



Proposal for Visegrád Network for Urban Systems' Research and Planning

A conceptual and operational plan

based on the project “Changing role of SEcondary Cities in the POLYcentric
development of Visegrád Countries” (SECPOLYC)

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Introduction

The proposal for a Visegrad Network for Urban Systems' Research and Planning has been developed as a cooperation framework for researchers, planning professionals, academic institutions and professional organisations concerned with the specific urban and spatial development challenges of the Visegrad countries and, more broadly, Central and Eastern Europe. The initiative is intended to respond to a clear need identified by the project partners at SEQPOLYC: while Central and Eastern European countries face distinctive post-socialist demographic, infrastructural, metropolitan, and governance-related challenges, these issues are still often insufficiently articulated in dominant European urban research and planning agendas. The project therefore seeks to strengthen the regional production, circulation and policy translation of knowledge rooted in the particular territorial conditions of the V4 countries.

The proposal is based on the observation that urban systems in Central and Eastern Europe are not merely national planning issues but increasingly transnational and relational phenomena. Metropolitan regions, secondary cities, shrinking towns, suburban zones, cross-border functional areas and rural–urban interfaces are shaped by shared historical legacies and comparable contemporary pressures: post-socialist restructuring, EU integration, uneven development, demographic ageing, selective migration, suburbanisation, infrastructure gaps, climate adaptation needs and changing forms of territorial governance. These common challenges provide a strong basis for V4-level dialogue, and the project events demonstrate significant professional and academic demand for more regular cooperation in this field.

The experience of European urban and spatial planning networks reinforces the relevance of such cooperation. Major planning concepts such as polycentric development and territorial cohesion emerged not only from academic debates but also through policy-oriented professional networks, transnational research cooperation, and European-level agenda-setting. The Visegrad initiative builds on this lesson by exploring how regional cooperation can help formulate shared research questions, compare national experiences and strengthen the visibility of Central and Eastern European perspectives in broader European debates. The project proposal does not aim to create a parallel structure competing with existing European organisations, but rather to prepare a regional platform capable of connecting V4 expertise to wider European academic and policy networks.

All planned activities for the project SEQPOLYC were successfully implemented, providing a foundation for the proposed future network. The project meetings, consultations, structured national inputs and professional exchanges provided a rich empirical and institutional basis for the preparation of this conceptual and operational plan. Participation exceeded original expectations: the events attracted a large number

of researchers, university experts, representatives of professional organisations, planners, and policy-oriented actors from the participating countries. This strong participation confirmed that the proposed network addresses an existing professional need and that there is a substantial constituency for continued V4 cooperation in urban systems research and planning.

The direct target group originally consisted of the participants in the project events, but the project's actual reach proved broader. Through presentations, discussions, workshops and dissemination activities, the network idea was communicated to universities, research institutes, planning associations, municipalities, professional organisations and policy actors active in urban development and spatial planning. The participating partners played a central role in this process. Each partner contributed national knowledge, identified relevant organisations, assessed existing cooperation experiences in their own country and supported the discussion of possible future cooperation formats. The applicant institution also contributed to the exploration of EU-level experiences and benchmark networks.

The structured national inputs form a particularly important component of the work. They enabled the project partners to map relevant organisations in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, including academic institutions, professional associations, research centres, planning organisations, and other actors potentially relevant to a V4 urban systems research and planning network. In the Hungarian case, for example, the template identified the Hungarian Society for Urban and Spatial Planning / Magyar Urbanisztikai Társaság as a key professional platform connecting urban planning, regional development and related professional communities. The template also showed that the intended network should not be understood as a purely academic structure, but as a bridge between research, professional practice and policy-oriented knowledge exchange.

Methodologically, the plan is based on the results of project meetings, partner consultations, desk research, structured national templates and the collective reflections generated during the four project events. These events functioned not only as occasions for thematic discussion but also as practical network-building exercises. They helped identify shared problems, compare institutional landscapes, discuss possible activities, and test the feasibility of different cooperation formats. The high level of participation and the quality of the discussions demonstrated that a V4-level cooperation platform in this field is both relevant and realistic.

The completed project SEQPOLYC also clarified the potential role of the future network. Initially, it can function as an informal cooperation platform connecting researchers, university workshops, professional associations, and planning experts. In later phases, depending on available resources and project opportunities, it may develop more formalised functions including joint conferences, thematic working groups, comparative research projects, policy briefs, teaching cooperation, doctoral and early-career

researcher activities and coordinated representation in wider European debates. The project experience suggests an incremental approach is appropriate. The long-term value of the network will depend not only on institutional formalisation but also on trust, regular communication, shared intellectual agendas and visible outputs.

This conceptual and operational plan synthesises completed project activities and proposes future cooperation. Conceptually, it argues that the V4 countries require a stronger and more cohesive voice in urban systems research and spatial planning. Operationally, it identifies the organisations, functions, activities and potential next steps through which this voice can be gradually strengthened. The successful implementation of project activities and the strong participation of relevant actors provide a solid foundation for transforming the initial project-based cooperation into a sustainable regional knowledge infrastructure supporting research professional exchange and policy-oriented agenda-setting on urban and territorial development in Central and Eastern Europe.

International networks as benchmarks

International networks as benchmarks

The establishment of a Visegrád Network for Urban Systems' Research and Planning can draw important lessons from existing international networks operating in the fields of spatial planning, urban research, regional development and planning education. These benchmark organisations demonstrate that durable professional networks rarely perform a single function. Instead, they typically combine several roles, including knowledge exchange, agenda setting, professional representation, education policy support, publications, conferences, capacity building and project generation. For the proposed V4 network, the most relevant lesson is not to replicate any single existing model, but to identify the organisational principles and activities that can realistically be adapted to a Central and Eastern European cooperation framework.

Trans-European networks and their relevance

The most directly relevant European benchmark is the **European Council of Spatial Planners – Conseil Européen des Urbanistes**, usually referred to as **ECTP-CEU**. Founded in 1985, ECTP-CEU brings together professional spatial planning associations and institutes from across Europe; its current profile emphasises the connections among European spatial planning associations, the exchange of expertise, and the promotion of sustainable and inclusive urban development. Its relevance for the V4 network is threefold. First, it demonstrates how national professional associations can be connected through a European umbrella organisation. Second, it shows the importance of professional standards, shared principles and common statements in strengthening

the visibility of planning. Third, it illustrates that planning networks can operate as intermediaries between professional communities and European policy debates. ECTP-CEU is therefore especially relevant for the professional and practice-oriented dimension of the proposed V4 network.

A second major benchmark is **AESOP – the Association of European Schools of Planning**. AESOP represents planning schools in Europe and has more than 150 member institutions. Its role is particularly important in planning education, curriculum development, academic exchange, and the professional positioning of planning schools. For the V4 network, AESOP offers a useful model for connecting university departments, doctoral schools, research groups and educational programmes. Its example suggests that a V4 network should not be limited to occasional conferences. It could also support teaching cooperation, PhD and early-career researcher exchange, shared syllabi, summer schools, comparative teaching materials and collaborative publications. AESOP is also an example of how an academic network can maintain relevance by linking education, research and professional debates.

The **Urban Europe Research Alliance** provides a third important model. UERA is one of the key initiatives connected to JPI Urban Europe and brings together European research organisations, researchers, professors, and PhD students. Its profile explicitly emphasises integrated, systemic, environmental and socio-economic approaches to urban research. UERA is especially relevant because it shows how urban research cooperation can be organised around thematic priorities and research agendas rather than only institutional membership. For the V4 network, this suggests the value of establishing thematic working groups on issues such as post-socialist metropolitan development, suburbanisation, shrinking cities, polycentric urban regions, climate adaptation, spatial justice, housing, cross-border urban systems and territorial governance. UERA also demonstrates the importance of research coordination, researcher exchange and the dissemination of results as core network functions.

The **European Network for Housing Research** is another particularly relevant benchmark, especially because housing has become one of the most urgent urban and territorial policy questions across Europe. ENHR was established in 1988 as an organisational platform for institutions and individuals engaged in housing research, both within and beyond Europe. It currently has around 230 individual members and 60 institutional members, representing almost every European country. Its activities include annual conferences, working group meetings, new-housing researcher colloquia, seminars, and publication-oriented cooperation. ENHR is especially relevant for the V4 network because it demonstrates how a thematic European research network can combine academic exchange, early-career researcher support, policy comparison and project development. It comprises more than 25 working groups covering diverse fields from collaborative housing to welfare policy, and also provides a useful organisational

model for a future V4 network. Housing affordability, tenure restructuring, housing estates, suburbanisation, municipal housing policy and socio-spatial inequalities are all central issues in Central and Eastern European urban systems; therefore, a V4 network should either connect directly to ENHR activities or develop a housing-related working group that can articulate the specific housing challenges of the region in wider European debates.

Another important benchmark is ESPON, although it differs from classical membership associations. ESPON is an EU-funded programme that bridges research and policy by providing territorial analyses, data and maps to support EU development policies, especially Cohesion Policy. It also helps public authorities benchmark regions and cities, identify challenges and shape development policies. Its relevance lies in the connection between comparative territorial evidence and policy learning. A V4 network would not have ESPON's resources. Still, it can adopt a similar logic at the regional scale: collecting comparable evidence, identifying shared territorial patterns, producing short policy briefs, and translating research findings into accessible formats for decision-makers. ESPON also indicates that territorial knowledge becomes influential when it is standardised, visualised and made usable for public authorities.

Eurocities represents a different but also highly relevant model. It is a European city network that works to make cities genuine partners of the EU and supports knowledge sharing among urban governments. The network brings together more than 200 cities from 38 European countries and represents a large urban population base. For the proposed V4 network, Eurocities is important because it demonstrates the role of municipalities and urban governments in transnational learning. While the V4 network is primarily conceived as a research and planning cooperation platform, it should not remain detached from cities and metropolitan authorities. Its potential impact would be much stronger if selected municipalities, metropolitan institutions, city associations and planning departments were gradually connected to its activities.

A further useful reference is the **Regional Studies Association**. The RSA defines itself as an international, interdisciplinary community for regional research, development and policy, with a mission to promote academic excellence, scholarly discourse, policy impact and open knowledge exchange across borders. Its relevance to the V4 initiative lies in its strong integration of academic research and policy impact. The RSA model suggests that the V4 network should position urban systems research within broader debates on territorial and regional development. This is particularly important in Central and Eastern Europe, where urban development, regional inequalities, metropolitan concentration, rural decline and cross-border spatial relations are closely connected.

Finally, **ISOCARP – the International Society of City and Regional Planners** offers a global professional benchmark. It describes itself as a member-led global organisation working for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements. Its mission includes mobilising professional urban and regional planners, fostering planning

research, training and education, and encouraging professional knowledge exchange. Although ISOCARP is global rather than European, it offers a useful model for combining professional identity, international visibility, training, practical knowledge and planning excellence.

National and trans-North American benchmarks

Although the proposed network is European and regionally focused, North American examples are also useful because they show how large professional and academic communities organise representation, certification, research exchange and policy communication.

The most important US benchmark is the **American Planning Association**. APA describes itself as the largest membership organisation of professional planners and a leading source of planning resources. Its strategic goals include prioritising equity and reframing the public voice of planning, so that planning is better understood and valued by decision-makers and wider publics. APA is relevant because it shows how a planning organisation can combine professional services, advocacy, conferences, knowledge dissemination, policy communication and public visibility. For the V4 network, the APA model is too large and resource-intensive to replicate, but its emphasis on professional identity and communication is highly transferable. The V4 network should not only circulate research internally; it should also help articulate why urban systems research and spatial planning matter for public policy.

The **Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning** is another relevant North American example. ACSP promotes education, research, service and outreach in planning in the United States, Canada and internationally. It functions as a consortium of university-based planning programmes and supports the academic infrastructure of planning education and research. For the V4 network, ACSP is a relevant model for linking university departments and planning schools around shared educational and research interests. A V4 version of this logic could support joint doctoral workshops, early-career researcher sessions, teaching exchanges and comparative curriculum development on Central and Eastern European urban systems.

The **Urban Affairs Association** provides a broader benchmark for urban studies. UAA is an international professional organisation for urban scholars, researchers, policy analysts and public service professionals, with more than 1,000 members. Its mission is to create interdisciplinary spaces for theoretical, empirical and action-oriented research on urban life. This model is important because it moves beyond narrowly understood planning and connects urban sociology, geography, public policy, governance studies, housing, social justice and urban political economy. The proposed V4 network should similarly remain open to interdisciplinary urban studies, rather than being limited to statutory planning or design-oriented urbanism.

The **Lincoln Institute of Land Policy** is not a membership network in the same sense. Still, it is a relevant North American benchmark for connecting research, education, publications and policy advice. Its mission is to improve the quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land. The Lincoln Institute is useful for the V4 network because land policy, municipal finance, housing, land value capture, urban expansion and property relations are central but often underdeveloped themes in Central and Eastern European urban debates. Its model suggests that a network can become influential by producing high-quality applied research and translating complex land and planning issues into usable policy knowledge.

Lessons for the V4 Urban Systems Research and Planning Network

The reviewed benchmarks indicate several transferable lessons. First, successful networks have a clearly defined constituency. ECTP-CEU primarily connects professional planning associations; AESOP connects planning schools; UERA connects urban research organisations; Eurocities connects city governments; APA connects professional planners; ACSP connects planning schools; UAA and ENHR connect urban scholars and practitioners. The proposed V4 network needs a similarly clear but flexible identity: it should connect researchers, planning professionals, universities, professional associations and policy-oriented organisations working on urban systems and spatial development in Central and Eastern Europe.

