

## **LAUDATION IN HONOUR OF PROF. DR. JÁNOS RECHNITZER DSC.**

Dr. János Rechnitzer, economist, is not only one of the introducers of Regional Science in Hungary and a promoter of the representation of the discipline among the scientific branches of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), but he is also the founder and most prominent character of this scientific school. His research activities originate in the examination of territorial input-output and his works have spanned territorial research of innovation, methodology of regional planning, and the evaluation of regional policy and its institutional system for the research of the territorial capital and creative economy.

Dr János Rechnitzer was born on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1952, in Hédervár, he graduated as a qualified economist in 1975 from the Faculty of Economics of Janus Pannonius University of Pécs and in the same year he started his research career at the Transdanubian Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy, Pécs. Under the leadership of academician György Enyedi, the organisation started to develop a regional network called the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1984 and in the course of this period, in 1986, he called upon János Rechnitzer to establish and manage the new department of the institute in Győr. The new department started to develop rapidly under his leadership and in line with the foundation of his group in Szombathely, the Győr Department was transformed into an institute in 1992. In 2000 he established a research group in Székesfehérvár.

His presence in the academic research environment and in higher education has been entwined for decades. He has been attached to the operation of Széchenyi István University and its legal predecessor for 29 years as Head of Department and later as Dean, Vice-Rector, founder of the Doctoral School, and as the Head of the Doctoral School. He was one of the founders and then the Vice-Chairman of the Regional Science Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and between 1997 and 2008 and between 2015 and 2017 he served as the Chairman. He was one of the founding members (2002) and later, between 2011 and 2017, President of the Hungarian Regional Science Association, the professional association of the discipline.

In regard to progress in his scientific career he was awarded University Doctorate (Economic Science) at Janus Pannonius University in 1978, Candidate's Degree in 1985 (MTA, Economic Science), Academic Doctorate in 1995 (MTA, Geographic Science) and he was habilitated (Economics) at the University of Pécs in 1999. He was appointed as University Professor in 2000. He has been nominated as a Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences four times.

His endeavours led him to represent the research results of the institute in higher education in the early years of the Győr department, which was possible within the framework of the transformation strategy of Széchenyi István College to become a university. The Faculty of Economics, which was newly established

in 1991, needed to announce specializations. In the framework of the cooperation between the College and MTA RKK (CRS HAS – Centre of Regional Studies for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), the Department of Regional Studies and Public Policy was founded under the leadership of János Rechnitzer. The urban economist course was launched by the department to cover the subject areas that correspond to the research fields examined by the research institute. After the establishment of Széchenyi István University, János Rechnitzer developed the training system of the Public Governance BA course and the Regional and Environmental Economic Studies MA course. In this same period, he became the first Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Law and then he became the first Dean of the independent Faculty of Economics. Subsequently, between 2008 and 2014 he was the General and Scientific Vice-Rector of the university. He was the founder and director of the first Doctoral School of the University, which at the time still incorporated Law and Political Sciences, later he established the independent Doctoral School of Regional and Economic Sciences and has been the Head of the Doctoral Schools since their initial operation. Since its foundation he has been a Member of the Faculty and University Doctoral Council and the Habilitation Committee.

From the mid-1990s, as a guest lecturer at several higher education institutions in Hungary, he introduced university programmes that are related to regional sciences – first of all Regional Economics and Public Policy - and integrated them into various training systems. In the last ten years he has been invited to give lectures and courses at various Hungarian doctoral schools – ELTE, the University of Szeged and the University of Pécs.

He has won 7 independent OTKA/NKFIH applications so far in the academic environment and he has led a number of governmental research projects that are related mainly to regional development. In the mid-1990s he was one of the founders of the methodological development of spatial planning and he was the leader of the elaboration of several county and regional concepts and programs of regional development. In the last decade he has launched and headed several large-scale research projects in the university environment. One outstanding project is the Research Programme of the Győr Industrial District in which he managed to involve almost all the teachers of the faculty. The results of the three-year research project were published in a series of monographies under the editorship of Universitas Győr Nonprofit Kft.

His scientific activity has been remarkable not only in Hungary but on an international scale as well. The significance of his achievements has been reflected in 444 scientific publications out of which 72 were published in a foreign language. Apart from 101 articles in scientific journals he has recorded 21 independent monographies and 145 book excerpts. The editorial work of 35 books can be attributed to his name. Regarding all these works 2,557 independent references can be assigned to him. The total number of references of all his publications is 3,273. His Hirsh index is outstanding with the value of 21.

His prominent role as a scientific manager is proved by the fact that between 1994 and 2010 he was the general editor of “Tér és Társadalom” (“Space and Society”), the Hungarian journal of Regional Science. He is currently a Member of the Editorial Board of various Hungarian and international scientific journals. He is the Chairman of the Editorial Board of the journal titled “Tér-Gazdaság-Ember” (“Space-Economy-Society”), which is being published under the editorship of the faculty.

In addition to his distinguished activities outlined above, his role as an outstanding founder of the scientific school and as an educator of the new generation of scientists, is indicated by the fact that 29 of his doctoral students have already obtained their degrees (he was the associate supervisor in 8 cases). The promotion of 9 of his doctoral students is due currently (he is the associate supervisor for 7 of them). His work at the Doctoral School has contributed a lot to the establishment of the scientific and managerial staff of Széchenyi István University. Many of his earlier doctoral students, who have been awarded the PhD degree, are presently working at various levels in the management of Széchenyi István University (7 colleagues) or teach as lecturers (11 colleagues).

An outstanding example of his social policy activities related to science is the fact that between 1996 and 2005 he was a Member of the Advisory Board of Social Sciences of the Council of the Research Institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He had an active role in the Veszprém Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (VEAB) as the founder and Chair of the Regional Development Committee and then he was functioning as the Vice-President of VEAB for several cycles between 1996 and 2005. As far as the academic area is concerned he held the position of Vice-President of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee from 2000 to 2003. He has been acting as the Chairman of the Advisory Board of the György Enyedi Regional Science Foundation since 2016.

To honour his professional and public activities he was awarded the Junior Scientists’ Award of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1979, the Pro Geographia Prize of the Hungarian Geographical Association in 1992, the Széchenyi Ferenc Scientific Award of the Győr-Moson-Sopron County Government in 1994. He was awarded the Pro Regio Award in 2004, the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary and the Pro Renovanda Cultura Deák Ferenc Researcher Award in 2009. In 2014 he received the title of Honorary Citizen of the City of Győr and he was honoured with the Academic Award in 2017.

His professional activity will be of great importance for us subsequent to his retirement.

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Dr. Ladó Mihály  
Head of Department  
Associate Professor