

## 2. ABOUT ORADEA

### **Short History**

Situated at the foot of Apuseni Mountains, at a distance sensitively equal from Vienna, Prague and Bucharest, Oradea is a passing-point on the roads which connect Central and Northern Europe with the South-Eastern part of our continent. By its position in our country, Oradea is the main entering gate at the Western frontier.

The long lasting process of merging of the Dacian inhabitants with the Romans to settle into the Romanian people was often interrupted by migrants' invasions, such as the Huns, Gepids, Avars, and Slavs. Most of the above mentioned groups reached Oradea-Salca area, regarded as the core of the settlement that was to expand later into a medieval town with suburbs.

After 1000, Oradea extends its area and turns into the settlement that grants the development of the modern city in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on its commercial and trade activities that will lead to the strengthening of its position as an important business centre in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The Hungarian Kingdom, the newly imposed political ruler, turned Oradea into an important Catholic centre between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and into a religious administrative centre by founding the Roman-Catholic Bishopric during the reign of king Ladislau I (1077 1095). From now on, Varadinum (Oradea) first mentioned with this toponymy; in 1113, it acquires more prestige and gets to a higher development than other settlements in the region.



The period of the Turkish rule (1660 - 1692) was rather calm because the new rulers were interested in maintaining cordial relationships with the inhabitants of Oradea, with the obvious purpose of granting social daily peacefulness.

The annexation to the Habsburg Empire in 1692, after the victory against the Turks, is a crucial moment in the process of promoting the characteristic principles of the modern age.

For more than 200 years, until 1918, the town had many territorial changes, different settlements that had been cooperating for centuries being unified eventually as Oradea Mare. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a decisive one regarding the development of the settlement lying on the banks of the river Crișul Repede from the condition of a medieval town to that of a city, defined by its modern urban conception, public and institutional utilities.

In 1870 Oradea gains the status of municipality.

After 1918, with its new geo-political condition, the city gets integrated into the administrative structure of the unified country, România Mare characteristic of the period between the two world wars, and becomes the district main city.



During World War II, by the Diktat of Vienna (August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1940), the North-Western part of Romania, together with Oradea, is annexed to Hungary and it will remain like

this until October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1944, when this region is liberated by the Romanian and Soviet troops from under the Hungarian-German occupation. Oradea is set free on October 12<sup>th</sup> of the same year, and becomes again part of Romania, a communist state now, and is reconfirmed as a regional main city on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945; later, in 1964, it becomes the main city of Bihor district.

The Revolution in 1989 determines no changes in the administrative status of the city, but it brings about radical changes in the election-system of the city council. The mayors of the city are elected freely by the community, with no interference of any supreme power.

### **Major Events**

In autumn, in Oradea several festivals take place: the wine festival, the beer festival. They all culminate with the City Day on October 12. These festivals last several (2-3) days each and they are very popular. During these days, there are concerts every evening in the city centre, in open air, and a lot of people gather here. You can sit at a table to drink beer and eat "mici" and sausages, or you can ride on the carrousel, which are placed there on the City Day, or you can just find yourself a place closer to the stage and listen to the concert. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, after the last concert, there is a big firework around midnight.