Second, effective networks create regular occasions for interaction. Conferences, workshops, thematic working groups, doctoral events, policy seminars and professional meetings are not secondary activities; they are the institutional infrastructure through which trust and common agendas are built. The V4 network should therefore begin with feasible, low-cost and repeatable formats: annual meetings, online seminars, thematic roundtables and joint conference sessions attached to existing national or European events.

Third, benchmark networks show the importance of combining academic and professional functions. A purely academic network may have limited policy influence, while a purely professional association may lack analytical depth. The specific value of the proposed V4 network lies in connecting research-based knowledge with planning practice and policy debates.

Fourth, networks become influential when they produce visible outputs. These may include position papers, policy briefs, comparative reports, thematic databases, conference proceedings, journal special issues, teaching materials and project proposals. For the V4 network, the first outputs should remain realistic: a shared contact database, a mapped institutional landscape, short thematic policy notes and collaborative research proposals.

Fifth, the strongest benchmark organisations operate at multiple scales. They connect local, national, European and sometimes global debates. The V4 network should therefore be designed as a regional intermediary: rooted in Visegrad and Central and Eastern European urban realities, but capable of communicating with wider European organisations such as ECTP-CEU, AESOP, UERA, ESPON, Eurocities and RSA.

Overall, the international benchmarks confirm that the proposed V4 network is both relevant and feasible. Its initial form should be modest and flexible. Still, its longer-term ambition should be strategic: to build a durable cooperation platform that strengthens Central and Eastern European urban systems research, supports planning practice, generates comparative knowledge, and improves the visibility of V4 perspectives in European urban and territorial policy debates.

Potentially relevant networks in V4 countries

The future Visegrad Network for Urban Systems' Research and Planning cannot be built from scratch. Each V4 country already has a rich, although institutionally fragmented, landscape of organisations working on urban systems, spatial planning, regional development, geography, municipal governance, climate adaptation, architectural quality and territorial policy. These include academic research institutes, university departments, professional associations, national and regional geographical and science societies, municipal associations, planning institutes, chief architect networks, and public bodies responsible for spatial development. The mapping presented in this chapter, therefore, serves a dual purpose: it identifies potential partners for a future V4/CEE cooperation framework. It shows that the institutional basis for such cooperation already exists. The task is not to replace these organisations, but to connect them more systematically around shared Central and Eastern European urban and territorial questions.

The organisations listed in this chapter differ considerably in their profile, scale and institutional character. Some are primarily academic actors with strong research and publication capacities; others are professional associations capable of mobilising planners, architects, geographers, or regional development experts; still others are municipal or public-sector organisations with direct access to policy implementation and local governance. This diversity is one of the main strengths of the prospective network. The SECPOLYC project has shown that questions of secondary-city development, polycentric urban systems, and territorial cohesion cannot be addressed by a single sector alone. They require dialogue between research, planning practice, public administration and local governments. For this reason, the following country-level mapping should be read not merely as an inventory of organisations, but as the first step towards a multi-actor cooperation platform capable of linking comparative research, professional exchange and policy-oriented knowledge production across the V4 region.

Hungary

The Hungarian institutional landscape offers a particularly broad basis for participation in a future V4/CEE Urban Systems Research and Planning Network. The organisations identified below cover several complementary fields: urban and spatial planning, regional science, geography, municipal interest representation, local climate adaptation, settlement development and the professional governance of the built environment. Together, they connect academic research capacity, professional planning expertise and direct municipal experience. This diversity is important because Hungarian debates on secondary cities, polycentric development, territorial inequalities, suburbanisation, climate resilience and local governance are distributed across several institutional communities rather than concentrated in a single organisation. The listed actors could therefore contribute different but mutually reinforcing capacities to the future network: research and comparative analysis, professional dissemination, access to municipalities, policy consultation, applied planning knowledge and links to wider European professional and scientific networks.

No	HU 1
Name Original name and in English	Magyar Urbanisztikai Társaság, Hungarian Society for Urban and Spatial Planning, MUT
Year of foundation	1966
Membership	The Hungarian Society of Urban and Spatial Planning is a voluntary association that brings together experts and professionals from various scientific disciplines and professional activities related to urban development. It offers two types of membership: individual and institutional. The application process is determined by the board. Individuals must have qualifications in urban planning, while institutions must be municipalities or organisations active in the field.
Number of members / employees	Approximately 200 individuals and 25 local municipalities
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The Association's purpose is to make Hungarian urban planning, including regional and settlement development, planning management and operation, as successful, efficient and effective as possible. To this end, it considers the following to be its tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring new professional knowledge and collecting domestic and international practical experience to pass on to its members. • Improving professional practice by developing and promoting theoretical and practical activities and disseminating the urban planning approach.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing urban planning in non-governmental international organisations and the European Union. • Creating a professional club life tailored to the needs of its members. • Monitoring the professional and general ethical integrity of its members. • Strengthening professional cohesion within the Hungarian urban planning community, integrating its knowledge and planners beyond the border into the discourse and community and fostering dialogue between related professions. • Defining the knowledge and standards necessary for planning and expert work in the field of regional and urban development and regularly reviewing their scope. • Defining the knowledge and standards necessary for planning and expert work in the field of land and settlement development and regularly reviewing these based on socio-economic and technological trends and social expectations.
Geographical scope	Hungary, national level, with regional subsections
Activities	The organisation hosts 20–40 events annually, including the annual Hungarian National Conference on Urban Planning. It also awards quality prizes to expert students and local municipalities and participates in the work of the European Council of Spatial Planners.
Contact	<p>Postal address: 1085 Budapest, József körút 9., Hungary</p> <p>Email: mut@mut.hu</p> <p>www.mut.hu</p> <p>János Balázs Kocsis and Géza Salamin, participants of the SECPOLYC project, are vice presidents</p>
Character	Association of professionals active in urban planning, regional development and professions related to these fields.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	MUT is a key Hungarian practice-oriented partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value is mobilising the national community of urban planners, spatial planners, municipal experts and urban development practitioners and linking academic evidence on urban systems and polycentric development with planning and policy practice. Through its annual national conference, professional events and connections to municipalities and planning experts MUT could provide an important dissemination and consultation platform for SECPOLYC results. It could also support the future network by bringing practitioners into comparative CEE debates on secondary cities urban–regional governance spatial planning transport development and the policy conditions of more balanced polycentric development.

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No	HU 2
Name Original name and in English	Magyar Regionális Tudományi Társaság, Hungarian Regional Science Association, MRTT.
Year of foundation	2002. The Society was founded by members of the Regional Science Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, who decided on its establishment on 21 February 2002.
Membership	MRTT is an independent civil organisation and the professional forum of Hungarian regional science. It brings together specialists involved in territorial research, regional development and territorial governance. Its members are mainly researchers and academics working in research institutes and higher education, complemented by professionals from local, territorial and central public administration, as well as public, municipal and private-sector organisations. Membership is open to Hungarian and foreign individuals cultivating or interested in regional science, provided that they accept the statutes, submit a membership declaration and pay the membership fee.
Number of members / employees	More than 300 members , including nearly 100 members representing regional-science workshops outside Hungary. The Society's active fee-paying membership has been above 210 since 2017.
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	MRTT's mission is to provide a professional forum for regional science; disseminate Hungarian and international regional-science results; connect Hungarian scholarship to international organisations; build links between research, higher education, regional policy-makers and practitioners; support research centres and university workshops cultivating regional science; organise conferences and publish books and other outputs; support regional research and development in Hungary and the Carpathian Basin; and contribute to the dissemination of European Union transregional policy knowledge in the region. Its relevance for urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is particularly strong because regional science in Hungary directly addresses territorial inequalities, regional development, spatial policy, urban–regional systems, centre–periphery relations, metropolitan development, decentralisation and cohesion policy. The Society explicitly defines regional science as an interdisciplinary field concerned with the durable processes shaping territorial inequalities and the evidence-based preparation of territorial-policy interventions.
Geographical scope	Hungary and the wider Carpathian Basin. The Society is organised on a regional basis and operates domestic and cross-border sections. Its website lists seven domestic territorial sections and several cross-border sections, including Transcarpathian, East Slovakian, Cluj/Kolozsvár, West Slovakian, Partium, Szeklerland and Vojvodina sections.

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Activities	MRTT organises annual travelling conferences, thematic conferences, regional-science evenings, young regionalists' conferences and other professional events. It supports regional-science journals and publication platforms, including <i>Tér és Társadalom</i> , <i>Deturope</i> , <i>Comitatus</i> and the <i>Studia Regionum</i> book series. It awards professional prizes, including the Regional Science Award, the Excellent Young Regionalist Award, honorary diplomas and the Pro Communitate Regionalistarum Award. It also maintains regular professional communication through newsletters, its website and social media, and cooperates with key domestic and international regional-science organisations.
Contact	Hungarian Regional Science Association / Magyar Regionális Tudományi Társaság, 7621 Pécs, Papnövelde u. 22.; postal address: 7601 Pécs, Pf. 199.; Tel.: +36 72 523 800; Fax: +36 72 523 806 e-mail: mrтт@mrтт.hu; website: www.mrтт.hu
Character	Academic and professional association for regional science, territorial research, regional development and territorial governance. It functions as a bridge between researchers, higher-education workshops, policy-makers and practitioners, and as the Hungarian section of the European Regional Science Association.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	MRTT would be a key Hungarian partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network in the field of regional and territorial analysis. Its main added value is the mobilisation of Hungary's regional-science community, including university departments, research institutes, policy experts and cross-border Hungarian regional workshops in the Carpathian Basin. It could contribute expertise on urban–regional systems, territorial inequalities, cohesion policy, metropolitan and polycentric development, regional governance, centre–periphery relations and the spatial consequences of economic and demographic change in Central and Eastern Europe. Its existing cooperation with regional-science organisations, its ERSA/RSAI connections and its domestic and cross-border sections make it especially suitable for comparative CEE networking.

No	HU 3
Name Original name and in English	Településfejlesztési Szövetség, Urban Development Association, TESZ
Year of foundation	2020
Membership	TESZ is a professional community of actors committed to regional and settlement development, representing different areas of expertise. Its practical orientation is reflected in its work with partner settlements and municipalities, and in projects aimed at creating tangible benefits for local development practice.

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Number of members / employees	n.d.
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The main goal of TESZ is to promote professional excellence in regional and settlement development. It seeks to support good professional practice, disseminate relevant knowledge and strengthen the practical connection between settlement-development expertise, municipalities and local development actors. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe lies primarily in its applied, implementation-oriented profile: it works close to municipalities, local development projects and professional communities dealing with everyday challenges of settlement development, public-space improvement, local services, community development and infrastructure. This makes TESZ relevant for translating research findings on urban systems, polycentric development and secondary cities into the language of local development practice.</p>
Geographical scope	<p>Primarily Hungary, with relevance for Hungarian-speaking settlement-development communities. Its award calls and public activities address Hungarian municipalities and, according to public communication, may also be open to municipalities in Hungarian-inhabited areas beyond the borders.</p>
Activities	<p>TESZ carries out practical settlement-development projects and programmes. Its listed activities include the Digital Settlement Development Programme, sectoral advocacy-capacity development, a dementia-garden design guide and projects funded through the National Cooperation Fund. The organisation also runs the annual Településfejlesztési Díj / Settlement Development Award, presented at a national event, recognising municipal and municipal-company projects in categories such as community development, service development and infrastructure development. In addition, TESZ has received support for a sectoral advocacy-capacity-development project under the Széchenyi Plan Plus / GINOP Plus framework.</p>
Contact	<p>Website: https://www.telepulesfejleszt.es.eu E-mail: info@telepulesfejleszt.es.eu Postal Address: 2700 Cegléd, Öreghegyi u. 3. Legal representative: Szebeni Dávid, president.</p>
Character	<p>Practice-oriented professional association in the field of regional and settlement development. It is especially relevant for applied urban-development practice, municipal project development, local innovation, community development and the dissemination of good examples among municipalities.</p>

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<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>TESZ could be a useful Hungarian practice-oriented partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network, particularly in connecting academic and policy-oriented research with local implementation practice. While MUT represents the broader professional field of urban and spatial planning, TESZ could add a more project-based and municipality-facing perspective, bringing experience from settlement-development awards, local development programmes, partner settlements and practical capacity-building activities. This would fit the SECPOLYC objective of linking new evidence, policy discourse and networking, and of involving practitioners of policies and planning in discussions on secondary cities and polycentric development. TESZ could contribute to the network by identifying good local development practices, mobilising municipal actors, disseminating policy recommendations to local development professionals, and supporting discussions on how CEE-specific challenges—such as limited local capacities, uneven territorial development, infrastructure gaps and centre–periphery inequalities—appear in concrete settlement-level projects. Its strongest added value would therefore be the translation of comparative V4/CEE research results into practically usable knowledge for municipalities and local development organisations.</p>
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No	HU 4
<p>Name Original name and in English</p>	<p>HUN-REN Csillagászati és Földtudományi Kutatóközpont Földrajztudományi Intézet, Geographical Institute, HUN-REN Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences</p>
<p>Year of foundation</p>	<p>1951, as the Geographical Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, established on the basis of the former geographical library and map archive. In 1967 it was reorganised as the Geographical Research Institute. The present institute continues this academic geographical research tradition within HUN-REN CSFK.</p>
<p>Membership</p>	<p>The Geographical Institute is not a membership-based association, but a public academic research institute within HUN-REN CSFK. Its community consists of researchers, scientific staff, technical and administrative personnel working in human geography, physical geography, cartography, geoinformatics, environmental studies and related fields. Its website lists the Institute's staff and directorate, together with research groups and research infrastructure.</p>
<p>Number of members / employees</p>	<p>More than 35 named staff members, affiliated with the Geographical Institute, including researchers, editorial, technical, library and administrative personnel.</p>

