

# **ANNUAL CONGRESS 2025**



**Monday 7 July 2025 - Friday 11 July 2025**

**Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul**

## **Scientific Programme**

Planning as a Transformative Action in an Age of Planetary Crisis.

As we gather in Istanbul—a city where East meets West, past meets future, and urban challenges and opportunities converge—we invite you to engage in critical conversations about the evolving role of planning in tackling the unprecedented challenges of our time.

The congress theme reflects the urgency of addressing planetary crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss, social inequalities, and resource depletion. At the heart of this crisis is a socio-economic system that continues to promote growth-oriented development and relies on unsustainable practices, reinforcing deep-seated inequalities and social exclusion.

In this age of planetary crisis, the time has come to move beyond the narrow focus on growth as a measure of success. It is critical to shift our thinking and adopt alternative approaches that prioritize the people and the planet.

## Track 01 | POSTGROWTH URBANISM

**Looking “Beyond Growth” for Ecological Balance and Social Equity in Cities and Regions.**

**Chairs:** Emrah Altınok, Istanbul Bilgi University // Shefali Nayak, HafenCity Universität // Barbara Pizzo, Sapienza Università di Rome

Climate change, economic inequality, and resource depletion pose mounting challenges to cities and regions, prompting a reevaluation of conventional growth-driven development models and their ability to serve the common good. This session on "post-growth urbanism" examines settlements as integrated social-ecological systems, investigating how urban and regional areas can evolve beyond the demands of ceaseless economic, physical, and material expansion. Furthermore, it explores how their metabolisms can be reconfigured to sustain both ecological balance and social equity.

We solicit critical contributions from the potentially integrated perspectives of urban and regional planning, political ecology, and political economy, to envision a post-capitalist future, incorporating innovative critiques of the society-nature divide and drawing upon novel interpretations of the "metabolic rift."

Given that urban areas account for significant energy consumption and emissions, we will examine the role of cities and regions in restoring eco-social balance. We will discuss strategies for reducing environmental footprints beyond mainstream efficiency-oriented measures, integrating nature-based solutions, and fostering circular economies that regenerate rather than exploit ecosystems, including the necessity of "scaling-down" production and consumption, as advocated by de-growth proponents.

We seek contributions that address key planning questions, such as:

How can planning tools be utilized to reshape housing, transportation, water, and energy systems to better align with community needs while fostering regenerative relationships between society and the environment?

How can cities and regions be reimagined to offer more equitable resource distribution, inclusive governance, and improved access to public goods, particularly for geographically and socially marginalized communities?

Participants are expected to contribute to the post-growth debate by presenting novel theoretical and conceptual frameworks, cutting-edge case studies, practices, and innovative policy approaches from diverse global contexts, offering actionable insights and new modes of interdisciplinary collaboration between academia and industry that guide us towards models of eco-social integrity in a post-growth context.

**Keywords:** Cities and urbanism beyond growth; Degrowth; Social equity; Ecological balance

## Track 02 | PLANNING AND LAW

**Law as a catalyst for change; Legal frameworks for planetary transformation and just transitions.**

**Chairs:** Rachelle Alterman, Technion University, Israel // Paula Vale de Paula, Instituto Superior Técnico - ULisboa // Şence Türk, Istanbul Technical University (ITU) // Fatma Ünsal, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul

Spatial planning decisions rely on the authority derived from law. Property rights too (housing tenure, private versus public land and natural resources - are also grounded in law. So are the tools of implementation – such as land use categories, development density, or protection of land and buildings from sea level rise. In times of major crises such as currently, the legal framework may need reshaping, but when it comes to law, this is a difficult matter. The role of research focusing on legal frameworks is therefore crucial.

Can the laws and institutions that govern planning meet the challenges posed by climate change, sustainability, demographic changes and increasing economic and political uncertainties? This track aims to provide a platform for sharing research on any topic that connects planning and law or planning and property rights. Example of topic areas:

Governance structures and procedures: How does planning law structure the relationships between central governmental control, local government, markets, and non-governmental organizations? Where is legitimacy derived from?

