



ROPEVIROS

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

“Population and Environment:
Challenges and Perspectives”
International Scientific Conference





International Scientific Conference

“Population and Environment: Challenges and Perspectives”

Art Palace Madlena, Belgrade
October 24, 2025.

International Scientific Conference
"Population and Environment: Challenges and Perspectives"
– **Book of abstracts** –

Publisher

Faculty of Geography- University of Belgrade

For the publisher

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Print

Planeta print d.o.o.

Circulation

300

ISBN 978-86-6283-169-9

This conference is organized within the framework of the POPENVIROS project
"Population dynamics under environmental challenges in Serbia" (project ID: 7358),
funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

This publication has been co-financed by the Ministry of Science, Technological
Innovation and Education of the Republic of Serbia.

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Belgrade, October 2025.

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UDK: 711:502:622(497.11)

DOI: 10.5937/POPENVIROS25031P

Methodological Advances in Participatory Processes in Serbia: Enhancing Spatial Planning and Living Environments in Mining Regions

Participatory processes play a crucial role in spatial planning, particularly in mining regions where environmental and social impacts of resource extraction are significant. This research examines the need to adapt and improve public participation procedures in Serbia, emphasizing the legal framework, methodological enhancements, and institutional support to foster more meaningful engagement of the affected population. Conducted under the funding of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (Grant #7598), the study is based on in-depth interviews with key stakeholders responsible for shaping participation processes in legislation, education, and practice. The research identifies challenges in existing participatory mechanisms and proposes solutions to enhance their effectiveness. A key recommendation is the enrichment of participatory methods at the earliest stages of planning—before formal decisions on plan creation are made—by improving stakeholder information, education, and early engagement. The study also highlights the importance of maintaining continuous feedback loops with stakeholders throughout the planning process and considering public participation during the spatial plan implementation phase. Furthermore, restoring trust in national and local government, as well as other decision-makers, is recognized as a critical factor in ensuring meaningful public participation. Strengthening institutional commitment to transparency,

accountability, and inclusivity is essential for fostering long-term stakeholder engagement and improving decision-making processes in spatial planning. This study contributes to the discourse on participatory governance by advocating for a more legally structured, methodologically enriched, and trust-centered approach to public participation in spatial planning, particularly in mining regions and their living environments.

Keywords: MINIPART, public participation, decision-making, spatial planning, mining regions