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The Institute's long-standing mission is to investigate and evaluate the physical and human geographical endowments and potentials of Hungary and its regions; to develop theoretical and methodological studies in geography; to survey spatial processes and relationships; to conduct thematic mapping; to disseminate geographical knowledge; to operate a specialised library; and to publish and document geographical research results. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is substantial: the Institute has research groups directly relevant to ethnic and political geography, migration, economic geography, spatial development, urbanisation and settlement environments. These fields overlap strongly with the SECPOLYC focus on urban systems, secondary cities, territorial inequalities, spatial planning, mobility, migration, polycentric development and the specific spatial-development challenges of the V4/CEE region.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Hungary, the Carpathian Basin and Central/Eastern Europe, with broader international research cooperation. The Institute's historical mission covers the geographical analysis of Hungary and its regions, while its projects and editorial networks show strong international and V4/CEE links.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>The Institute conducts basic and applied geographical research; maintains specialised research groups; operates research infrastructure including a library, cartographic/geoinformatics capacities, SEDILAB and the Szentgyörgyvár Research Station; carries out national and international research projects; publishes and edits geographical outputs; and hosts the Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, the journal of the Geographical Institute. Its listed projects include the National Atlas of Hungary, migration-related V4 research, Industry 4.0 research, environmental and metropolitan-region projects, and research on residential environments in large housing estates after socialism, including Budapest, Bratislava, Katowice, Brno and Yerevan.</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>Geographical Institute, HUN-REN Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences 1112 Budapest, Budaörsi út 45. Main telephone: +36 1 309-2600. The wider HUN-REN CSFK official seat is 1121 Budapest, Konkoly Thege Miklós út 15–17; Central e-mail: titkarsag@csfk.hun-ren.hu. Website: https://hungarian-geography.hu</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>National academic research institute in geography, combining human geography, physical geography, spatial analysis, cartography, geoinformatics and environmental research. For the purposes of the V4/CEE network, its most relevant profile is as a high-level academic research centre with strong competence in urban and regional systems, territorial inequalities, migration, settlement environments, spatial development and cartographic/geoinformatics analysis.</p>

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<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>HUN-REN CSFK Geographical Institute would be a key Hungarian academic partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value lies in its strong research capacity in human geography, economic geography, migration, urbanisation, settlement environments, spatial development, mapping and geoinformatics. This profile directly supports the SECPOLYC ambition to create new evidence on the changing role of secondary cities, to compare urban systems and spatial policies across the V4 countries, and to strengthen academic and policy discourse on polycentric development in Central and Eastern Europe. The Institute could contribute comparative empirical expertise, spatial data analysis, cartographic outputs, publication channels and international academic visibility. Its experience with projects on migration, V4 mobility, housing estates after socialism, the National Atlas of Hungary and metropolitan environmental issues makes it especially relevant for interpreting urban–regional change in Hungary and the wider CEE context. It could also help connect the future network to the Hungarian and international geographical research community through its research groups, publications and the Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, thereby strengthening the scientific foundation of a longer-term V4/CEE cooperation platform on urban systems, secondary cities and polycentric spatial development.</p>
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No	HU 5
<p>Name Original name and in English</p>	<p>ELKH Közgazdaság és Regionális Tudományi Kutató Központ – Regionális Kutatások Intézete / ELHK Centre for Economic and Regional Studies – Institute for Regional Studies, RKI</p>
<p>Year of foundation</p>	<p>1943 – The Institute’s predecessor, the Transdanubian Research Institute (<i>Dunántúli Tudományos Intézet, DTI</i>), was founded in 1943 in Pécs. It became an academic research institute in 1955. The Centre for Regional Studies (<i>Regionális Kutatások Központja, RKK</i>) was organised in 1984, based on DTI, with a decentralised, network-like institutional structure built on regional units. In 2012, it was integrated into the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies.</p>
<p>Membership</p>	<p>RKI is not a membership-based association but an academic research institute. Its professional community consists of researchers and research-support staff working in regional science, economic geography, sociology, political science, law, public policy, spatial development and related fields. The Institute has historically played a central role in building Hungarian regional science, including doctoral education, regional-science workshops and professional organisations.</p>
<p>Number of members / employees</p>	<p>61 researchers, including research professors, senior research fellows, research fellows, assistant research fellows and emeritus researchers.</p>

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>RKI's mission is to contribute to the development of regional science theory and methodology; support regional-policy decisions through research on territorial processes; provide evidence for Hungarian and European policy-making; analyse territorial processes in East-Central Europe; function as a centre of Carpathian Basin regional-development research; strengthen the EU compatibility and competitiveness of Hungarian territorial policy; support university and doctoral training in regional science; and maintain important publication forums, including <i>Tér és Társadalom</i> and the <i>Regions of the Carpathian Basin</i> series. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is direct: its listed basic research tasks include the drivers of regional development in Europe, East European regional transformation, the Carpathian Basin, EU regional policy, the foundations of polycentric urban development, the development tendencies of the Hungarian settlement network and spatial structure, regional competitiveness, disadvantaged regions, decentralisation, regionalism, territorial administration and border relations.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Hungary, the regions of Hungary, the Carpathian Basin, East-Central Europe and broader European regional-science networks. RKI has a decentralised territorial structure with scientific departments and research groups in several Hungarian regions: Pécs, Budapest, Kecskemét, Békéscsaba and Győr.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>RKI conducts basic and applied research in regional science and territorial development; supports policy-making through research and recommendations; participates in higher education and doctoral training; organises conferences and seminar series; maintains research infrastructure; and publishes major regional-science outputs. Its dissemination activities include the quarterly journal <i>Tér és Társadalom</i>, the <i>Alföldi Tanulmányok</i> series, <i>Észak-magyarországi Stratégiai Füzetek</i>, regional and settlement research monograph series, the <i>Regions of the Carpathian Basin</i> series, the <i>Regions of Europe</i> series, border-research publications, the English-language <i>Discussion Papers</i> series, and conference series such as the Village Conference, Region Conference and Alföld Congress.</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>Institute for Regional Studies / Regionális Kutatások Intézete. Address: 7621 Pécs, Papnövelde u. 22. Postal address: 7601 Pécs, Pf. 199. Phone: +36 72523800, Fax:+36 72 523 806. E-mail: rki.titkarsag@krtk.elte.hu Website: www.rki.krtk.hu</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>National academic research institute and Hungary's central institutional base for regional science. It combines regional economics, geography, sociology, political science, legal and public-policy perspectives, with strong competence in territorial processes, spatial inequalities, settlement networks, regional policy, decentralisation, border studies and Carpathian Basin research.</p>

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<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>RKI would be one of the most important Hungarian academic partners for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value lies in its long-standing institutional role as the national base of Hungarian regional science, its decentralised presence in several Hungarian regions, and its interdisciplinary expertise in territorial inequalities, settlement networks, regional policy, polycentric urban development, decentralisation, cross-border relations and East-Central European spatial transformation. This profile directly matches the SECPOLYC objective of creating new evidence on the role of secondary cities, comparing urban systems and spatial policies in the V4 countries, and strengthening academic and policy discourse on polycentric development. RKI could contribute comparative empirical research capacity, policy-oriented regional analysis, access to regional scientific communities, publication channels and long experience in connecting research with territorial-development policy. Its regional departments in Pécs, Budapest, Győr, Kecskemét and Békéscsaba would also help the network move beyond a capital-city perspective and engage with secondary cities, peripheral regions and functional urban regions across Hungary. Its strongest role would therefore be to provide the scientific backbone for the Hungarian contribution to a longer-term V4/CEE cooperation platform on urban systems, secondary-city development and balanced polycentric spatial development.</p>
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No	HU 6
<p>Name Original name and in English</p>	<p>Magyar Földrajzi Társaság, Hungarian Geographical Society, MFT</p>
<p>Year of foundation</p>	<p>1872</p>
<p>Membership</p>	<p>MFT is a voluntary scientific and professional association bringing together geographers, geography teachers, researchers, students and professionals interested in geography and related earth sciences. Membership is open to individuals who wish to support geographical research, geographical education, public dissemination and the professional community of geography.</p>
<p>Number of members / employees</p>	<p>Roughly 2000</p>

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The Society's mission is to cultivate and develop geography in Hungary, disseminate geographical knowledge, popularise geography and improve the quality and position of geography education. Its public-benefit activities include scientific, educational, cultural and public-dissemination tasks, maintaining relations with international geographical organisations and Hungarian geographers beyond the borders, and supporting community activities that popularise geography. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe lies in its role as the broad national platform of Hungarian geography. Through its human-geographical, regional, economic-geographical and educational networks, MFT can support debates on urban systems, regional development, territorial inequalities, spatial transformation, urban-rural relations and post-socialist urbanisation in Hungary and the wider CEE region.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Hungary, national level, with international professional relations and links to Hungarian geographers beyond the borders. The Society's statutes define its operating area as Hungary, while its activities include contact with international geographical organisations and cross-border Hungarian geographical communities.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>MFT organises public scientific and educational events, lectures, travelling meetings, study trips, conferences, exhibitions and professional debates. It supports Hungarian geography education and maintains public-benefit collections, including a library, map collection, archive and manuscript collection. The Society publishes and supports geographical dissemination and scientific outputs, including Földrajzi Közlemények, its quarterly scientific journal.</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>Website: https://foldrajzitorsasag.hu. Address: 1142 Budapest, Erzsébet királyné útja 125. Postal address: 1112 Budapest, Budaörsi út 45. E-mail: info@foldrajzitorsasag.hu</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>National scientific and professional association of geographers. It is relevant for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network as a broad academic-professional platform connecting researchers, teachers, students and practitioners working on geography, spatial processes, regional development, urban and rural systems, and territorial change.</p>
<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>MFT could be an important Hungarian scientific-society partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value would be the mobilisation of the wider Hungarian geographical community, including researchers, teachers, students and professionals working on spatial development, urban and regional geography, settlement systems and territorial inequalities. It could support the network through dissemination, professional events, publications and links to geographical education. This role fits the SECPOLYC objective of</p>

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	mapping potential organisations and creating a longer-term cooperation framework for researchers and practitioners dealing with urban systems and spatial development in the V4/CEE region. MFT would be especially useful for broadening the network beyond specialised urban-planning and regional-science organisations, connecting it to the disciplinary base of geography and to comparative discussions on urbanisation, regional transformation, centre-periphery relations, spatial inequalities and post-socialist territorial development.
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No	HU 7
Name Original name and in English	Országos Főépítész Kollégium, National College of Chief Architects
Year of foundation	1989
Membership	The Kollégium is the professional organisation of Hungarian chief architects. It brings together municipal, county, city-with-county-rights, Budapest, district, associated-municipality, territorial/state and retired chief architects. Its members are elected by the wider body of Hungarian chief architects.
Number of members / employees	Roughly 300
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The organisation represents and supports the professional work of chief architects, whose role is central in preparing local-government decisions on settlement development, spatial regulation, the built environment, heritage protection and the shaping of the natural and built environment. The Kollégium acts as a professional advisory and proposal-making body on matters belonging to the competence of chief architects. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is strongly practice-oriented: chief architects are key actors in translating spatial-planning, urban-design and settlement-development principles into municipal regulation, development control, local design quality and long-term urban form.
Geographical scope	Hungary, national level, covering municipal, county, city-with-county-rights, Budapest, district and territorial/state chief architects. The organisation also maintains professional links with related national professional organisations.
Activities	The Kollégium organises the annual National Chief Architects' Conference, maintains the professional network of chief architects, prepares professional opinions and proposals, participates in consultations on architecture, spatial planning and building administration, and cooperates with related organisations such as the Hungarian Chamber of Architects, the Association of Hungarian Architects, the Hungarian Society for Urban and Spatial Planning and engineering organisations. It also administers and promotes the Chief Architect of the Year Award and the Chief Architect Lifetime Achievement Award, founded in 2000.

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Contact	<p>Address: 1088 Budapest, Ötpacsirta utca 2.</p> <p>Postal address: 1024 Budapest, Margit krt. 5/a.</p> <p>E-mail: foepiteszek@foepiteszek.hu</p>
Character	National professional association of chief architects. It is a practice-oriented planning, architectural and settlement-development organisation with direct links to municipal decision-making, spatial regulation, design quality, heritage protection, local development control and the professional governance of the built environment.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	The Országos Főépítészeti Kollégium could be a highly relevant Hungarian professional-practice partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value is direct access to chief architects, who are among the most important professional actors linking municipal leadership, spatial planning, architectural quality, heritage protection, development control and settlement-level implementation. The SECPOLYC network plan explicitly aims to map potential organisations and identify functions for a longer-term V4/CEE cooperation framework, while the project's policy recommendations target regional development, spatial planning, urban planning, transport development and professional associations. The Kollégium could contribute by mobilising practising chief architects, providing feedback on the practical feasibility of policy recommendations, supporting consultation with municipalities, and connecting comparative urban-system research to the everyday regulatory and design challenges of Hungarian towns and cities. Its role would be especially important in debates on secondary cities, local spatial regulation, settlement identity, built-heritage protection, urban design quality, and the institutional capacities needed for more balanced polycentric development in Central and Eastern Europe.

No	HU 8
Name Original name and in English	Megyei Jogú Városok Szövetsége, Association of Cities with County Rights, MVSZ
Year of foundation	1990
Membership	MJVSZ is a municipal association of Hungary's cities with county rights. According to its statutes, every city granted county-right status by the Hungarian Parliament may become a member. The Association states that all 25 cities with county rights have exercised this option and are members.
Number of members / employees	25 member cities. These are Hungary's largest non-capital urban municipalities with county-right status.