Regulatory instruments of spatial planning and their implementation: Critical analysis of how well instruments work in times of crisis.

regulation of agricultural land, open space and natural resources, heritage-building regulation,

Theory of property rights: How to deal with tensions between public and private rights and responsibilities

Financial aspects of land use regulation: Land value capture on the one hand, and compensation rights (if any) on the other.

types of housing tenure and how they interact with the adequacy and fairness of housing supply and allocation.

How can planning law contribute to the environment and climate change challenges.

Contributions may look at theoretical aspects or present empirical or legal analysis. The paper may relate to a single country or be comparative. Make sure that your abstract features the connection with legal aspects clear.

**Keywords:** Spatial planning law, land use; land policy, property rights, housing regulations, development control, participation in planning procedures; governance of spatial planning; land-value capture, frugal use of land resources; climate mitigation and adaptation

## Track 03 | MOBILITY

**Planning for Inclusive, accessible, sustainable, innovative forms of urban mobility systems.**

**Chairs:** Ela Babalik, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara // Simon De Boeck, University of Antwerp // Enrica Papa, University of Westminster

Track 3 at the AESOP 2025 Congress will address how urban mobility systems can be reimagined to promote inclusive, accessible, sustainable, and resilient practices. This aligns with the congress theme, "Planning as a Transformative Action in an Age of Planetary Crisis," recognizing mobility as vital to sustainable urban futures amid climate challenges, rising inequality, and growth pressures. Participants will explore ways to reduce environmental impact while ensuring accessibility for all, particularly vulnerable communities, in adopting new mobility technologies and policies.

This track will bring together planners, engineers, policymakers, and community stakeholders, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue on developing just, sustainable, and safe urban mobility systems. Contributions are encouraged that examine mobility transitions globally, from theoretical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives. Key topics include:

**Urban Mobility and Land Use Policies:** Examining models like the 15-minute city, low-traffic neighborhoods, Superblocks, and car-free zones for their contributions and limitations in equitable, sustainable mobility.

**Care and Commoning in Transport:** Investigating how care principles and community-led initiatives shape inclusive, resilient mobility systems.

**Car as an option:** Addressing shifts in car ownership, cycling, pedestrianisation, and the impact of emerging technologies like electrification, autonomous vehicles, and shared mobility.

**Degrowth in Transport:** Exploring how degrowth principles affect equity and accessibility in the transport sector.

**Governance and New Actors:** Considering the influence of emerging mobility-as-a-service companies and grassroots movements on sustainable mobility policies

**Theoretical and Methodological Expansion:** Integrating insights from gender studies, postcolonial studies, and Global South perspectives to challenge traditional mobility planning and enhance transport justice research.

**Keywords:** transport modes, mobility policies, urban models, care, degrowth, community-led initiatives, social justice, critical studies.

## Track 04 | GOVERNANCE

**Institutions, actors and ideas crossing boundaries and enabling learning.**

**Chairs:** Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara // Mehmet Penpecioğlu, Izmir Institute of Technology // Elisa Privitera, University of Toronto Scarborough // Eva Purkarthofer, Aalto University

The world is facing multiple crises, including accelerated climate change, increasing social and economic inequalities, and devastating wars. These crises pose global challenges; yet, they require policy responses at various scales, from the international to the European, national, regional, until the local one. Where established administrative arrangements do not fit the challenges at hand, flexible “soft spaces”, crossing territorial boundaries, promise more accurate and less bureaucratic solutions. However, their informal governance models are potentially undemocratic and sometimes render transformative actions difficult to implement.

Track 4 “Governance” discusses the broad range of governance arrangements framing planning and enabling transition. This covers the institutional aspects of governance, i.e. the rules, laws, and procedural requirements shaping planning, as well as the possibilities opened by community practices and actors (co-)operating within these structural settings, and how these practices might lead to generative conflicts, institutional learning, and enhanced reflexivity. We explore the transboundary nature of challenges and responses, referring both to the need for new spatial framings, and for crossing boundaries between administrative silos, scientific disciplines, and various communities. We welcome theoretical and empirical contributions, as well as methodology- and policy-oriented discussions on governance and planning practices.

