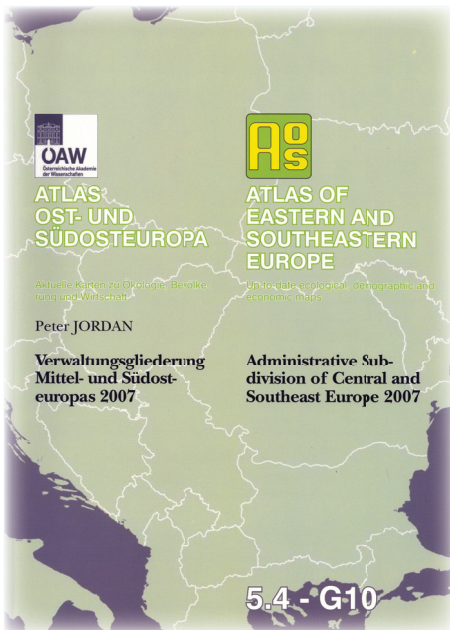


Jordan, P.: Verwaltungsgliederung Mittel- und Südosteuropas 2007/Administrative Subdivision of Central and Southeast Europe 2007. Institut für Stadt- und Regionalforschung der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010. Vienna. 212 p. (Series: Atlas Ost- und Südosteuropa/Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. 5.4 – G10)

The latest volume of the series Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe is the supplement (or continuation) of the publication with the same topic from 1989. It consists of two parts: the map and the accompanying text (70 pages in German, 69 pages in English). At the end a register is added on 70 pages.

The map layout represents an extract of Central and South-eastern Europe as of 01.01.2007. This date seems rather early compared to the date of publication (2010), but it helped the author to avoid the problem arising from the present legal status of Kosovo. The area represented is the same as in 1989: from Thuringia in the west to Kiev in the east and from Vilnius in the north to South Albania in the south. Only the former socialist buffer states between the Soviet Union and Western Europe are represented on the map completely. The map depicts administrative borders and seats of various levels: besides the state borders, generally the levels of NUTS-3 through NUTS-5 are shown (as in most of the countries investigated NUTS-2 is a merely statistical-planning level without real administrative functions). The border of the EU is also represented. The inscriptions are written in the official language of the specific country. Regarding the design of the map it should be emphasized that the harmonic colours of the administrative units can be clearly marked off.

Four of the five main sections of the accompanying text consist only 7–8 pages together. The introduction begins with a general overview and includes some basic definitions for a better understanding of the text. The second part deals with the state of the EU integration of the countries in transition. The author describes the EU enlargement process, the membership of Eurozone and Schengen Area until 2007 (but indicates the changes until 30.06.2010), writes about the relation with the non-member states and puts forward the perspectives of the further enlargement. The third unit investigates the present situation of the decentralisation process in the transformation countries. It starts with an overview about the roots of the administrative system, since the historical development has been quite diverse in the region: it fundamentally differed in the Hapsburg, Russian and Ottoman empires. This chapter then turns from the past into the present and depicts the expectations by



the EU: that would be the weakening of the centralised nation states and empowering the regions (NUTS-2–3 levels). The author also refers to the importance of the European and regional identity in this process. On the one hand his views seem realistic: e.g. barely developed European awareness, existing but weak regional identities, on the other hand idealistic conceptions and general statements also occur (e.g. “strengthening of regional identities and regionalisation could be in a position to halt nationalism and reduce the likelihood of large-scale conflicts. Switzerland offers of good example...”). That idea might be right theoretically, but it is very far from working in the reality.

The fourth part of the accompanying text (entitled Subnational territorial-administrative units and their development) is the main analysing section. A detailed presentation is given about the 17 countries (in order: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine). To be more comparable, every country has been elaborated according to identical criteria: first, the cultural and administrative traditions are shown, followed by the developments between 1989 and 2007; finally the current administrative-territorial system is presented. There is a figure at every country about the current administrative system, which makes them more understandable.

At the end of the accompanying text a short synopsis can be found, which offers the essential characteristics of the 17 states surveyed. Figure 18 is perhaps the most valuable part of the book: it summarizes the main features of the administrative systems by countries and by NUTS-levels, completed with information on administrative traditions.

The final part of the book is the register of the administrative units depicted on the map with their seats. This part includes not only transformation countries, but all the regions that appear on the map. As it was mentioned earlier, only official names were indicated on the map, even so the register includes a very few minority names too. It is evident in Slovenia, where Italian and Hungarian minority names are official in certain regions, but not so in Hungary, where the German names for Győr and Sopron are indicated, but e.g. Kőszeg appears only in Hungarian or in Romania, where Hungarian and German geographical names are in the register but the reader cannot find neither historical nor ethnic connotations for that.

The attempt to draw the administrative map of Central and Southeastern Europe and to present the administrative characteristics of 17 countries was a significant task – and it has proven to be a successful undertaking. The atlas is a very useful database for anybody interested in administrative issues of this region.

PATRIK TÁTRAI