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The Association's goal is the collective representation, protection and assertion of the municipal rights and interests of cities with county rights; the improvement of local-government operation; and cooperation with domestic and international municipal associations. It also participates in political and professional forums and consultations, and has developed a service-oriented internal role towards its member cities. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is direct but practice-oriented: MJVSZ represents the Hungarian city category that most closely corresponds to the secondary-city focus of SECPOLYC. These cities are central to debates on polycentric development, territorial balance, urban–regional governance, local public services, infrastructure, economic development and the role of non-capital urban centres in national development.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Hungary, national level. The Association represents cities with county rights across the country, including major regional centres and county seats such as Debrecen, Győr, Pécs, Miskolc, Szeged, Székesfehérvár, Kecskemét and others.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>MJVSZ represents member cities in national-level policy and legislative processes, gives opinions on draft legislation and state decisions affecting cities with county rights, and participates in law-making and preparatory policy work. It maintains cooperation with state bodies, social-interest organisations, foreign organisations and international municipal associations; follows funding systems; coordinates potential project participation; supports international exchange; and regards the encouragement and support of scientific research as relevant for both the member cities and the Association as a whole.</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>Address: 1055 Budapest, Szent István krt. 3. Phone: +36 1 266 3838. E-mail: mjvsz@mjvsz.hu Website: https://www.mjvsz.hu</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>National municipal advocacy and interest-representation association of Hungary's cities with county rights. For the purposes of the V4/CEE Urban Research Network, its strongest profile is not academic research but direct access to city leadership, municipal experience, urban governance concerns and policy implementation challenges in Hungary's major non-capital cities.</p>
<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>MJVSZ could be one of the most important Hungarian municipal-stakeholder partners for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value would be direct access to the political and administrative leadership of Hungary's major non-capital cities, many of which are precisely the types of secondary cities that SECPOLYC treats as potential counterbalances to capital-city dominance. The project application explicitly identifies secondary-city municipalities, local and regional authorities and policy</p>

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	<p>stakeholders as target groups for policy recommendations, and stresses the need to connect academic evidence with policy and planning practice. MJVSZ could therefore contribute by mobilising city leaders and municipal experts, supporting stakeholder consultations, validating research findings from the perspective of city governments, and helping disseminate policy recommendations to Hungarian urban decision-makers. Its role would be particularly valuable in discussing the governance, infrastructure, economic-development, service-provision and financing conditions under which Hungarian secondary cities can act as stronger regional development centres. Through MJVSZ, the future network could move beyond academic and professional-planning circles and engage directly with the municipalities whose development trajectories are central to any realistic CEE agenda for polycentric urban development.</p>
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No	HU 9
Name Original name and in English	Klímbarád Települések Szövetsége, Association of Climate-Friendly Municipalities , KTSZ.
Year of foundation	2009
Membership	The Association is a municipal alliance of local governments committed to climate protection and climate adaptation. Its members include very small villages, small towns, Budapest districts and cities with county rights, from all parts of Hungary and, more broadly, Hungarian-inhabited areas of the Carpathian Basin.
Number of members / employees	More than 100 municipalities.
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The Association was created to support adaptation to unavoidable climate change and preparedness for climate-related challenges at local and settlement level through the sharing of professional experience. Its activities focus on increasing climate awareness, preparing settlement-level climate strategies and SECAPs, providing methodological and grant-related advice, and implementing environmental and climate-protection campaigns for local communities. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is mainly municipal and implementation-oriented. Climate adaptation, blue-green infrastructure, water retention, public-space resilience, local energy planning, participatory climate communication and municipal capacity-building are increasingly central to the development trajectories of CEE settlements. KTSZ could therefore help connect urban-system and polycentric-development research with the climate-adaptation challenges of Hungarian municipalities, especially smaller cities, districts and non-capital urban centres.

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Geographical scope	Primarily Hungary, with wider relevance for Hungarian-inhabited territories in the Carpathian Basin. The membership base covers municipalities of different sizes, including villages, small towns, Budapest districts and cities with county rights, from across the country.
Activities	KTSZ organises professional trainings for municipal decision-makers, experts and interested participants. Its portfolio includes climate-communication trainings, methodological consultations on climate strategies, and participatory and residential-facilitation trainings. Its expert team prepares and helps socialise climate strategies and SECAPs according to the Association's methodology, and supports municipalities in local climate-protection and environmental projects and campaigns. The Association also maintains a document library with official documents, reports and methodological materials, including guides for counties, Budapest districts, cities and settlement groups, greenhouse-gas inventory tools and model climate strategies. A major earlier project was the KEHOP-1.2.0-15-2016-00001 methodology, capacity-development and awareness-raising project on climate strategies, implemented between 2016 and 2019, which included trainings, regional professional events, publications and climate-adaptation dissemination materials.
Contact	Website: https://www.klimabarat.hu E-mail: info@klimabarat.hu Postal address: 1531 Budapest, Pf. 98, Hungary. Office: 1126 Budapest, Hungary, Kiss János altábornagy utca 47.
Character	Municipal association and applied professional network focused on local climate protection, climate adaptation, climate strategies, SECAPs, awareness-raising and municipal capacity-building. For the purposes of the V4/CEE Urban Research Network, its most relevant profile is the connection of settlement development, climate resilience, local environmental governance and municipal implementation practice.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	KTSZ could be a valuable Hungarian municipal and climate-adaptation partner for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value would be direct access to municipalities that are already committed to climate-conscious local development, including villages, small towns, Budapest districts and cities with county rights. This would complement SECPOLYC's focus on urban systems and polycentric development by bringing in the climate-resilience dimension of settlement development, particularly the practical challenges of local adaptation, municipal capacity, public engagement, SECAP preparation, water retention, blue-green infrastructure and climate communication. The SECPOLYC application stresses that the future network should map potential organisations, identify functions and activities, and support cooperation between researchers, professional experts and

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	practitioners in the V4/CEE region. KTSZ could contribute by mobilising climate-conscious municipalities, disseminating research and policy recommendations through its trainings and newsletters, testing findings against local implementation experience, and identifying how secondary cities and smaller settlements can integrate climate adaptation into wider urban-regional development strategies. Its strongest role would be to ensure that the future network treats polycentric urban development not only as an economic and spatial-planning issue, but also as a question of local climate resilience and sustainable municipal governance.
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No	HU 10
Name Original name and in English	Települési Önkormányzatok Országos Szövetsége, Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities TÖOSZ.
Year of foundation	1989
Membership	TÖOSZ is a voluntary national association of Hungarian local governments. Its members include a broad range of municipalities: Budapest district municipalities, county assemblies, cities with county rights, district-centre towns, small towns, large villages and small villages.
Number of members / employees	More than 1,700 member municipalities (out of 3184 municipalities of Hungary).
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	TÖOSZ's core mission is to identify, articulate, represent and defend local-government interests, and to contribute to a social, economic, legal and political environment that is favourable to local self-government, decentralisation and multi-level governance. Its statutes state that it seeks to support the development of local self-government, improve municipal performance, strengthen inter-municipal and micro-regional cooperation, and reinforce a territorial approach in municipal activity and public-service provision. Its connection to urban research in Central and Eastern Europe is therefore primarily municipal, governance-oriented and implementation-focused. TÖOSZ provides access to the local-government system as a whole, including small settlements, towns, district centres, cities with county rights and capital districts. This makes it relevant for research on urban–rural relations, secondary cities, local public services, decentralisation, municipal capacity, inter-municipal cooperation and the governance conditions of polycentric territorial development.
Geographical scope	Hungary, national level. Through its membership, TÖOSZ covers all types of Hungarian local governments and has county-level territorial organisation.

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Activities	TÖOSZ carries out interest representation, interest mediation, coordination, advocacy and professional support for local governments. Its tasks include supporting municipal operation, promoting municipal asset management, assisting cooperation between local governments, conducting consultations related to national budgetary decisions, commenting on draft legislation and state decisions, providing mediation between members, supporting international municipal cooperation, organising services, operating consultative and coordination forums, and improving information flows among members. It organises mayoral forums in every county each year and participates in several professional initiatives as organiser or co-organiser. It also publishes the quarterly <i>Önkormányzat</i> journal, sends newsletters to member municipalities, and operates digital and advisory services, including the TÖOSZ Online Platform, the Local Government Data Platform and a municipal hotline advisory service.
Contact	Address: 1071 Budapest, Damjanich u. 44. Phone: +361321 24 97 E-mail: toosz@toosz.hu Website: https://toosz.hu
Character	National municipal interest-representation, advocacy and service organisation. For the purposes of the V4/CEE Urban Research Network, its strongest profile is not academic research or professional planning, but direct access to Hungarian local governments, municipal leaders, county-level networks, public-service and governance experience, and the everyday implementation challenges of local development.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	TÖOSZ could be one of the most important Hungarian municipal-network partners for the V4/CEE Urban Research Network. Its main added value would be its exceptionally broad reach across the Hungarian local-government system, including small municipalities, towns, district centres, cities with county rights, Budapest districts and county governments. This would allow the network to connect academic evidence on urban systems, secondary cities and polycentric development with the practical experience of municipal leaders and local administrations. This role fits the SECPOLYC ambition to support effective regional and urban planning through new evidence, policy discourse and regional networking, while explicitly engaging policy and planning practitioners. TÖOSZ could contribute by mobilising municipalities for consultations, disseminating policy recommendations through its county forums, newsletters, journal and online platforms, and validating research findings against local governance realities. It would be especially useful for discussing decentralisation, inter-municipal cooperation, local public-service provision, municipal finance, administrative capacity, urban-rural linkages and the territorial governance conditions of more balanced development. Because SECPOLYC stresses that secondary cities and other non-capital urban centres need stronger policy attention in CEE, TÖOSZ could help ensure that the future network does not remain limited to researchers and planners but becomes connected to the municipalities whose capacities and decisions shape the practical possibilities of polycentric urban development.

Poland

Poland represents a particularly important case for the future V4/CEE Urban Systems Research and Planning Network because of the scale, diversity and multi-centred character of its urban system. Unlike smaller Visegrad countries, Poland has several large metropolitan and regional centres outside the capital, which makes it a key reference point for analysing secondary cities, functional urban areas, regional inequalities and the practical conditions of polycentric development. The organisations listed below reflect this complexity. They include national geographical institutions, expert bodies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, major research institutes, university centres and technical organisations with competence in spatial data and geoinformation. Their potential contribution lies above all in comparative research, territorial analysis, methodological development, GIS-based monitoring, policy-oriented expertise and academic networking. In the context of the proposed V4/CEE cooperation platform, Polish institutions could therefore play a major role in connecting urban-systems research with evidence-based spatial policy, particularly in relation to metropolitan regions, post-socialist urban transformation, regional development and the changing position of non-capital cities within national and European territorial structures.

No	PL 1
Name Original name and in English	Polskie Towarzystwo Geograficzne (Polish Geographical Society)
Year of foundation	1918
Membership	National scientific association of geographers.
Number of members /employees	Approximately 1,000 members (researchers, academics, teachers and doctoral students).
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The society aims to promote geographical research and integrate the geographical community in Poland. It supports research on urban geography, regional development and spatial processes in Central and Eastern Europe.
Geographical scope	Poland (regional branches) with international cooperation.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisation of scientific conferences and congresses • publication of scientific journals • networking of researchers and academic institutions • promotion of geographical knowledge
Contact	www.ptgeo.org.pl

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Character	Scientific association.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	A platform integrating researchers from different universities and institutes, supporting networking and organisation of conferences or workshops within the V4 research cooperation.

No	PL 2
Name Original name and in English	Komitet Nauk Geograficznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Committee for Geographical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences)
Year of foundation	1952
Membership	Expert committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences composed of leading Polish geographers.
Number of members /employees	Approx. 30–40 members.
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The committee coordinates scientific activities of the geographical community in Poland and promotes the development of research on spatial, social and economic processes, including urbanisation and regional development.
Geographical scope	Poland with international academic cooperation
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation of expert opinions and reports • coordination of research initiatives • organisation of conferences and scientific meetings • representation of Polish geography in international scientific structures
Contact	Polish Academy of Sciences Warsaw, Poland https://pan.pl/komitety/komitet-nauk-geograficznych/
Character	Advisory and expert scientific body.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	A strategic and advisory partner supporting the coordination of scientific cooperation among geographical institutions in the V4 region.

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No	PL 3
Name Original name and in English	Instytut Geografii i Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania im. Stanisława Leszczyckiego PAN (Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences)
Year of foundation	1953
Membership	Research institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences
Number of members /employees	Approx. 100–120 employees, including several dozen researchers
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The institute conducts research in socio-economic geography, physical geography and spatial organisation, including urban geography, regional development and spatial planning. It carries out analyses of urbanisation processes, settlement systems and regional development in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe.
Geographical scope	Poland, Central and Eastern Europe, European research projects
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific research projects • international research cooperation • policy analyses and expert reports for public administration • scientific publications and conferences.
Contact	Twarda 51/55 00-818 Warsaw, Poland www.igipz.pan.pl
Character	Public research institute.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	A key scientific partner capable of coordinating comparative research on urban systems and spatial policies in Central and Eastern Europe.

No	PL 4
Name Original name and in English	Wydział Geografii i Studiów Regionalnych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies, University of Warsaw)
Year of foundation	1918 (1977)
Membership	Faculty of the University of Warsaw
Number of members /employees	Approx. 150 academic staff members

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Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The faculty conducts research and education in socio-economic geography, urban studies, regional studies and spatial planning. Its research includes urban development, metropolitan processes and regional transformations in Central and Eastern Europe.
Geographical scope	Poland, Central and Eastern Europe.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic research and publications • higher education (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programmes) • participation in international research projects • cooperation with public administration and planning institutions
Contact	Warsaw, Poland www.wgsr.uw.edu.pl
Character	Public university faculty
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	A major academic centre capable of contributing to comparative research on urban development and regional policy in Central Europe.