Track 4 focuses on five major themes:

Institutions, e.g. the dynamic nature and relationship of planning systems and planning cultures; the regulatory and sectoral policy inputs coming from the EU level; change, reform, and innovation of institutional settings; tensions between various governance arrangements (e.g. top-down/bottom-up, local/regional, hard/soft)

Actors, e.g. community engagement, participatory planning, and collaborative governance; social movements and commoning practices as confrontations to planetary crises; actors as catalysts and drivers of transformative action

Ideas, e.g. policy narratives for transitions towards degrowth, digitalisation, renewable energy, sustainable food systems, inclusiveness, and spatial justice; transfer and mobility of planning ideas, concepts and practices; local interpretations of pervasive narratives such as sustainability

Learning, e.g. challenges and opportunities related to reflexive governance and institutional learning; conditions for innovation and the role of actors therein; generative conflict and dissensus in planning practice; potential and challenges of different institutional backgrounds, knowledges and languages

Boundaries, e.g. planning in cross-border regions and functional spaces; borders as social constructs, administrative challenges and lived realities; tensions between different levels of governance; policy coordination and integration related to planning; planning in light of geopolitics and European integration

**Keywords:** planning system, planning culture, soft space, policy transfer, mobilities, geopolitics, transboundary planning, border, functional region, scale, institution, actor, collaboration, participation, Europeanisation, EU policymaking, reflexive urban governance, local participatory governance, social movement, urban commons/commoning, equitable urban policies, inclusiveness, cohesion

## Track 05 | ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

**Sustainable cities and climate action: the role of planning in addressing the environmental and climate challenge.**

**Chairs:** Osman Balaban, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara // Doğan Dursun, Atatürk University, Erzurum // Xiaolin LAO, University College Dublin // Francesco Musco, IUAV Venice

No doubt that we are in the midst of a planetary crisis driven by various environmental challenges. Atmospheric temperatures are still rising and the earth's climate has been drastically changing, loss of biodiversity and degradation of natural ecosystems are not slowing down, and desertification and pollution threaten the living of millions of households. The future of humanity is very much dependant on the addressing of global, regional and local environmental challenges, particularly climate change, as we have already reached the limits of the 1.5oC of global warming.

Cities are at the forefront of the planetary crisis, due not only to being the major drivers of environmental challenges such as GHGs emissions, habitat loses, excessive resource consumption, etc. but also due to being adversely impacted from these challenges. Many cities today are suffering from such climate change impacts as rising sea levels, heatwaves, flooding, and the shortage of the key life support systems like food, water and energy. As key players in both contributing to and combating environmental challenges, cities also hold immense potential for driving transformative actions for creating sustainable and climate resilient futures. As being closely located to the sources and outputs of a range of environmental issues, cities help develop innovative policies, actions and strategies that reflect the complexity of urban environments and the diversity of urban populations.

We invite researchers, practitioners, policy- and decision-makers, and students, who deal with planning, design and management of urban areas, to contribute to the discussions on addressing the planetary crisis at the local level. In particular, this track aims to bring together forward-thinking solutions that tackle various environmental hazards and risks faced by urban areas, while promoting sustainable, low-carbon and climate resilient urban development.

We encourage proposals that engage with the following themes:

**Planning for Climate Adaptation:** Innovative approaches for cities to adapt to climate change with particular attention to the plans of the new generation provided by advanced knowledge systems that provide specific framework to climate adaptation planning and design. Specific attention would be also provided to urban and spatial planning techniques to counteract climate impacts, or with special reference to peculiar contexts (as coastal cities, interface areas with water-seas, in-land urban and rural contexts, arid cities, cultural heritage etc.). Proposals that focus on emerging concepts, tools and methods in planning and design, such as green infrastructure planning, nature-based solutions, etc. are more than welcome.

**Climate Mitigation in the Urban Context:** Innovative strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions within cities and urban areas in relation to key sectors of urban development including energy-efficient buildings, low-carbon transportation systems, positive energy districts, renewable energy integration, and circular urban economies. That being said, proposals should not solely focus on technological innovations in key urban sectors but also include governance and policy frameworks that target carbon-neutral or climate-positive cities.

**Ecosystem Services and Resilience:** The loss of nature affects our cities and territories and our daily life as individuals. Supporting nature regeneration with a proper action of planning systems – including enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems and landscapes above and below the water – will help improve the quality of these services as well as securing them for future generations. In particular ecosystem services can provide and actual support to adaptation strategies in built and natural environments.

