

## Statement to the President of the International Society of City and Regional Planners ISOCARP

In response to the Call for the Post of Secretary General

Didier Vancutsem

Dear colleague and friend,

I am seeking your support regarding the Call for the position of Secretary General for the term 2016-2019, as **my second term for this position**. I am convinced that I have to continue the actions and initiatives started during my first term as Secretary General.

In the following pages I would like to present you the approach, which would guide my activities if I am re-elected, together with the results achieved during my first term.

### Approach and Work Program

#### 1. Members

- **Develop and capitalise** the unique diversity of high-qualified and individual members into a strong community, where national and international networks are integrated
- **Support and empower** regional and national committees (ND's) and their activities
- Develop an **attractive framework** for the members, where they can communicate, exchange their experience and knowledge
- Develop a **policy of members involvement** in Society's activities with benefits for the members and the Society
- Diversify **members programmes**, (UPAT's, etc.), which enables members to share knowledge and gain international multidisciplinary experience, by increasing Society's visibility
- Streamline the **dissemination of collaboration opportunities** amongst members and employment openings using our website and newsletters
- Provide **institutional support** to members interested in developing initiatives focusing on capacity building (Young Planning Professional programme, etc.)

#### *Achievements 2013-2016:*

I think that ISOCARP has improved in the past 3 years its member's involvement substantially; several new activities and windows of opportunities were developed, including partnerships and programs. New partnerships on local and global level were initiated; a diversification of activities and consequently new project activities took place: new public and private actors have joined the society, and old relationships were reactivated. This is essential for a society of members, as it has to become more inclusive and bottom-up processed. This will be further developed, on the local, regional and global level.

#### 2. Society's Governance

- Give the Society a **sustainable functioning structure and decision-making process**, involving all decision levels from local to international
- Develop a **stable financial system** for the Society, including projects, publications and events
- Position the Society as the **reference organisation on urban solutions** with a truly international profile and cross-cultural know-how for multilateral organisations, administrations and entrepreneurs
- **Increase the presence** of the Society in emerging regions, consolidate in developed regions
- **Reinforce the society's consultative status** to multilateral organisations encouraging collaboration in practical terms through member participation on specific projects

*Achievements 2013-2016:*

After years of crisis and austerity, especially in the years 2009-2014, a period of regeneration and restructuring was needed; this process is not completed, especially the financial system is still unstable – although it improved a lot. ISOCARP has increased its role a reference organisation with international profile, and is well appreciated in knowledge sharing. There is still a need of increasing the visibility of the Society in emerging regions, as well as consolidation in developed regions: it will be a central task of the next years, as well as a further stabilisation of the financial situation. The question of financial situation is strongly related to the role of the Headquarters, where we will have to prepare the future.

**3. Products and Contents**

- Develop **exchange programmes** with other organisations and planning associations, including future involvement in projects via ISOCARP's Liaison Offices
- Further **development of publications and research** in all disciplines related to urban and regional planning, including website as a recognised resource in planning knowledge dissemination
- Continue the **current awards** and publications programme including the ISOCARP Awards of Excellence
- **Support initiatives** that broaden the profession's scope of influence, complementing an academic point of view with the perspectives of local governments and the private sector through professional training seminars and other specialised events
- Develop and implement a **strategy of projects and activities** for ISOCARP

*Achievements 2013-2016:*

Exchange programmes were developed well in the past 3 years, unfortunately not with our Liaison Offices – this will become a more actual task, related to the proposed structure of working committees. Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was a firework of publications, thanks to fantastic members and contributors. We have learned from this: more digital publications, and our Journal is a first step. Also, our new ISOCARP Institute will contribute to the research activities, and is already involved in research projects.

*In conclusion – next steps for 2016 – 2019*

Based on the results of the last three years, the proposed actions will focus on a further implementation on members, society's governance, products and contents levels.

New initiatives and bottom-up process, transparency and diversification of activities, as well as a better visibility and further governance transformation of our society will be the next milestones for the time 2016 – 2019.

I thank you already for your confidence and support,



Didier

## Profile

Didier Vancutsem is an urban planner and landscape architect in Urban and Regional Planning, Landscape Planning, Infrastructure and Environmental Management with more than 25 years research and planning experience in Europe and abroad.

Born in Belgium 1963, he is based in Munich / Germany and has degrees in City and Regional Planning, Landscape Architecture and Regional management. His practice in Munich is involved in local and international projects in regional planning, land use and structure planning, city planning, business and communication for municipalities, associations as well as regional authorities and federal ministries. He is involved in European programmes for cities, e.g. as thematic lead expert in the EU Program URBACT.

He is also Professor at the Faculty of Architecture LaCambreHorta / Université Libre de Bruxelles, and Lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences of Munich, the Université Lille II and the University of Perm, Russia.

He was member of ISOCARP EXCO and treasurer between 2000 - 2006; and was elected as Secretary-General in 2013.

Due to his previous activities as member of EXCO, actual activities close to the EU Commission and involvement in several research activities and large-scale projects, he has good communicative and diplomatic skills, excellent managing capabilities, large experience in fund raising and financial sponsorship.

He is member of different professional societies and honorary appointments in Europe and worldwide.