No	PL 5
Name Original name and in English	Instytut Geografii i Gospodarki Przestrzennej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego (Institute of Geography and Spatial Management, Jagiellonian University)
Year of foundation	1849
Membership	Institute within the Jagiellonian University
Number of members /employees	Approx. 100 academic staff members.
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The institute conducts research on regional development, urbanisation, spatial planning and the transformation of post-industrial regions. It contributes to research on urban and regional transformations in Central and Eastern Europe.
Geographical scope	Poland and Central Europe
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific research projects • expert studies for regional and local authorities • educational programmes in spatial management and geography • international academic cooperation

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Contact	Kraków, Poland www.geo.uj.edu.pl
Character	University research institute
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	An important partner in research on urban transformation and regional development in post-socialist cities.

No	PL 6
Name Original name and in English	Instytut Geodezji i Kartografii (Institute of Geodesy and Cartography)
Year of foundation	1945
Membership	State research institute supervised by the Ministry of Development and Technology.
Number of members /employees	Several dozen researchers and technical specialists
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	The institute develops spatial data and geoinformation technologies used for monitoring spatial development, land use changes and urban growth. It provides analytical tools supporting spatial planning and urban research.
Geographical scope	Poland with participation in European and international projects
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geoinformation and remote sensing research • spatial analyses for public administration • monitoring land-use and environmental changes • development of GIS and spatial data infrastructure
Contact	Warsaw, Poland www.igik.edu.pl
Character	Public research and technical institute
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Provider of spatial data, GIS analyses and methodological support for urban and regional research within the V4 countries.

Slovakia

The Slovak institutional landscape is especially relevant for a future V4/CEE Urban Systems Research and Planning Network because it combines strong academic expertise in geography and regional development with applied planning institutions operating at national, metropolitan, regional and municipal levels. The organisations identified below include the Slovak Geographical Society, university departments in Košice, Bratislava and Nitra, the Institute of Geography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, municipal and metropolitan planning bodies, regional planning institutions and the national authority responsible for spatial planning and construction. This creates a broad potential for cooperation, linking research, teaching, spatial analysis, GIS-based methods, planning practice, public administration, and policy implementation. Slovakia's urban system is particularly important for comparative V4 debates because of the strong contrast between Bratislava and eastern Slovakia, the strategic role of Košice as a major secondary city, the relevance of cross-border and regional disparities, and the ongoing institutional development of spatial planning capacities. The listed Slovak organisations could therefore contribute academic research, methodological expertise, municipal and metropolitan planning experience, regional governance perspectives and national-level policy knowledge to the future network. As outlined in the current project document, Slovakia offers a well-balanced set of potential partners capable of connecting urban systems research with practical planning and territorial development challenges in Central Europe.

No	SK 1
Name Original name and in English	Slovak Geographical Society at the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovenská geografická spoločnosť pri SAV)
Year of foundation	1946
Membership	The Slovak Geographical Society is a voluntary professional association bringing together researchers, teachers, students, and professionals working in geography and related disciplines. Membership is open to individuals interested in geographical research, education, and the application of geographical knowledge in practice. Members participate in the activities of the society through conferences, seminars, working groups, and professional events.
Number of members /employees	Ca. 300 members

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The Slovak Geographical Society aims to promote the development of geography as a scientific discipline and to support cooperation among researchers, educators, and practitioners in geography and related fields.</p> <p>The society contributes to the dissemination of geographical knowledge, supports geographical education, and promotes the results of geographical research among professionals and the wider public.</p> <p>Through its regional branches across Slovakia, the society forms a nationwide network that facilitates cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and experience among geographical and related scientific institutions.</p> <p>Its activities include organizing scientific conferences and seminars, supporting cooperation among geographical workplaces in Slovakia, and contributing to research on spatial development, regional disparities, urban and rural development, and socio-spatial processes.</p> <p>The society provides a national platform for discussion and collaboration in areas related to urban systems, regional development, spatial planning, and territorial cohesion with particular attention to Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Slovakia, international, national, regional and local level</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of scientific conferences, seminars, and workshops in geography and regional development. • Support of cooperation between academic institutions, universities, and practitioners in spatial planning and regional policy. • Participation in the popularization of geography and support of geographical education. • Facilitation of professional exchange and networking among geographers working in different fields including urban and regional research.
<p>Contact</p>	<p>https://sgsnew.sav.sk/;</p> <p>President: Prof. PaedDr. PhDr. RNDr. Martin Boltžiar, PhD., MBE</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>Professional scientific association bringing together researchers and practitioners in geography, spatial planning, and regional development.</p>

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Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	The society represents the main professional platform connecting Slovak geographers working on spatial development, regional policy, and urban research. It can facilitate networking and dissemination of research results within the V4 urban research and planning community.
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No	SK 2
Name Original name and in English	Institute of Geography (Ústav geografie) Faculty of Science, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice
Year of foundation	1998
Membership	Members of institute
Number of members /employees	16 employees
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The Institute of Geography conducts research and teaching in the fields of human geography, physical geography, regional development, geoinformatics and remote sensing. Research activities focus on spatial processes and regional development in Slovakia and Central Europe.</p> <p>Particular attention is devoted to the study of regional disparities, urban and rural development, spatial organization of society, urban transitions, and social and economic transformation processes in post-socialist regions.</p> <p>The institute also develops and applies quantitative and qualitative research methods, including spatial analysis, GIS-based approaches, and field research. Through its research and teaching activities, the institute contributes to the understanding of urban systems, regional development patterns, and territorial cohesion in Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
Geographical scope	Slovakia, international, national, regional and local level – particular focus on East Slovakia and Košice urban region

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Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programmes in geography. • Research on regional development, spatial organization, and socio-economic processes in regions. • Development and application of GIS and spatial analytical methods. • Participation in national and international research projects. • Organization of conferences, workshops, summer schools, and scientific meetings. • Publication of scientific articles, monographs, and research reports in geography and related disciplines.
Contact	pf-sekretariat-uge@upjs.sk Head: doc. Mgr. Ladislav Novotný, PhD.
Character	University research and teaching institute specializing in geographical research, spatial analysis, and regional development.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Projects, schooling, conferences, publications, research activities, etc.

No	SK 3
Name Original name and in English	Department of Economic and Social Geography, Demography and Territorial Development (Katedra ekonomickej a sociálnej geografie, demografie a územného rozvoja), Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava.
Year of foundation	1952
Membership	Members of department
Number of members /employees	19 employees

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The department focuses on research in several disciplines of human geography and demography. Within human geography, it concentrates on issues related to economic, social, cultural, and political geography. Particular attention is devoted to the analysis of regional differentiation within the territory of Slovakia, urban and rural development, spatial aspects of public administration, local economic development, regional policy and development, and the application of e-government.</p> <p>Special emphasis is placed on demographic processes and structures, demographic forecasting, and population and social policy. An important component of the department's research activities is the development and application of quantitative methods, including modelling, human-geographical regionalization, analyses of spatial networks and flows, the use of GIS, as well as forecasting of socio-economic systems. At the same time, qualitative research methods are also strongly represented, particularly in studies focusing on poverty, marginal regions, social exclusion, and tourism.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>National and international, particular focus on Bratislava</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of university students – future experts. Organisation of conferences, providing scientific background for decision-makers. • A selection of research projects designed for the decision-making sphere: • Delineation of cities and urban regions in Slovakia, including the evaluation of functional types of settlements based on population density using raster-based methods. • Assessment of the availability of existing data necessary for producing accurate outputs on urban development in Slovakia.
<p>Contact</p>	<p>https://www.humannageografia.sk/eng/index.php; head: prof. RNDr. Ján Buček, PhD.</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>Academic staff and researchers engaged in research on urbanism, spatial planning, and regional development at international, national, regional, and micro-regional levels.</p>
<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>Projects, schooling, conferences, publications, research activities, etc.</p>

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No	SK 4
Name Original name and in English	Department of Regional Geography and Regional Development (Katedra regionálnej geografie a rozvoja regiónov), Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava.
Year of foundation	1974
Membership	Members of department
Number of members /employees	14 employees
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The department's current scientific research primarily focuses on:</p> <p>Comprehensive studies of regional structures across multiple dimensions, including their analysis, synthesis, and forecasting, with emphasis on the rational and ecological use of regional potentials.</p> <p>Research on both domestic and international regions, as well as global development trends.</p> <p>Development of methods and techniques for regional and macro-regional analysis, as well as comprehensive landscape assessment.</p> <p>Regional policy, development, and planning in Slovakia, particularly in connection with European integration processes.</p> <p>Identification of regional disparities, analysis of the causes of unequal regional development, and the formulation of measures to reduce the most pronounced differences between regions.</p> <p>Marginal regions, their position within higher-level regional structures, and their prospects for future development.</p> <p>Contemporary urban and rural systems and their associated issues, including settlement trends such as suburbanization.</p> <p>Current population migration trends, particularly changes in the spatial structure of internal migration in Slovakia since 2000.</p> <p>Current urban issues.</p> <p>Sustainable development.</p>
Geographical scope	National and international, particular focus on regions across Slovakia

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Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of university students – future experts. Organisation of conferences, providing scientific background for decision-makers. • A selection of research projects related to urban development: • Rural-urban rhythms: Hierarchy in commuting of mobile phone users in Slovakia • Weekly Rhythms of Population Presence in the Bratislava Metropolitan Region: A Typology Based on Mobile Phone Data
Contact	https://www.regionalnageografia.sk/ , Head: prof. RNDr. Ladislav Tolmáči, PhD.
Character	Academic staff and researchers engaged in research on regional development at national, regional, and micro-regional levels.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Projects, schooling, conferences, publications, research activities, etc.

No	SK 5
Name Original name and in English	Department of Geography, Geoinformatics and Regional Development (Katedra geografie, geoinformatiky a regionálneho rozvoja), Faculty of Natural Sciences and Informatics, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Year of foundation	1959
Membership	Members of department
Number of members /employees	14 employees
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	Research interests include: the study of regions at various hierarchical levels (Slovakia, the Nitra Region, districts of the Nitra Region, micro-regions, and municipalities); border areas and cross-border processes; regional labour markets; rural development challenges; the formation of new spatial structures; the assessment of landscape potential and the analysis of territorial problems at various spatial scales; regional disparities; and regional and sustainable development across different hierarchical levels of territory.

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Geographical scope	National and regional: Slovakia, the Nitra Region, microregions
Activities	Education of university students – future experts; research and conferences. The department organizes a scientific conference entitled <i>Geographical Aspects of the Central European Space</i> every two years, each time focusing on a different thematic area. https://www.kggr.fpvai.ukf.sk/en/index.php/conferences
Contact	https://www.kggr.fpvai.ukf.sk/en/ ; Head: Prof. PaedDr. PhDr. RNDr. Martin Boltžiar, PhD., MBE
Character	Academic staff and researchers engaged in research on regional development at national, regional, and micro-regional levels.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Projects, schooling, conferences, publications, research activities, etc.

No	SK 6
Name Original name and in English	Institute of Geography, Slovak Academy of Sciences (Geografický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied)
Year of foundation	1943
Membership	Members of the institute (researchers and technical staff)
Number of members /employees	35 employees
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The Institute of Geography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences conducts interdisciplinary research on spatial processes and regional development in Slovakia and Central Europe.</p> <p>Research activities focus on human geography, regional development, urban and rural systems, spatial planning, landscape transformation, environmental change, and geospatial technologies.</p> <p>Particular attention is devoted to issues of regional disparities, spatial organization of society, urbanization processes, metropolitan development, and the socio-economic transformation of regions.</p> <p>The institute participates in national and international research projects (e.g., Horizon Europe, ESPON-related research, and other European research initiatives) and contributes to the development of analytical tools and spatial data used in territorial policy and regional planning.</p>

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Geographical scope	Slovakia, Central Europe, international research cooperation
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic and applied research in human and physical geography. • Research on regional development, spatial planning, and urban and rural systems. • Development and application of GIS and spatial analytical methods. • Participation in international research projects and scientific networks. • Publication of scientific papers, monographs, and policy-relevant studies related to spatial development. • Organization of conferences, workshops, and scientific meetings.
Contact	https://geography.sav.sk/ Head: Mgr. Daniel Michniak, PhD.
Character	Public research institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences specializing in geographical research and spatial analysis.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	The institute is one of the main research institutions in Slovakia focusing on spatial development, regional policy, and urban processes. Its research expertise, international project experience, and analytical capacities make it a key partner for cooperation within a Central European network focused on urban systems and polycentric development.