**Environmental Justice and Inclusive Urban Policies:** Most environmental challenges but particularly climate change disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups like marginalized, low-income, and

vulnerable communities, which historically have contributed the least to the occurrence of the planetary crisis and the climate problem. However, these groups today endure the harshest impacts of almost all environmental issues. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to solutions, developing actions and strategies particularly for protecting the most vulnerable urban populations are must for an effective local climate action. Proposals are invited to explore how to advance equitable solutions so as not to “leave no one behind”, and to critically examine how cities can formulate and implement policies to address environmental and climate inequalities.

**Governance of the Environment:** There are significant governance challenges in development and implementation of local actions for addressing environmental issues and ensuring sustainability. Therefore, proposals under this theme are expected to identify a variety of such challenges, preferably via case studies and also to discuss the ways to address them. Participatory decision-making, inclusive multi-level governance, enhanced stakeholder collaboration, institutional capacities, enabling conditions, new and innovative finance, diverse knowledge systems are the likely keywords of the discussions under this theme.

We hope that this track will serve as a platform for joint-thinking among a range of urban scholars and actors to exchange knowledge and ideas, and explore innovative solutions for the long-term sustainability and climate resilience of cities. We also hope to acknowledge the best practices and stimulate cross-sector collaboration to drive the urban transition in response to the planetary crisis.

We cordially invite you to join this important debate on the future of cities in the midst of a planetary crisis.

## **Track 06 | URBAN CULTURES AND LIVED HERITAGE**

**Transformative power of culture and heritage; Risks and threats on cultural landscapes.**

**Chairs:** Evangelia Athanassiou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki // Zeynep Gunay, Istanbul Technical University (ITU) // Anita Martinelli, Politecnico di Milano - DASTU Department // Tihomir Viderman BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

This track explores how cultural landscapes take shape through people’s search a sense of connection and presence in unsettled urban space. As societies perceive their foundations as increasingly unsettled, and commit to envisioning paths to fairer futures, urban cultures and heritage conceptually address and practically open possibilities for disrupting unjust urban development.

Urban cultures foster moments where people engage with the unknown and unpredictable, enhancing the capacity to challenge social constraints through improvisation, creativity, and action. Heritage links present struggles to ideas of the past, reflecting how collective memories and aspirations are shaped through the tension between local identities and planetary urbanization. Planetary urbanization drives processes like touristification, gentrification, and commodification of space, alongside global and local forces like climate change, environmental crises, and conflicts. Together, these pressures erode urban heritage and cultural landscapes, creating vulnerabilities that require innovative protection and enhancement strategies.

This track puts culture and heritage into dialogue, viewing heritage not as an abstract quality of

objects or places, but as an outcome of diverse, often contested social relations through which groups interpret the past to give meaning to the present and future. Heritage is not a static condition but a lived process, constantly redefined through urban cultures. By situating this lived heritage in spaces of everyday life, and urban cultures in the morphologies of objects and places, this track asks how daily negotiated rhythms of urban development—whether accelerated, paused, disruptive, or stabilizing—shape transformative paths and actions.

We invite contributions that explore challenges posed to historic places and everyday urban spaces as multicultural and emerging heritage sites. Adopting a broad view of urban cultures and lived heritage as dynamic and interconnected processes, this track highlights their roles in shaping urban transformations and invites discussions on how they influence social structures and spatial development.

**Keywords:** urban cultures, heritage as process, lived heritage, everyday, cultural landscapes, unsettled urban space

## Track 07 | INCLUSION

**Planning responses to shifting demographic landscape; Vulnerable populations; Political, natural and anthropogenic triggers of migration.**

**Chairs:** Chandrima Mukhopadhyay, UN-Habitat India // Ela Ataç Kavurmacı, TED University, Ankara // Ersi Zafeiriou, Dresden Leibniz Graduate School (DLGS), Institute for Ecological Urban & Regional Development (IÖR), Environmental Studies, Technische Universität Dresden (TUD)

