



Welcome to Istanbul

AN INVITATION TO ISTANBUL

Dr. Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Metropolitan Istanbul

Cities are the utmost signs of civilizations. Every city has a story of its own, and at the background of each story lays a rich accumulation of centuries marked by traces of many layers of history. In this respect, Istanbul is not a symbol of one civilization alone. Instead, it had been the glorious capital city of many civilizations. Eastern Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Civilizations took root in this city of distinctive geography and Istanbul acted as a unique melting pot in which different cultures and civilizations blended and merged into one another over many centuries. For this reason, peace and brotherhood stand out among the many other signifiers of Istanbul.

As a port city, Istanbul has historically been a place where different languages, religions, races and cultures coalesced in an atmosphere of tolerance. In line with its peculiar geographical location at the crossroads of two continents, Istanbul nourished this role over many centuries and continues to build upon this tradition as a point of juncture between East and West in the contemporary world of globalization.

As the economic engine of the modern Turkish economy, Istanbul occupies yet another pivotal role and aspires to be one of the leading cities in the new world hierarchy of cities, which brings along a variety of problems of "integration and disintegration" to the forefront in the agenda of local administration and planning. These are questions and dilemmas that are not easy to handle. And they are not concerns solely specific to Istanbul. On the contrary, many cities around the globe experience, in one way or another, similar challenges. Thus, the Istanbul Congress of ISoCaRP, I believe, shall provide a crucial platform to discuss these common challenges and opportunities that many cities around the world are faced with.

I am proud to welcome the 42nd World Planning Congress of ISoCaRP to our city. Thanking to all who contributed to the organization of this very important Congress, I invite you all to come and experience the rich cultural heritage of Istanbul.

NEW PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Pierre Laconte, Belgium

Dear colleagues and friends,

As new President since February this year I first wish to express again a special message of gratitude to my predecessor Alfonso Vegara, whose extraordinary commitment and initiatives culminated in the Bilbao Congress, its string of high quality publications and its post congress mobile workshops.

The theme of the 42nd Congress is particularly challenging to planners worldwide. And so is the location of this congress. Istanbul is the largest city of Europe, and one of its oldest. Its development areas are located on both sides of the Bosphorus and the connection between Europe and Asia presents a specific challenge and opportunity. The networking of Istanbul with the large Metropolitan areas - worldwide - is one of the features offered by this congress. The bi-annual "Summit of the Mayors of the World" hosted by the City of Istanbul takes place in the same period. ISoCaRP is grateful to the Mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Mr Kadir Topbas, who has offered to ISoCaRP the opportunity to meet some Mayors coming from all over the world in an ISoCaRP Mayors Summit to be held during our Congress.

As part of its aims ISoCaRP wishes to promote planning education and to participate in the development of the planning profession, in the context of worldwide urbanisation. This year's Congress will give an increased importance to young planning professionals' workshops. Two of them will take place in parallel and their results will be presented to participants at large.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Architecture and the Department of City and Regional Planning for their most gracious offer to host and co-organise our 42nd ISoCaRP World Planning Congress, the Local Organising Committee, and all the strategic partners they have brought together, for their engagement and support to make this congress a successful event.

See you in Istanbul, warmest regards to you all.

WELCOME by IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Alfonso Vegara, Spain

For over four decades, the ISoCaRP Congresses have been an important forum for debate and collaboration for planners from around the world, as we respond to urban trends that we observe happening, and as we work to create new visions to guide the urban evolution of our cities and regions.

The urban landscape of globalisation is not only that of shiny skyscrapers, luxury homes, private clubs, and the new airports. It is also the landscape of poverty. We can see an urban landscape of growing social segregation, the worrying emergence of violence and insecurity, new barriers in the urban space, the growing reliance on private security systems in high-income residential districts, in public buildings and in commercial centres. This segregation and polarisation of wealth and poverty in cities, particularly the larger cities, is a major challenge for us as planners and citizens.

The 42nd Annual ISoCaRP Congress will be held this year in the city of Istanbul, at the historical nexus of cultures and continents. This large, dynamic city straddles Europe and Asia, and links the developed and developing world. Istanbul faces many of the challenges and contradictions of the processes of globalisation, but also has tremendous opportunities for the future. For this reason, it is a very appropriate Host City for this year's Congress.

I invite all of you to join us in Istanbul in September 2006 in work and debate.

WELCOME by the LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE (LOC)

Zekai Görgülü, Zeynep Merey Enlil

The theme of this year's congress "Cities between Integration and Disintegration: Opportunities and Challenges" comes at a time when most societies all over the world face, in one way or another, problems pertaining to economic, social, cultural and spatial disintegration. While nations, regions and cities are striving to connect to the global economy, forces of globalisation continue to create inequalities, widen the gap between the rich and the poor and exacerbate polarisation.

One of the spatial outcomes of this process is the proliferation of compartments in cities. On the one hand, there are iconic projects, gentrified neighbourhoods and gated communities of the new elite. On the other hand, there are ghettos of the poor, the migrants, the unemployed and all those who are excluded from the other segments of the society.

Istanbul provides a rich context to discuss these current issues which occupies a central place in the planning agenda. While the city is trying to connect and re-profile its position within the global network of cities, it comprises many of these tensions, problems and dilemmas. Yet at the same time, it is a timeless city of many cultures, a unique meeting point where civilisations and continents embrace each other.

We invite you all to the Istanbul Congress and hope to share the inspiration that our city, with all its problems and prospects, has the potential to spark.