No	SK 7
Name Original name and in English	Department of the Chief Architect of the City of Košice (Útvar hlavného architekta mesta Košice)
Year of foundation	1965
Membership	Members of the department (planners, architects, engineers, and other specialists involved in urban planning and city development)
Number of members /employees	28 employees

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The mission of the Department of the Chief Architect of the City of Košice is to guide and coordinate the sustainable spatial development of the city through urban planning, architectural policy, and infrastructure planning. The department prepares and manages spatial planning documents, evaluates major development proposals, and supports strategic planning and long-term urban development.</p> <p>Through cooperation with universities and research institutions, including Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice and the Technical University of Košice, the department contributes to knowledge exchange and the application of research in urban planning and spatial development. Its activities are closely related to contemporary challenges of urban transformation, sustainable development, and metropolitan governance in Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Local - Košice</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>The Department of the Chief Architect consists of three main divisions: Urban Planning, Architecture, and Infrastructure.</p> <p>Urban Planning Division – prepares and updates spatial planning documents, evaluates major investment projects, coordinates planning activities with surrounding municipalities, and supports public participation in planning processes.</p> <p>Architecture Division – oversees the application of architectural and urban design principles in development projects, provides expert opinions on building proposals, and organizes architectural competitions for projects of citywide importance.</p> <p>Infrastructure Division – coordinates the planning of transport, technical, and green infrastructure, prepares analytical studies, and evaluates spatial and economic impacts of infrastructure development.</p> <p>Through these activities the department contributes to strategic urban development, professional regulation of spatial development, and the improvement of the urban environment.</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>Head: Dipl.-Ing. Architekt Petr Kropp, petr.kropp@kosice.sk</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>Professional planning and advisory department within the Košice City Magistrate responsible for urban planning, architecture, and infrastructure coordination.</p>

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Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	The department represents a key municipal institution responsible for spatial planning and urban development in one of Slovakia's largest cities. Its practical experience in strategic planning, spatial regulation, and cooperation with academic institutions makes it a relevant partner for applied research, knowledge exchange, and policy discussions within a Central European urban research network.
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No	SK 8
Name Original name and in English	Institute of Spatial Planning (Inštitút priestorového plánovania)
Year of foundation	2001
Membership	Members of the Institute (experts in spatial planning, urbanism, regional development, environmental planning, GIS, and sustainable mobility, i.e. planners, architects, analysts, and researchers)
Number of members /employees	13 employees
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The mission of the Institute of Spatial Planning is to support research, knowledge development, and professional practice in spatial planning, urban development, and regional policy. The institute promotes evidence-based planning and informed decision-making through research, analytical studies, and cooperation with public authorities, municipalities, and academic institutions.</p> <p>Its activities contribute to the understanding of spatial and urban dynamics, the preparation of strategic planning documents, and the development of sustainable territorial policies. Through international cooperation and participation in European projects, the institute contributes to knowledge exchange and research on spatial development and urban systems in Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
Geographical scope	Slovakia, international, national, regional and local level
Activities	The Institute of Spatial Planning participates in international research and development projects and prepares spatial planning documents, urban studies, and strategic development plans for municipalities and regions.

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	<p>Its activities include GIS analyses, mobility and parking planning, environmental planning, and the preparation of methodological and analytical materials for spatial and regional development policies. The institute has contributed to the preparation of strategic and methodological documents, including materials related to municipal and regional development programmes, national regional development strategies, and sustainable mobility initiatives.</p> <p>The institute also cooperates with universities, including the University of Economics in Bratislava, where it contributes to teaching activities and professional training in public administration and regional development.</p> <p>(see EU Projects)</p>
Contact	<p>ipp@ipp-oz.sk, +421 905 277 485, Head: Ing. Ľubomír Macák</p>
Character	Professional expert organization focusing on spatial planning, urban and regional development, GIS analyses, and sustainable mobility.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	The institute represents an applied research and professional planning organization with experience in spatial planning projects, strategic development documents, and international cooperation. Its expertise in applied spatial planning and regional policy makes it a valuable partner for collaboration within a Central European network focused on urban systems and polycentric development.

No	SK 9
Name Original name and in English	Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava - MIB (Metropolitný inštitút Bratislavy)
Year of foundation	2019
Membership	Members of MIB (architects, urban planners, analysts, and other experts involved in city development, public space design, and strategic planning)
Number of members /employees	ca. 50

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<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava is responsible for preparing strategic and conceptual documents related to urban development, architecture, and spatial planning of the Slovak capital. Its mission is to promote high-quality urban planning, architecture, and public space design that respond to the needs of residents and contemporary social and environmental challenges.</p> <p>Through research, analytical work, and the preparation of urban development strategies, the institute contributes to evidence-based urban policy and sustainable metropolitan development. Its activities address issues such as public space transformation, urban regeneration, mobility, and climate adaptation, which are key topics in contemporary urban research across Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Bratislava metropolitan area; cooperation at national and international level</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of strategic and conceptual planning documents for the City of Bratislava. • Organization of architectural and urban design competitions. • Development of urban and public space design manuals and methodological guidelines. • Preparation of urban studies, analyses, and spatial development concepts. • Promotion of participatory planning and public involvement in urban development processes. • Organization of lectures, workshops, and discussions on architecture and city development.
<p>Contact</p>	<p>info@mib.sk Director: Petra Marko, MA Arch ARB</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>Public urban planning and strategic development institute established by the City of Bratislava.</p>
<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>As the main conceptual urban planning institute of the Slovak capital, MIB represents a key partner for applied urban research, knowledge exchange, and cooperation between academia, planning practice, and public administration within the Central European urban research community.</p>

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No	SK 10
Name Original name and in English	Urban Planning Institute of the Košice Self-Governing Region (Urbanistický inštitút Košického samosprávneho kraja)
Year of foundation	2026
Membership	Members of the institute (experts in urban and regional planning, spatial analysis, and territorial development)
Number of members /employees	ca. 10 (just established, planning to hire more experts)
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The mission of the Urban Planning Institute of the Košice Self-Governing Region is to support sustainable spatial and regional development through analytical work, planning activities, and coordination of territorial policies at the regional level.</p> <p>The institute contributes to the preparation of strategic and spatial development documents, promotes evidence-based planning, and facilitates cooperation between regional authorities, municipalities, and academic institutions. Through its activities, the institute supports knowledge exchange and contributes to addressing challenges related to regional development, spatial organization, and urban–rural interactions in Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
Geographical scope	Košice Self-Governing Region; cooperation with municipalities and regional development actors.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of analytical and strategic documents related to regional and spatial development. • Support for spatial planning processes and territorial coordination within the region. • Collection and analysis of spatial and socio-economic data for regional planning. • Cooperation with municipalities, public institutions, and research organizations. • Contribution to discussions on sustainable regional and territorial development.
Contact	urbin.ksk@vucke.sk Head: Ing. arch. Peter Serfözö

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Character	Regional planning and analytical institute established by the Košice Self-Governing Region to support spatial and territorial development.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	The institute represents a regional-level planning institution focusing on territorial development and spatial coordination. Its role in regional planning and cooperation with municipalities makes it a relevant partner for discussions on polycentric development, regional governance, and urban–rural relations in Central Europe.

No	SK 11
Name Original name and in English	Authority for Spatial Planning and Construction of the Slovak Republic (Úrad pre územné plánovanie a výstavbu Slovenskej republiky)
Year of foundation	2023
Membership	Employees of the authority (experts in spatial planning, urbanism, architecture, construction regulation, law, public administration, and geospatial information systems)
Number of members /employees	over 100 employees
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The mission of the Office for Spatial Planning and Construction of the Slovak Republic is to ensure the effective functioning and development of the national spatial planning system and construction policy.</p> <p>The office is responsible for developing legislative frameworks, methodological guidelines, and strategic documents related to spatial planning and territorial development. It plays a key role in shaping national policies affecting urban development, infrastructure planning, and territorial governance.</p> <p>Through cooperation with public institutions, regional and local authorities, and international partners, the office contributes to the development of modern planning systems and the exchange of knowledge related to spatial planning and urban development in Central and Eastern Europe.</p>
Geographical scope	Slovakia; national level with coordination of regional and local planning systems.

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Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and implementation of national spatial planning policies and legislation. • Development of methodological guidelines and standards for spatial planning. • Coordination of spatial planning activities across national, regional, and local levels. • Participation in national and international initiatives related to spatial planning and territorial governance. • Support for digitalization and modernization of spatial planning systems.
Contact	<p>info@stavebnyurad.gov.sk</p> <p>Head: JUDr. Milan Valašík</p>
Character	Central state authority responsible for spatial planning and construction policy in Slovakia
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	As the national authority responsible for spatial planning policy, the office plays a key role in shaping territorial development frameworks in Slovakia. Its participation would strengthen links between research, planning practice, and public policy within a Central European urban research and planning network.

Czech Republik

The Czech Republic brings a specific institutional profile to the future V4/CEE Urban Systems Research and Planning Network, shaped by the close interaction between geography, spatial planning, architecture, public administration and metropolitan development practice. The organisations identified below range from long-established scholarly societies and university departments to state-supported planning institutions, professional associations and urban planning bodies working directly with metropolitan transformation. This gives the Czech contribution a particularly strong applied-planning and institutional-policy dimension. The Czech case is also relevant because its urban system combines the dominance of Prague with a dense network of medium-sized and regional cities, historically embedded settlement structures, advanced spatial-planning instruments and extensive experience with urban regeneration, industrial heritage, public-space development and metropolitan governance. These organisations could support the future network by contributing planning methodologies, comparative urban and regional research, educational cooperation, professional consultation, public-facing dissemination, and expertise in linking national spatial development frameworks with city-level planning practice. In this respect, the Czech partners would strengthen the network's capacity to connect conceptual debates on polycentric development with concrete planning instruments and institutional experience from Central Europe.

No	CZ 1
Name Original name and in English	Česká geografická společnost (Czech Geographical Society)
Year of foundation	1894
Membership	<p>The Czech Geographical Society is seeking to expand its membership base. It currently offers the opportunity to become an individual member or a collective member of the society.</p> <p>Individual membership is open to anyone over the age of 18 after paying a registration fee of CZK 50 and an annual membership fee. The annual membership fee is CZK 600 for regular members and CZK 300 for students and pensioners. Legal entities (institutions) can become collective members of the Czech Geographical Society.</p> <p>The recommended annual contribution for collective members of the Czech Geographical Society is CZK 10,000 for profit-making organizations and universities, and CZK 1,000 for non-profit organizations and groups of citizens (primary schools, secondary schools, civic associations, clubs, etc.).</p>
Number of members /employees	cc. 400 individuals, 20 collective participants

Conceptual and operational plan of Visegrád Network for Urban Systems' Research and Planning

<p>Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE</p>	<p>The Czech Geographical Society is a registered association that brings together scientists, educators, and professionals in geography and related fields. The Czech Geographical Society strives to further develop and raise the profile of geography as a scientific discipline, to develop geographical education in primary and secondary schools, and to promote geography and disseminate the results of geographical research to the general public.</p> <p>The Czech Geographical Society builds on a long tradition of geographical societies dating back to 1894 and is one of the oldest scientific societies in Czechia.</p> <p>The society's current activities focus on several priority areas:</p> <p>Publishing the professional journals <i>Geografie</i>, <i>Informace České geografické společnosti</i>, <i>Geografické rozhledy</i>, and the monographic series <i>Geographica</i></p> <p>Participation in the organization of the Geography Olympiad, a competition for talented pupils and students interested in geography, and the organization of competitions for the best bachelor's thesis in the field of geography, Student Scientific Work, and the Competition for the Best Dissertation in the Field of Geography.</p> <p>Organization of conferences, seminars, and other professional meetings</p> <p>Popularization of geography through the organization of Geography Days, in which all geography departments across the Czech Republic participate annually, and other activities.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>Czechia, national level</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>This involves hundreds of professional and popularization activities related to geography and urban systems research.</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>https://geography.cz/en/ (Pavel Chromý as the current president)</p>
<p>Character</p>	<p>Association of professionals active in geography and urban planning, regional development and professions related to this fields.</p>
<p>Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network</p>	<p>This is the most important cooperation platform of the Czech professionals in practice oriented urban studies and planning.</p>

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No	CZ 2
Name Original name and in English	Ústav územního rozvoje (The Institute for Spatial Development)
Year of foundation	1994
Membership	<p>The purpose of the establishment of the ISD is to provide professional background and assistance in performing specific competencies assigned to its founder. The activities of the ISD are carried out mainly in the fields of spatial planning, building regulations, spatial development and regional policy.</p>
Number of members /employees	cc. 40 participants
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The ISD acts in providing the tasks imposed by the Building Act, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting research, publishing and addressing conceptual issues both of theory and practice in the field of spatial planning and building regulations, building culture and the built environment, urbanism and architecture; • Developing the Architecture and Building Culture Policy drafts, Spatial Development Policy, Spatial Development Plan, and spatial planning documentation for the territory of the state; • Operating the Construction Technical Prevention System, drafting technical requirements for buildings, their continuous updating, and assessment of the causes of building accidents or participation in it, if they significantly affect public interests by their extent or repeated consequences; • Recording of spatial planning activities; • Maintaining national geoportal for spatial planning and standardisation of spatial planning activities. <p>It is involved in providing the tasks imposed by government resolutions, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the fulfilment of the measures imposed on the founder and the ISD by the Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic; • Cooperating in providing the fulfilment of the tasks imposed on the founder by the Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic, including the necessary spatial planning documentation; • Cooperating in the development of documents for the analysis of the situation in the field of spatial planning and building regulations.