In a world buzzing with dynamic global challenges, rapid demographic shifts, and ongoing turmoil—especially for our most vulnerable populations—we stand at a pivotal moment that calls for bold and inclusive planning responses. This track invites you to unleash your insights and strategies for reimagining our planning approaches. The track, therefore, aims to explore alternative and innovative analytical and methodological tools, alongside fresh conceptual frameworks, to tackle the political, natural, and anthropogenic triggers of migration. At the heart of this discussion is a commitment to amplifying the voices of vulnerable and marginalized communities, ensuring they are front and center in shaping our future. On this basis, issues such as diversity, age, gender, disability, religion, identities including political, co-production of knowledge by the scholars from the Global South and East, heterogenous onto-epistemological positions, vulnerability, urban and regional inequalities, urban poverty, migration including climate- and politically driven ones, displacement driven by mega transport- and urban development-projects, corridor development projects are all central to the contemporary discourse on inclusion. The track defines “inclusivity” in a wider sense than that of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal 11.

The track is intended to cover a broad spectrum of contributions, such as urban planning policies and strategies, design approaches, theoretical reflections, ethical perspectives, philosophical positions, various forms of southern urbanism(s) including pluriversal urbanism, inclusivity reflected in planning education (e.g. decolonization), development of planning policies and interventions, analysis of current socio-spatial dynamics, consideration of heterogenous onto-epistemological positions, advancement in knowledge in fairness and just literature (e.g. climate justice), planning for migrant-ready cities, and broader reflections on inclusion and understanding the city and beyond.



The track aims to encourage a dynamic exchange of ideas and experiences and welcomes abstracts on these topics of inclusion and planning.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Integration, Multiculturalism, Minority Groups, Inclusive Cities, Pluriversal Urbanism, Vulnerable Populations, Urban and Regional Inequalities, Demographic Landscapes, Migration and Refugee Crisis, Heterogenous Onto-Epistemological Positions.

## Track 08 | EDUCATION AND SKILLS

**Planning education responses to social, economic, and environmental challenges; Innovative pedagogical approaches, knowledge and skills.**

**Chairs:** Andrea Frank, University of Birmingham // Kerem Koramaz, Istanbul Technical University (ITU) // Dafni Riga, Politecnico di Milano

Planning education programmes in higher education have been preparing future planning practitioners for careers in urban and regional planning as well as urban design for decades. In recent years, implications of the changing climate for human settlements have become increasingly visible, with a growing number of heat related premature deaths, damages from storms, landslides and flooding. Territorial fragility and marginality, spatial and social inequities, urban refugees and migrants, food insecurities and homelessness are creating tensions and potentially unrest. There is strong evidence that these issues are interlinked and rooted in a socio-economic system that prioritizes economic growth and gain over social and economic approaches that challenge the status quo. It is thus high time to re-think “business as usual” planning practices and time-tested educational approaches, which often constitute the convention for planning pedagogies.

However, are planning education curricula fit for such an endeavour? While AESOP published a revised version of its core curriculum, is this going far enough? What might be the skills and knowledge areas needed to support fostering new and alternative imaginaries of urban living and forms? How can students practice transformative skills and gain experience in such activities? Is it possible for the planning practices and pedagogies derived from developed geographies to become responsive to the planning experiences of the entire world?

This track invites theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions (individual papers/posters/pre-organised sessions) that explore:

How planning education curricula should and need to be adapted to offer suitable knowledge and skills;

Novel approaches in teaching and learning to equip planning practitioners with knowledge and skills to address current social, economic, and environmental challenges, such as urban climate change adaptations.

**Keywords:** Planning education, pedagogy, planning curricula, innovative approaches, transformation skills

## Track 09 | URBAN FUTURES

## **Changing mindset; Novel and innovative narratives for a equitable, and just future.**

**Chairs:** Peter Ache, Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen // Mete Başar Baypinar, Istanbul University // Varvara Toura, EHESS/Géographie-Cités

Planning, as a transformative action amidst complex challenges, relies, to a large extent, on various communicative actions. Part of planning power results from strong narratives regarding the intended changes and the ways to get there. At the same time, technology convergence and innovations like AI, moving global agendas or the increasing power of metropolitan cities, change the objective or material conditions of the planning exercise. Ultimately, these forces – and their embedded narratives - will shape the planning community and its discourses, too.

