

April 10, 2001

Dear Regional Science Colleagues:

I am delighted to be able to offer these greetings on the occasion of the first national symposium of the Romanian Regional Science Association. We in regional science have been delighted by the emergence of interest in both the field and the association in central and eastern Europe; as these economies develop, the challenges will focus more on issues of regional disparities, regional equity and the optimal investment of funds in physical infrastructure and human capital. These are challenges that regional science is equipped to address, combining as it does insights from international trade, location theory, transportation systems analysis and regional economic modeling.

However, the most important contributions will come from scholars such as yourselves, translating these techniques into forms that are suitable for application in Romania. With representation in over 60 countries throughout the world, regional science has demonstrated a remarkable flexibility to adapt to different economic structures, political regimes and development contexts. We look forward to reading about the innovations that you will make in this field and we hope that your participation in the Regional Science Association International will provide an attractive forum for you to engage in debate and discussion with colleagues in other countries and other disciplines. Regional Science remains one of the few disciplines that is truly international and interdisciplinary; it is both strength and opportunity since we still have many problems in many countries that need this perspective.

Over the last year, we have seen the emergence of a Regional Science section in Indonesia; our colleagues in Brazil will be hosting their inaugural meeting in December of this year. In 2004, we hope to hold the World Congress in South Africa and, at the same time, welcome this country to membership in the organization. However, today, we focus on Romania! On behalf of the international organization, let me welcome you to the regional science organization. I hope to be able to meet many of you in Zagreb later this year and at future international gatherings. Very best wishes for a successful conference and I look forward to reading about your contributions to science and policy in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey J.D. Hewings
Director, Regional Economics Applications Laboratory
University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign

President, Regional Science Association International