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	<p>It performs the tasks arising from international commitments, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the background materials for cooperation in the field of spatial development of the V4+2 countries; • Providing the activities of the ESPON National Contact Point. <p>Moreover, it provides the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodological assistance in the field of spatial planning and building regulations; • Consultancy and research activities; • The study, documentation, publication and publishing activities; • Development of information systems; • Preparation of background materials for the operational activities of the founder, including auxiliary activities; • Other tasks as decided by the founder.
Geographical scope	Czechia, national level
Activities	<p>The Institute for Spatial Development provides the following outputs within activities performed:</p> <p><u>Spatial Development Plan</u> (SDP) - activity based on Section 11 of Act No. 183/2006 Coll., as amended (hereinafter also referred to as the Building Act). The ISD develops a draft of the first Spatial Development Plan.</p> <p><u>Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic</u> (SDP) and the necessary spatial planning documentation - activity based on Section 11 of Act No. 183/2006 Coll., as amended. ISD is a producer of the Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic document and its updates and also develops draft spatial analytical documents for the territory of the state. <u>Spatial analytical documents of the Czech Republic</u> are presented on the <u>ISD Map Portal</u>.</p> <p><u>Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic</u> (ABCP) - activity based on Section 21 of Act No. 283/2021 Coll., effective from 1 January 2023. Initially dealt with by the Government Resolution No. 22 of 14 January 2015. The ISD is the producer of the Architecture and Building Culture Policy of the Czech Republic document and its updates (currently, Update No. 1 is under development). The ISD cooperates on selected measures to fulfil the strategic objectives of the document.</p> <p>National Geoportal of Spatial Planning (NGSP) - activity based on Sections 11 and 161a of the Building Act. The task of the ISD is to create a data repository of standardised spatial planning documentation until the NGSP establishment and to provide assistance to regional authorities in transferring data to the central data repository.</p> <p><u>Standardisation of spatial planning documentation</u> - the ISD, in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development, provide</p>

	<p>methodological support to the developers and creators of spatial planning documentation in the implementation of the requirements for standardisation of spatial planning documentation, especially spatial plans, and cooperates in the preparation of further standardisation.</p> <p>Registration of spatial planning activities (RSPA) - the ISD has created and maintained this system since 2000. Activities based on Sections 11 and 162 of the Building Act. It is a continuous registration and updating of data on the process of creation of spatial planning documentation and spatial planning documentation of municipalities and regions. It is linked to the Register of Spatial Identification, Addresses and Immovable Property (RSIAIP). The system should become part of the NGSP in the future.</p> <p>ISD has created and has been managing the Construction Technical Prevention System (CTPS) since 2008 - an activity based on Section 12 of the Building Act. The aim is to identify and record the causes of defects, failures and construction accidents. <i>Both the Registration of spatial planning activities and the Construction Technical Prevention System have now been transformed into new technologies.</i></p> <p>Analysis of the state administration performance in the field of building regulations and spatial planning - activity based on the Government Resolution No. 774 of 19 October 2011.</p> <p>ISD is the national contact point for the Czech Republic within the ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) programme. It participates in providing the background materials for cooperation in the field of spatial development of the V4+2.</p> <p>Consultation Centre for Construction Law in the field of spatial planning - ISD provides consultations and methodological assistance in the performance of tasks arising from the Building Act. One of the outputs is the web application 1000 Questions dealing with Construction Law and Discussion about Construction Law.</p> <p>Spatial Planning Information Website - an open, continuously updated system of links to relevant information in the field of spatial planning and spatial development, resulting from the activities of the ISD and external sources. It is intended for public administration, professionals and the general public.</p> <p>Spatial Development Interpretative Dictionary - a continuously updated and amended catalogue of terms and definitions from the field of spatial development and related fields. It is intended mainly for public administration and the professional public.</p> <p>The ISD carries out regular updates of web manuals to assist and provide necessary information to the state administration, local government and professional and general public - Limits of Land Use, Authorities Involved in the Process of Spatial Planning, Principles and Rules of Spatial Planning, Average Prices of Transport and Technical Infrastructure of Municipalities.</p>
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	<p>Urbanism and Spatial Development Journal - is a professional journal intended for the needs of planning authorities and the professional public. It has been published since 1998 and is issued 6 times a year. It includes a regular appendix called "Acquisition Practice" and "Building and Administrative Practice", and occasional monothematic appendices. The journal is included in the database of scientific journals CEJSH (Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities), ERIH+ (European Reference Index for Humanities and Social Sciences), EBSCO database (reference database of online scientific journals) and the List of peer-reviewed non-impacted journals published in the Czech Republic.</p> <p>The ISD operates a scientific library for its own needs and the professional public. It produces an online catalogue containing records of all books, reports and electronic resources in the ISD library collection. It also contains records of selected articles from Czech and foreign journals published since 1990.</p> <p>In cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development, the ISD actively participates in the organisation of national conferences on spatial planning and building regulations every second year.</p>
Contact	https://www.uur.cz/
Character	It is an organisational unit of the state, established by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	This is the most important cooperation platform of the Czech professionals in Regional planning and regional development.

No	CZ 3
Name Original name and in English	Asociace pro urbanismus a územní plánování (Association for Urban and Regional Planning of the Czech Republic)
Year of foundation	2005
Membership	<p>Membership fees are CZK 900 per year; for pensioners whose sole income is their pension, full-time students, and members on parental leave whose sole income is parental allowance, the fee is CZK 200; members over 80 years of age are exempt from membership fees.</p> <p>Contributions are always due by June 30 of the given year. Contributions can be paid by bank transfer to the Association's account no. 1922930399/0800.</p> <p>Paid membership fees entitle members to a reduced fee for events organized by the Association (conferences, study trips).</p>

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Number of members /employees	cc. 120 participants
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>Our goal is to influence human behavior towards the optimal development of residential structures, the harmonious arrangement of the territory, maintaining ecological balance and preservation of cultural heritage.</p> <p>We strive to better integrate urban and regional planning in the broader social context, to increase the professional level of planners and the quality of their work, to share ideas and experiences.</p> <p>As an independent and non-political organization we seek to be a professional base for public administration.</p>
Geographical scope	Czechia, national level
Activities	<p>Every year we organize for our members and other professionals two conferences, each on a different topic in the field of urban planning, where we invite leading experts to lecture on the topic. The contributions of these conferences are published in conference proceedings.</p> <p>Another event is the annual workshop, focusing particularly on sharing of experiences and best practices of practicing planners, and the discussion of problematic aspects of the profession.</p> <p>We also regularly organize excursions abroad, associated with exploring the local planning culture, and successful developments.</p> <p>An important part of our activity is also independent professional advice for regions and municipalities in the field of spatial and strategic planning, building regulations and assessment of investment projects and development concepts.</p> <p>For state institutions and civil society organizations we offer expert services, in particular in the form of commenting on laws, regulations, standards and other measures in the field of construction, conservation of nature and historical heritage.</p>
Contact	Petr Durdík , durdik@volny.cz
Character	<p>The Association for Urbanism and Spatial Planning of the Czech Republic</p> <p>is a voluntary association of experts and individuals working in the fields of urbanism and spatial planning and related fields.</p>
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	voluntary association of experts and individuals working in the fields of urbanism and spatial planning and related fields.

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No	CZ 4
Name Original name and in English	Institut plánování a rozvoje hl. m. Prahy (Prague Institute of Planning and Development)
Year of foundation	2013
Membership	-
Number of members /employees	-
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	Key urban planning authority for Prague. Prepares strategic planning documents and spatial plans for the capital city.
Geographical scope	Czechia, Prague metropolitan area
Activities	We are Prague's main conceptual workplace in the field of architecture, urban planning, development, creation, and city management. We involve the public in planning so that we don't lose local knowledge. We present how Prague will change at CAMP, so come visit us. Our goal is for Prague to develop and become a healthier, more competitive, stronger, and richer city. And for all of us to live better lives here.
Contact	Boháč Ondřej Mgr. bohac@ipr.praha.eu
Character	We are an institution open to discussion with residents about their city. We strive to explain everything we do in detail and present it publicly. We are an open institution. Anyone who is interested can learn a great deal about Prague and its plans. We wanted there to be a physical place on the map of Prague where you can come and ask what is going to change in the city. So we created it right here – CAMP (Center for Architecture and Urban Planning).
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Public discussion and exhibition platform on urban planning and architecture in Prague.

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No	CZ 5
Name Original name and in English	Fakulta architektury, České vysoké učení v Praze (Czech Technical University in Prague – Faculty of Architecture)
Year of foundation	1976
Membership	-
Number of members /employees	178 professors, 1,563 students
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	<p>The Research Centre for Industrial Heritage is the only institution in the Czech Republic that systematically maps the technical and industrial heritage, and deals with the further use of heritage objects. The results of the research are collected together in the Industrial Topography of the Czech Republic, a project carried out within the program of applied research under the Ministry of Culture.</p> <p>The Institute of Intermedia (IIM) is a shared workplace of the CTU Faculty of Architecture, the CTU Faculty of Electrical Engineering, and the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. It provides a platform for international cooperation among students and teachers at the interface between the arts and technology.</p> <p>Research at the Faculty on current trends in urban planning and development contributes to Urbanism Checklist (Inventura Urbanismu) (2010-2015), which has been working closely with the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR) in the past two years.</p>
Geographical scope	Czechia, national and international level
Activities	<p>We are the only faculty of architecture in the Czech Republic that offers 3 study programmes: Architecture and Urbanism, Landscape Architecture, and Design. Our offer includes all fields of study in area of designing buildings, settlements, regions and landscapes, and also industrial design.</p> <p>We offer an educational system of vertical studio teaching, in which students from the second year of study to the fifth year of study all work together on collaborative projects.</p> <p>We have a wide range of agreements with outstanding faculties of architecture, leading to extensive student exchanges with European and world universities.</p> <p>We organize cycles of lectures and workshops led by foreign architects, urbanists and designers: November Talks (2017, 2016, 2015), Best of British (2014), French Future (2014), Dutch Footprint (2013), Design versus Architecture (2012), Ecology versus Architecture (2010)</p>

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	<p>We organize regular workshops and lectures that complement the taught course and enrich students' view of broader topics: City Development I -VII (2008 - 2015), Monuments (2006 - 2015), Overcoming Barriers (2009 - 2015), Public Space Security (2013 - 2014).</p> <p>We organize large international congresses and conferences: eCAADe 2012 (Education and Research in Computer Aided Architectural Design in Europe), 2015 AESOP Congress in Prague (Association of European Schools of Planning) and conferences and workshops on current issues: Municipal Park (2007), Antidesign (2008), Design (2009), Population ageing, new trends ... (2012), Housing estate, how next? (2014).</p> <p>We publish ALFA, a monthly faculty magazine that reports on activities at the faculty, and the annual Faculty Yearbook, which covers one year of work carried out in the Faculty's institutes and studios.</p> <p>We publish articles and papers, in cooperation with publishers in the field of architecture and culture (Kant, Torst, and others), and in cooperation with Golden Cut (Zlatý řez), the only Czech architectural magazine that is included in the list of reviewed Czech magazines.</p> <p>We carry out research on the reliability of the load-bearing structures of historical buildings, in which the Faculty cooperates with the Klokner Institute of CTU, the Faculty of Civil Engineering of CTU, the Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, the National Monument Institute, and also with the Department of Architecture of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, USA, and the Centre d'Histoire des Sciences et des Techniques, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France.</p> <p>We Are Members of the</p> <p>European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE)</p> <p>Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)</p> <p>Arbeitskreis für Hausforschung e.V.</p>
Contact	doc. Ing. arch. Dalibor Hlaváček, Ph.D., dekan@fa.cvut.cz
Character	The Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU) is the oldest and one of the largest technical universities in Europe, founded in 1707. Based in Prague, it offers studies at 8 faculties and 6 university institutes for more than 17,800 students. The school is known for its demanding curriculum, strong focus on technical fields, and applied mathematics.
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Projects, conferences, publications, research activities, etc.

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No	CZ 6
Name Original name and in English	Univerzita Karlova (Charles University)
Year of foundation	1347
Membership	-
Number of members /employees	4,000 professors, 51,000 students
Mission – goal and its connection to urban research in CEE	Department of Social Geography and Regional Development Department of Environmental Studies Urban and regional studies research groups
Geographical scope	Czechia, national and international level
Activities	Charles University was founded in 1348 and is one of the world's oldest universities. The largest and most famous Czech university, it also ranks highest among Czech schools in international rankings. It is the only Czech university ranking among the world's top 250 universities .
Contact	prof. RNDr. Jiří Zima, CSc. rektor@cuni.cz
Character	<p>The Department of Social Geography and Regional Development is one of the top social geography university departments in the Czech Republic. Among the staff are senior researchers from the Czech Science Foundation and the Grant Agency of Charles University. Members of the department have participated in international projects (FP7, HORIZON 2020) and, in many respects, are key players at the national level (mainly through their activities in the Czech Geographical Society) and international level (for example, serving on the editorial boards of prestigious journals or other important scientific research groups).</p> <p>The department is dedicated to the development of five main scientific disciplines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social geography and regional development • regional and political geography • geography education • global migration and development studies • social epidemiology
Its potential relation to the new V4(CEE) Urban research network	Projects, conferences, publications, research activities, etc.

Perspectives of a V4 cooperation on urban systems

The previous chapters have shown that the basis for a V4/CEE cooperation platform already exists. International benchmark networks demonstrate the value of sustained professional and academic cooperation. At the same time, the mapping of potential partner organisations in the Visegrad countries shows that the region has substantial institutional capacity in urban research, spatial planning, geography, regional science, municipal governance and territorial policy. The main challenge, therefore, is not the absence of relevant actors. Still, the lack of a stable regional framework to connect them around shared Central and Eastern European urban development questions. A V4 Urban Systems Research and Planning Network could fill this gap by creating regular channels of communication, comparison and joint agenda-setting.

The core rationale of the network is that many of the most important urban and territorial challenges of the Visegrad countries are structurally similar, yet still mostly discussed within national professional and policy arenas. These include the changing role of secondary cities, the dominance of capital-city regions, suburbanisation, uneven regional development, shrinking and ageing in smaller towns, cross-border functional relations, infrastructure constraints, climate adaptation, housing pressures, municipal capacity and the governance conditions of polycentric development. A V4 cooperation framework would enable systematic comparison of these challenges, identification of shared patterns and differences, and the formulation of regionally grounded research and policy messages that can also be represented in wider European debates.

