**Bucharest**: Population dispersion and air pollution

Bucharest lies in the southeastern part of Romania, halfway between the Danube River and the Southern Carpathian Mountains on the banks of the Dâmbovita River. As the country's principal political, cultural and economic centre, it is at least five times larger than any other Romanian city.

Urban Bucharest has more than doubled in population and land area since 1948 as a result of natural population growth, industrialisation and political centralisation. This has caused the city to become increasingly built up and congested.

Today, 16 years after the fall of the Communist Party and re-privatisation of land, Bucharest faces the problems of population growth and dispersion from the centre to suburban areas. The city's dispersed population and rising levels of car ownership have resulted in more traffic congestion together with air and noise pollution. The growth of industry in the suburbs also contributes to air pollution.

Today, with the re-privatisation of land, Bucharest not only has to cope with land and property reform, but it must also establish a legal framework and coordinated policies for future urban development. Integrating urban industrial structures into the city is another challenge for Bucharest, as it is for many other cities in transition.