



**Piotr Lorens**

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## **Candidate's Statement**

### **For the position of ISOCARP President-Elect 2023**

My name is Piotr Lorens and I decided to stand as a candidate for the position of ISOCARP President-Elect in the coming elections. Coming from Gdańsk, Poland, also known as a „city of solidarity and freedom”, I would like to bring this unique spirit to our society and make it – jointly with all members – not only an „**organization of members and for members**”, but an „**organization in solidarity with its members**”. This brings a lot of new ideas and chances for us as planners coming from various parts of the world, with different backgrounds, positions, and diversified chances to participate in the works of the global society.

I am currently working as a Professor and Head of the Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning at the Gdansk University of Technology. At the same time I hold the position of a Gdańsk City Architect. Holding these two positions allows me to bring together theory and practice as well as to better understand the contemporary issues and challenges that are in store for our cities and regions. Being an architect by education and urban planner by heart, I have been associated with ISOCARP for more than 20 years now. In the past, I held the position of the ISOCARP Vice President responsible for the Young Planning Professionals' Program (2011-2017, when I was responsible for the development of the program and organization of numerous trainings and workshops in various parts of the world) and General Rapporteur of two consecutive ISOCARP World Town Planning Congresses (in 2020 – virtual – and in 2021 in Doha, Qatar). I also managed to bring one of the previous ISOCARP congresses to Gdynia, Poland (2014), and organize two ISOCARP Regional Events in Gdansk (2022 and in 2023 – coming this November) as well as a Gdańsk YPP Workshop (2023). Aside from my associations with ISOCARP, I am also active with the Society of Polish Town Planners (was holding the position of the President of the Society for the term 2015-2018) as well as other professional and scientific bodies.

The reasons why I have decided to stand for the elections are twofold. First, I feel that our Society **needs a new mode of operations**, reflecting both the changing international context for urban development after the pandemics as well as new needs and issues that our members bring with them. Secondly, as I observe growing disparities between our members, I see the **need for more solidarity between our members**, which goes beyond the traditionally understood partnerships between different parts of the world. Therefore, I have decided to submit my candidature for the upcoming elections to develop better chances for all our members to be active parts of our ISOCARP family and have equal opportunities for their professional and personal development.

Regarding my program, I want to make sure that **ISOCARP grows as a key professional organization in the world**, becoming not only a „members’ society” but also a key player in the global context. We are a unique family of professionals coming from very different backgrounds: we have members coming from private practice, academia as well as from the public sector. Each of us can contribute to this vision and each of us should have equal rights and opportunities to become an active member of this global society. In order to achieve this, I would like to propose the following actions:

1. **Reinforcing regionalization of the society** – which translates into activation of the members representing particular countries and/or regions; this should come with support from the ISOCARP Board and other national/regional representations;
2. **Increasing and diversifying the scope of ISOCARP activities** – which means reinventing and reigniting our training programs (capacity building programs, YPP workshops) as well as practice-oriented activities (UPAT-s), organized and delivered by the society itself;
3. **Reinventing our research and development agenda** (reinventing our congresses – making it more attractive both for local hosts as well as members coming from both academia and practice; organizing the regional events, etc.);
4. **Focusing on all three pillars of our society**: professional practice, academia, and public services. This translates into reinventing our scope of activities and mode of delivery of the ISOCARP projects as well as developing partnerships covering all three aspects of our activities;
5. **Reinforcing our headquarters and service for members** – which requires rethinking the way we operate and deal with all our activities. Moreover, it further requires us to have an open door policy and both the President, Board, and Secretariat should be approachable to all members from different parts of the globe.

I have decided to contribute my time and energy to the delivery of these five points as I see **the need for further improvement of ISOCARP – my „society of choice”**. ISOCARP has been my family for more than 20 years and I want to do my best to make it develop further as a truly globally recognized key player in the field of city and regional planning.

Of course, as a society, we must face many challenges on the way towards our improvement: changing global context, lack of support from the public sector, financial and organizational issues, etc. Dealing with these might require the mobilization of our members, resources, and hidden potentials. I tried and tested these in my hometown, Gdańsk, where many events have already been organized – both for ISOCARP members and for Young Planning Professionals. So – **it is doable but needs a lot of commitment and mobilization**. But it should be the ISOCARP President’s role to ignite these actions. I am ready and willing to deliver on these actions.



Piotr Lorens.