transit, as well as the International Tourism Federation, the International League of Red Cross and the Association Internationale des Congres de la Route in advisory status. Within a few years of the Istanbul Congress, all European governments adopted this plan in their own road building programs. Thus, every state and many international organizations were represented by several delegates at the Road Conference held in Budapest.

Even if it was planned to continue this route later possibly to India and via Cairo to Cape Town, the more pragmatic report emphasized the feasible section in its report. He also emphasized that this is not an "Autostrade" nor is it a new route. The utilitarian, utilitarian language and the purely professional sentences expressed a very functionalist approach, which was supported by the reporter's personal travel plan and travel report made by car. Each country's government has approved the route and budgeted for its modernization. The Budapest conference that convened these governments wanted to coordinate all the elements of this problem from three points of view: technical construction, customs and traffic organization, and thirdly, road organization based on the same or similar principles. The road issues included the following: the horizontal alignment, longitudinal and cross section, structures (bridges, signs), road surface (cement, brick, granite and asphalt), minimum expectations of technical issues, financial issues and the deadline for the completion of construction. Customs issues included the creation of joint customs offices at road border crossings; a permanent control system for passenger cars and the creation of standardized types of passports and driver's licenses to be issued in a similar form. The general traffic questions were the following: danger signs and road signs in general. Three years later, in 1938, another Road Conference in The Hague and Amsterdam emphasized the importance of universal road signs and conventional signs.⁵⁹ Here in The Hague, the Communication and Transit Committee of the League of Nations presented the uniform and simple road sign types already approved by the international convention held in Geneva on March 30, 1930, as convention signs: triangular signs for dangers, circular signs for absolutely mandatory instructions, and rectangular signs were designated for simpler signs. The Traffic Committee of the League of Nations developed and adopted recommendations for electric and light signals, the three-color or alternating light system (red, yellow, green, alternating or stable yellow, etc.), and the signals of railway-road crossings. All these innovations in the 1930s still seem very useful and paradigmatic in the implementation of international, interstate investments. These signs were introduced due to the acceleration of road use and the increase in the number of cars, and indirectly due to the increase in the number of accidents (in the hope of reducing them). The recommended system has already been accepted by the A.I.T, the Association Internationale des Automobile-Clubs and the Union Internationale des Villes (International Union of Cities).

⁵⁹ LONAG COL 167 VALSINGER.

Romania ranked 31st, while Hungary ranked 29th in terms of the number of people per car, with 844 and 472 people/car, respectively.⁶⁰ As Delaisi noted, omnibuses began to run between towns, transporting villagers to urban centers for work and markets. Consumer cooperatives also managed to use trucks to transport raw food to cities and consumer goods to cities. The roads connected to railway stations/stations and railway junctions and the silos designed with the loan (but unfortunately only a small number of them were built) (would have) helped the diversification of agricultural trade, and, in general, a potential increase in the purchasing power of the population was promised. The economic and financial reorganization and strengthening of East-Central Europe (would have) contributed to the resulting mutual (win-win) benefit of Western Europe.

To sum up, public works investments required their appropriate own target public and target group in what concerns the enterprises which functionally were able to participate at public procurement. County halls and towns halls were usually ordered by the respective institutions, the county council or the magistrate of the town, while country-level school-networks were usually tendered or directly ordered at ministerial level. Cross-border investments were traditionally coordinated bilaterally by two neighboring countries (Austria-Hungary and Romania) and only exceptionally by international organizations (Danube Commission since 1856, ILO and LoN in interwar period) comprising not only two, but many more states in a transcontinental integrative project, besides those projects that intended to reconnect neighboring countries separated by the Versailles-system frontiers. On the local level, of course, locally rooted cooperatives in theory had a virtual chance to participate in public procurement. Works of art and mega infrastructure of course needed expensive technology and bigger companies.

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⁶⁰ LONAG COL 167 VALSINGER.

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