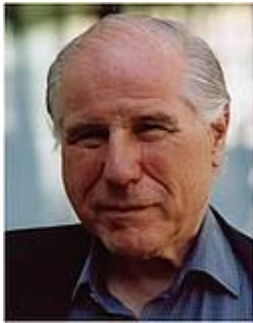




## Welcome to Porto

### Welcome by the ISOCARP President



Dear Colleagues,

At the invitation of the Porto Local Organising Committee, ISOCARP will hold its next Congress and Exhibition in the City of Porto, Portugal, from 18 to 22 October 2009.

As indicated in the First Announcement, the theme proposed by our hosts: “Planning for Low Carbon Cities”, is particularly timely, as reduction in carbon emissions and energy are key concerns of planning for future urban growth worldwide, not least in Europe. It is a seamless continuation of the 2007 theme, “Urban Growth without Urban Sprawl”. Urban sprawl, which is a mix of built space and residual open fields, requires a large amount of carbon producing transport and energy.

For decision-makers and their planning advisors, it raises the challenge of making compact and liveable places, caring for people and nature and favouring social inclusion.

Considering the wide experience of Portugal in the use of European Regional Funds, the findings of the Congress might be of consequence for the new policies presently being considered towards a more sustainable regional development. The exhibition should allow an opportunity to institutions and firms concerned to present their achievements and services to participants coming from all continents.

It also raises professional issues about assessing carbon emissions and energy production and consumption generated by buildings and neighbourhoods, and how to make the best use of carbon trading schemes. This in turn opens the field to a new profile of participants, interested in exhibiting and explaining the latest technologies related to planning for low carbon urban development, as the German Pavilion in Saragossa 2008 successfully did in the field of water resources. It is my pleasure to stress our collaboration with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Europe on these issues.

Once again, ISOCARP will endeavour to provide opportunities for bridging the gap between young and less young professionals, and between cultures, both through the congress papers and through its task-oriented young professionals’ workshops, that take place just prior to our congresses.

The same opportunity is provided by the Urban Planning Advisory Teams (UPATs), expert teams mixing members of different generations and cultures, international teams of experts that advise authorities on their current planning issues. Examples of these are to be found in the ISOCARP NET. ISOCARP’s web site is another tool for building bridges between members and institutions of different backgrounds and based in different regions ([www.isocarp.org](http://www.isocarp.org)).

May I express my thanks to those who have helped making this ISOCARP Congress possible, especially Manfred Schrenk, ISOCARP Vice President in charge of events, Secretary General Pablo

Vaggione and Chris Gossop, General Rapporteur for the Congress. I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to the Local Organising Committee for the fruitful and rewarding collaboration.

We have high expectations for this Congress and exhibition and look forward to welcoming many of you in Porto.

Pierre Laconte (President ISOCARP)

### **Invitation by the President of the LOC**



#### *The city of Porto and the ISOCARP Annual Conference on Low Carbon Cities*

In current days of undeniable global climate changes, of unprecedented increases in oil prices, as well as in food and other essential goods, of uncertain economic perspectives and of emerging divides in the social structures of our societies, the sustainability paradigm faces new challenges. For some, new approaches are needed, more pragmatic and soundly based on benchmarking, i.e. easily measured against clear targets such as ambitious reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Clearly, the cities are in the centre of this debate towards a new low carbon society. Planners have not only to offer innovative solutions to enhance citizens' quality of life, dealing with a multicultural society with diverse and complex values, attitudes and lifestyles, but also to reorganise our cities, regenerate old centres, improve the suburbs, manage the transport system, and design new interventions and urban projects towards a truly energy efficient city – the low carbon city.

The city of Porto provides a wonderful and stimulating environment to approach and discuss the multiple perspectives in which this topic of Low Carbon Cities can be analysed. Indeed, it is a typical example of an old and dense European city, rich in history and built heritage, with an urban form and structure close to the energy efficient compact city paradigm. It is right in the heart of a genuinely polycentric metropolitan area, the second largest in Portugal with 1.4 million inhabitants, served by an efficient public transport system and an award winning metro. Indeed, the Light Rail System (LRS) of the Porto metropolitan area was recently elected as the best new LRS in the world by the UITP (Union International Transport Public). The contribution of this metro system to lower the overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the metropolitan area is quite impressive. According to the Porto Municipal Energy Agency, responsible for an ambitious Sustainability Plan for the city, the present annual per capita production of CO<sub>2</sub> is 5.5 tonnes, well below the European average that is approaching the two digits figure.

The UNESCO World Heritage historic centre of Porto is under an ambitious regeneration programme of municipal initiative after decades of population decline. Located on the Atlantic coast of Portugal and facing the Douro River, Porto offers an impressive and diversified waterfront. On the seafront, recent successful environmental planning policies made possible the co-existence of the seaport with a large green park and blue flag beaches, connected by a lively and trendy promenade. On the riverfront, an old tramway is still operating providing an impressive perspective of the historic centre and of a series of emblematic bridges able to elegantly frame the rich local urban landscape. Heading north from the river side and up the hill, we arrive at the large and splendid central square, reminding the prosperous bourgeois city of the nineteenth century. Later on, the legacy of the modernist movement, and, more recently, the works of the so-called Architecture School of Porto

have been able to blend old and new keeping the sense of place and Porto's distinctive strong character.

Bearing in mind the innovative urban and transport policies towards urban sustainability and a low carbon society that are currently being pursued by the local and the metropolitan environment and planning agencies, the ambitious projects recently concluded or under way, the strong character of the city and the warm hospitality of the local people, we firmly believe that the city of Porto offers an ideal setting to host the ISOCARP 2009 Conference on Low Carbon Cities.

Paulo Pinho (President LOC)

### **Invitation by the Chair of the LOC**



#### *Widening the Scope and Mission of Congresses*

Since 1965 - date of ISOCARP's foundation - the Society has organized Annual International Congresses all over the world, bringing together highly qualified planners in an international network.

Today, the time has come to rethink what one should expect from International Congresses. Regarding contemporaneous shifts, Corbin Ball put forth the Seven Predictions about the Future of the Meetings Industry (ICCA Intelligence Vol. 02, Nov. 2003), mentioning the extraordinary tsunami of transformation that terrorism, travel cutback and belt-tightening economic trends are creating. There are no doubts about the rise in virtual meetings; but, there are also no doubts as to their incapacity to replace face-to-face meetings.

An international congress is an arena and channel for communication both before and after the event, imbued with inspiration and creativity, learning from previous events, shared failures and success, bringing together experts in an international network. Nevertheless, congresses today should be more ambitious - a wider mission should be pursued regarding current universal concerns such as threats to the human environment and future hopes. Given the vast array of critical threats that mankind is facing today, international congresses have the duty to urgently contribute to building safe and trustworthy solutions, sharing in the main purposes of the Intergovernmental Panel.

That is exactly what we are expecting from the 45th ISOCARP Congress, to be held in Porto, in October 2009 – to foster debate and research on the environmental effects of man's activities, promoting consistent international cooperation among scientists, practitioners and politicians, increasing innovative thinking and communication efficiency, confronting knowledge, resources and systems with real life applications.

To achieve its main objectives, the Porto Local Committee 2009 (LOC) requires a meticulous planning system to organize the 45th ISOCARP Congress. But only with input and know-how from Participants and cooperation with other bodies, can ISOCARP and the Porto LOC create a successful and memorable niche event.

F. Brandão Alves (Chair and Executive President LOC)