At the same time, the network should be conceived pragmatically. Its first task should not be to create a heavy formal institution, but to consolidate the cooperation already initiated through the SECPOLYC project. The successful project meetings, partner consultations, national mappings and professional discussions provide a starting point for a more durable but flexible cooperation platform. In the short term, the network can operate as an informal professional-academic forum to support communication, thematic exchange, and joint outputs. In the medium term, it may become a vehicle for comparative research, policy briefs, teaching cooperation, conference sessions, project applications and dialogue with European organisations. The following sections, therefore, outline the possible functions, activities, operational frameworks and next steps through which the initial project-based cooperation could develop into a longer-term V4/CEE knowledge infrastructure on urban systems and spatial planning.

Potential functions

The future V4 Urban Systems Research and Planning Network could fulfil several complementary functions. Its overall role would be to create an organised framework for cooperation between researchers, planning professionals, municipal actors and policy-oriented institutions working on urban systems and spatial development in Central and Eastern Europe. The network should not duplicate the work of existing national organisations or European networks. Its specific added value would be to connect these actors regionally, identify common V4/CEE issues and translate fragmented national knowledge into comparative, policy-relevant and internationally visible outputs.

A first potential function is **knowledge exchange and professional communication**. The mapping of organisations in the previous chapter shows that relevant expertise is already present in all V4 countries. Still, it is distributed across different institutional fields: geography, regional science, urban planning, architecture, municipal governance, climate adaptation, spatial data and public administration. The network could provide a regular platform for these communities to meet, compare experiences, and identify shared research and planning problems. This function is especially important because many CEE urban development issues are experienced similarly across countries, yet they are often discussed in separate national languages, professional cultures, and policy systems.

A second function is **comparative research agenda setting**. The network could help formulate those urban and territorial questions that are particularly relevant from a V4/CEE perspective but remain underrepresented in wider European debates. These include the changing role of secondary cities, capital-city dominance, post-socialist suburbanisation, shrinking towns, settlement-network transformation, urban–rural relations, cross-border functional areas, municipal capacity, housing restructuring, public-service provision, climate resilience and the planning conditions of polycentric development. By defining common research priorities, the network could support future joint publications, research projects and policy-oriented comparative analyses.

A third function is **policy translation and agenda formation**. One of the main lessons from European benchmark networks is that research becomes influential when it is converted into accessible policy messages. The V4 network could prepare short policy briefs, comparative notes, thematic statements and recommendations for municipalities, regional authorities, national ministries and European organisations. This function would be particularly valuable in areas where CEE countries face similar challenges but lack a sufficiently visible shared voice, such as balanced territorial development, secondary-city strengthening, metropolitan governance, spatial planning reform and territorial cohesion.

A fourth function is **bridging academic research and planning practice**. The proposed network should deliberately avoid becoming a purely academic forum. Its strength would lie in connecting university departments and research institutes with professional associations, municipal networks, planning bodies and public authorities. Such a bridge is needed because urban systems research often produces analytical knowledge that is difficult to translate into local planning decisions. At the same time, practitioners and municipalities frequently possess implementation knowledge that remains insufficiently visible in academic debates. The network could create structured encounters between these two forms of expertise.

A fifth function is **capacity building and education**. The network could support early-career researchers, doctoral students, young planners, and municipal professionals through workshops, doctoral sessions, summer schools, short training events, and teaching collaborations. This would be particularly relevant for themes where V4 countries share similar learning needs, such as functional urban area analysis, GIS-based settlement research, climate-sensitive planning, participatory planning, strategic urban governance, and comparative spatial policy analysis. Over time, the network could also support the sharing of teaching materials or guest lectures across participating universities.

A sixth function is **project generation and resource mobilisation**. A stable cooperation platform would improve the V4 partners' ability to prepare joint applications for European, Visegrad Fund, Horizon Europe, Interreg, ESPON, COST, or other relevant funding schemes. The network could serve as a partner search and concept development mechanism, helping institutions identify common interests, develop project ideas, and build consortia. This function is crucial because many forms of deeper cooperation will depend on external resources.

Finally, the network could perform a **representation and visibility function**. It could make V4/CEE urban research and planning perspectives more visible in European and international professional arenas, including organisations such as ECTP-CEU, AESOP, UERA, ESPON, RSA, ENHR, ISOCARP and related thematic networks. This does not require the network to become a formal lobbying organisation. Even through joint sessions, conference panels, policy notes, special issues and coordinated participation in European events, it could help articulate the specific urban-system challenges of Central and Eastern Europe more clearly. In this sense, the network's most important long-term function would be to transform dispersed national expertise into a recognisable regional knowledge platform.

Potential activities

The activities of the V4 Urban Systems Research and Planning Network should be organised as a gradual programme rather than as an immediately complex institutional agenda. In the first period, the most important task is to sustain the cooperation created through the SECPOLYC project and to turn occasional project meetings into recurring professional contacts. For this reason, the network should begin with activities that are simple to organise, inexpensive, and capable of producing visible results within a short time. Later, once regular cooperation has stabilised, these activities can be expanded towards more ambitious research, training and policy-support initiatives.

One of the most practical starting points would be a **rotating annual network meeting**. This could be hosted each year by one of the participating countries and, whenever possible, connected to an existing conference, university event, or professional forum. Instead of creating a large new conference immediately, the network could first organise a V4 thematic session within established national or European events. This would reduce organisational burdens while making the network visible to wider academic and professional audiences. Each annual meeting could focus on one central theme, such as secondary cities, metropolitan concentration, suburbanisation, urban–rural relations, spatial planning reform, housing, climate resilience or functional urban regions.

Between annual meetings, the network could maintain continuity through a **series of online expert seminars**. These seminars should be short, thematic and comparative. One seminar could present the spatial-planning system of one V4 country; another could compare the role of secondary cities; another could discuss methods for defining functional urban areas; another could focus on municipal climate-adaptation strategies. Such online events would allow regular exchange without high travel costs and would make it easier to involve a wider circle of researchers, planners, municipal experts and early-career participants.

A further activity could be the preparation of **country notes and thematic comparison papers**. These should be concise documents, not lengthy academic reports. Each country note could summarise the national urban system, the role of secondary cities, the planning and regional development framework, current policy debates, and available datasets. Thematic comparison papers could then build on these notes and compare selected issues across the V4 countries. Examples may include capital-city dominance, regional centres, commuting-based functional areas, shrinking towns, suburban zones, governance fragmentation or the relationship between spatial planning and transport policy.

The network should also develop a **shared repository of information and contacts**. This could start as a simple internal database containing relevant organisations, researchers, planning institutions, municipal associations, professional networks, datasets, ongoing

projects and useful publications. Over time, selected parts of this repository could become public through a small website or digital knowledge platform. Such a platform would not need to be technically complex. Its main value would be to make the V4 urban systems field more visible and easier to navigate for researchers, students, practitioners, and potential project partners.

Another important activity would be organising case-study workshops. These could focus on specific cities, metropolitan regions, or planning problems. For example, one workshop could examine Košice as a secondary city; another could focus on Wrocław or Kraków; another on Győr, Brno, Debrecen, or Ostrava; or on other regional centres. The host organisation would present the local case while participants from other countries would provide comparative reflections. This format would help connect abstract debates on polycentric development with real planning dilemmas, municipal capacities, infrastructure conditions, and governance constraints.

The network could also prepare concise policy briefs for decision-makers and professional audiences. These should be written in an accessible language and focus on clearly defined problems. Possible themes include strategies for strengthening secondary cities, improving cooperation within functional urban areas, connecting transport and settlement development, supporting climate adaptation in smaller and medium-sized cities, utilising spatial data in planning and enhancing territorial cohesion in Central and Eastern European contexts. These briefs would help the network communicate beyond academic circles and demonstrate the practical relevance of its work.

Training and education could form another activity line. The network could organise **doctoral workshops, young researcher sessions, and methodological training sessions**. These could be attached to annual meetings or held online. Topics may include comparative urban research, GIS-based urban system analysis, functional-area delineation, demographic and commuting data, policy document analysis, fieldwork in secondary cities, and the preparation of policy-oriented research outputs. This would help build a younger professional community familiar with V4 urban and planning debates.

The network should also encourage **joint publications and conference outputs**. In the early phase, this could mean coordinated conference panels, short working papers, or edited thematic sections in existing journals. Later, it could develop into special issues, edited volumes or comparative reports. The most realistic publication strategy would be incremental: first, conference presentations and discussion papers; then, peer-reviewed articles and policy-oriented synthesis reports. This would allow the network to produce outputs even before major external funding is secured.

The network should treat project preparation as a continuous activity. During meetings and seminars, partners should identify potential funding opportunities, formulate project ideas and prepare concise concept notes. Relevant programmes include the International Visegrad Fund, Interreg, Horizon Europe, COST, ESPON targeted analyses and Erasmus+ cooperation schemes. Rather than waiting for calls and subsequently searching for partners, the network could maintain a small portfolio of ready-to-develop project ideas. This would enhance future cooperation and facilitate the transformation of the initial SECPOLYC partnership into a longer-term V4/CEE platform for urban systems research and planning.

Possible operational frameworks and next steps

The future V4 Urban Systems Research and Planning Network should develop through a step-by-step operational model. At this stage, the most appropriate framework is not a newly established legal organisation but a flexible cooperation structure built around the institutions, experts, and professional relationships already mobilised by the SECPOLYC project. Such a model would allow the network to remain open, low-cost and adaptive while providing sufficient continuity for joint work. The first operational principle should therefore be gradual institutionalisation: beginning with an informal network of committed partners and progressing towards more stable forms of coordination when activities, resources and membership needs justify it.

In the initial phase, the network could be coordinated by a small core group comprising representatives of the SECPOLYC partner institutions. This core group would not function as a formal board but as a light coordination mechanism responsible for maintaining contact between partners, preparing annual priorities, identifying opportunities and ensuring that agreed activities are followed up. Its tasks could include updating the partner list, circulating information, convening online meetings, preparing short concept notes and coordinating the network's visibility in conferences and professional events. This minimal structure would be sufficient to preserve momentum without creating administrative burdens.

A second operational layer could consist of a wider circle of associated organisations and experts. These may include universities, research institutes, professional associations, municipal networks, planning bodies, public authorities and individual researchers or practitioners from the V4 countries. At this stage, participation should remain open and non-binding. Organisations could be invited to join activities, contribute to events, host meetings, comment on policy briefs or participate in project applications without becoming formal members. This flexible arrangement would be particularly suitable because the organisations mapped in Chapter 3 differ substantially in terms of legal status, size, resources, and mission.

In the medium term, if cooperation becomes regular and productive, the network may consider a more explicit membership model. Two options are possible. One is an organisation-based model, in which universities, institutes, associations and municipalities become institutional members. The other is a mixed model that combines institutional participation with individual membership for researchers, planners, doctoral students, and practitioners. The mixed model would probably be the most suitable for a V4 network, because it would allow both organisational continuity and personal professional engagement. However, formal membership should be introduced only once the practical benefits are clear and a minimal administrative capacity exists.

The network's territorial scope should also remain open to gradual development. Initially, the focus should remain on the Visegrad countries as this aligns with the project framework and the existing partnership. However, the network's thematic logic suggests broader relevance in Central and Eastern Europe. Many of the urban-system issues discussed in the project—post-socialist transformation, secondary-city development, suburbanisation, regional disparities, municipal capacity and territorial cohesion—are not limited to the V4. Therefore, the network could later invite selected partners from neighbouring CEE countries, particularly where cross-border urban regions shared planning problems or existing academic links make such extension meaningful.

The financial model should be equally incremental. In the short term, the network can operate through in-kind contributions by partner institutions: hosting meetings, providing staff time, maintaining communication channels and connecting activities to existing conferences or projects. This is realistic and avoids dependence on a single source of funding. For more ambitious activities, external resources will be necessary. The most relevant funding sources may include the International Visegrad Fund, Interreg programmes, ESPON targeted analyses, COST Actions, Erasmus+ cooperation projects, Horizon Europe calls and national research or policy funds. A practical next step would be to prepare a small portfolio of project ideas that can be adapted quickly to suitable calls.

The network should also establish a simple but recognisable communication infrastructure. In the short term, this may consist of a mailing list, a shared document repository and a basic webpage hosted by one of the partner institutions. Later, this could develop into a public website presenting the network's aims, members, events, outputs, working themes and contact points. The communication infrastructure should not be overdesigned. Its main purpose should be to make the network visible, searchable and usable for potential partners, municipalities, researchers, students and European organisations.

A realistic sequence of next steps could therefore be the following. First, the SECPOLYC partners should agree on a short founding note or memorandum that describes the purpose, scope, and working principles of the network. Second, a core coordination

group should be nominated for the first one or two years. Third, the mapped organisations should be contacted and invited to express interest in future cooperation. Fourth, the network should organise one follow-up event or online meeting after the completion of the project, focusing on a single concrete topic and output. Fifth, partners should identify two or three funding opportunities and prepare short project concepts for each. Sixth, the network should prepare at least one visible output, such as a policy brief, comparative note or conference session, to demonstrate continuity beyond the original project.

The most important operational requirement is continuity. Many international professional networks begin with successful project-based cooperation but lose momentum once the funded project ends. To avoid this, the V4/CEE Urban Systems Research and Planning Network should define a limited number of achievable commitments for the first year after SECPOLYC: one coordination meeting, one thematic event, one shared output, and one project development discussion. These modest commitments would be enough to keep the network alive and to test which forms of cooperation generate real interest.

In the longer term, the network could develop towards a more formal regional knowledge platform. This may include regular annual meetings, thematic working groups, joint research proposals, cooperation with European networks, early-career activities and policy-oriented publications. However, such development should follow demonstrated demand rather than precede it. The network's strength should come from useful cooperation, not from premature institutional complexity. Its operational framework should therefore remain light, flexible and purpose-driven, while gradually building the trust, visibility and resources needed for a durable V4/CEE platform on urban systems research and spatial planning.