To reach to what is envisaged by the Sustainable Development Agenda, that is a just and peaceful transition towards a safe and equitable living environment, and to avoid disastrous routes to dystopia, we need to reflect on new and old narratives, on new and old discourses, on new and old models, norms or visions, old and new strategies and tactics that often guide the planning endeavour with their established structures, institutions, routines. This track invites you for a vivid and challenging discussion of these and more dimensions, including the following main aspects:  
Experiences regarding the workings of old and new narratives guiding the transformative actions of planning,  
Experiments to introduce new narratives in transformative planning actions,  
Reflections on narratives and their operations in planning processes.

We invite scholars, academics, practitioners, established or 'young', from the planning field to consider Track 9 as a platform of discussion where we will address the importance of changing mindsets and share our thinking about and actions towards more equitable and just futures. We invite you to start from real world settings and explore further the professional and conceptual implications for planning and its ambition to be a transformative action. We seek to learn from each other about innovative approaches to challenge old narratives, establish new approaches, and build pathways toward environmental sustainability and equitable, inclusive, and resilient communities in the future.

Track 9 builds partially on activities promoted by the AESOP Thematic Group Urban Futures.

## **Track 10 | THEORIES**

**Critical approaches to planning theory and practice.**

**Chairs:** Jesse Fox, Tel Aviv University // Meike Levin-Keitel, University of Vienna // Binnur Öktem, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul // Franziska Sielker, TU Wien

Within the overarching theme of the 37th AESOP Congress "Planning as a Transformative Action in an Age of Planetary Crisis" Track 10 focuses on exploring and challenging the theoretical foundations of planning in response to the critical challenges of our time. As the world grapples with unprecedented environmental, social, and economic crises, the role of planning theories becomes increasingly vital in shaping transformative actions.

This track invites contributions that critically engage with traditional and emerging planning theories, encouraging participants to rethink and redefine the core concepts and assumptions that have historically guided planning practices. We welcome discussions that interrogate the epistemologies, ideologies, and methodologies that underpin planning and explore how they can be re-envisioned to address urgent planetary crises such as climate change, social inequality, and resource depletion. Particularly, this track seeks to examine how theoretical insights can be translated into practical interventions, especially in different geographies. We encourage submissions that not only critique established frameworks but also propose innovative, inclusive, and context-sensitive approaches to planning that emphasize social justice, sustainability, and resilience. Contributors are invited to engage with diverse perspectives, including decolonial, feminist, and postmodern theories, as well as interdisciplinary approaches that expand the horizons of planning thought. We aim to open discussions on the role of spatial planning and planners and ethics of planners under the recent global crises. By fostering critical debates on the transformative potential of planning theories, this track aims to create a space to imagine new possibilities for planning in an era defined by global crisis.

## Track 11 | EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

**Emerging digital technologies, transformative planning, and spatial systems.**

**Chairs:** Michele Campagna, Università degli Studi di Cagliari // Merve Deniz TAK, Istanbul University // Fatih Terzi, Istanbul Technical University

Urban and territorial systems are facing unprecedented crises ranging from population growth and climate change to social inequalities and resources consumption— which are complex and multidimensional. Traditional planning methods may no longer be adequate, and new technologies and novel technological solutions may enable us to address the need for transformative approaches.

The role of new technologies in spatial planning is increasingly crucial as we face global challenges requiring swift action. These technologies, and especially emerging artificial intelligence, may offer innovative solutions for achieving efficient, resilient, and inclusive cities by enhancing our understanding of urban dynamics, improving spatial planning, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and engaging stakeholders more effectively.

However, while technological advancements may provide many opportunities, they also raise ethical concerns, such as data privacy, digital inequality, and algorithmic bias. Planners must balance the benefits with careful scrutiny of potential risks to the social fabric.

Track 11 aims to foster dialogue on building sustainable, fair, and resilient cities and communities through technology, and to explore the integration of technology in planning, focusing on its opportunities, limitations, and impacts on the planning process and on urban and territorial systems. Participants are encouraged to present new perspectives, share best practices, and contribute theoretical, methodological, or empirical studies on how digital innovations are transforming spatial planning.

Contributions are invited on the following topics, including but not limited to:  
Artificial Intelligence and Geo-AI Method and Applications for Spatial Analysis

Big Data Analytics in Urban Contexts  
Computational Urbanism and Digital Tools for Transformative Planning Ethics, Representation, and Privacy in Data-Driven Urbanism  
Advanced Decision-Making and Planning Support Systems  
Digital Twins, Real Time Data, and Virtual Urban Environments  
Ethics and Privacy in Digital Information  
Gamification in Planning  
Geodesign for Resilient and Sustainable Cities  
Technology Impacts on Socio-Spatial Systems  
Social Media, Crowdsourcing, and Volunteered Geographic Information Technological Tools for Spatial Justice  
The Pros and Cons of Technological Advancements in Urban Planning

## Track 12 | DISASTER-RESILIENT PLANNING

**Planning for the Unexpected; Disaster preparedness, management and recovery; Disaster-oriented urban solutions; Resilience and risk mitigation.**

**Chairs:** Meltem Şenol Balaban, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara // Cora Fontana, Institute of Environmental Geology and Geo-Engineering (CNR-IGAG), Rome // Daniel Zwangleitner, TU München

The incidence of natural hazards affecting populations is rising across various regions, due to factors such as population growth, urbanization, and climate change. Despite evidence, the predominant approach of governments to disaster risk management is still focused on emergency public actions for repayment and the physical restoration of individual assets rather than comprehensive urban prevention strategies. This approach not only incurs high financial costs but also exacerbates issues of territorial equity. Emergency operations during post-disaster phases often lead to prolonged and stressful recovery processes that amplify vulnerabilities and inequalities instead of strengthening the affected territories. Moreover, anthropogenic factors—such as global pollution, biodiversity loss, and changes in land use—are having both direct and indirect effects on human health and the planet as a whole.

Consequently, while increasing development opportunities, the concentration of population and assets in urban and peri-urban areas also exposes people and the environment to potential impacts from multi-risk situations stemming from both natural and human-induced events. This requires continuous monitoring and sustainable planning processes supported by integrated governance. A shared framework of public policies is essential to implement effective mitigation programs and actions. By shifting the focus from "building back better" to "building better before," reducing the catastrophic impact of disasters, and prioritizing the development of resilient physical and social infrastructure.

Empirical areas of focus could include climate disasters, pandemics, or environmental crises. Contributions exploring both theoretical foundations and empirical examples of planning for the unexpected are encouraged. Presentations could cover subjects such as the conditions and limitations of planning, managing uncertainty in collective decision-making, balancing spontaneity and control, or approaches to disaster risk management, from prevention to recovery.

Hence, in the face of long-term transformations, how can planning integrate diverse capacities to

mitigate the impacts on our daily lives and adapt our practices? How can planners maintain the ability to achieve shared long-term goals, while managing and reducing the impacts of unpredictable events?

## Track 13 | HOUSING AND SHELTER

**Planning for affordable housing; New models of living; Homelessness; Shelter for refugees and vulnerable population.**

**Chairs:** Elif Akay, Istanbul Technical University (ITU) // Massimo Briccocoli, Politecnico di Milano // Dilek Darby, Istanbul University // Wanlin Huang, Utrecht University

The examination of the current housing crisis from various perspectives highlights the significant challenges that middle and low-income groups, as well as migrants and vulnerable populations, face in securing housing in many desirable cities and regions. Meanwhile, other areas are experiencing decline and marginalization. Research from various global locations shows that access issues have unique local characteristics. However, in nearly all situations, these remain the primary challenge for both central and local authorities.

This Track will focus on discussing the possibilities and limitations of overcoming the housing crisis through planning from the perspective of transformative actions. We may therefore ask: What is the capacity and power of planning to address the current housing crisis? Is it possible to analyze the housing crisis holistically within planning theory? How should we discuss the relationship between planning policy and housing policy, considering their social, economic, and spatial impacts? What planning processes and implementation tools have been developed to address housing problems?

Additionally, what collaborations have occurred between local governments, community-based initiatives, and NGOs in planning implementations and practices? How can we focus on local needs analysis while pursuing local-scale solutions amid transnational investments and financialization? When housing investments are made to meet local needs, can the profits from these investments be redirected towards public interest goals through planning policies and tools?

In conjunction with strategies aimed at increasing new housing supply, what types of interventions can be applied to existing housing areas? What social impacts do planning decisions and their implementations have on different social groups? Lastly, what planning tools can be introduced to mitigate negative social impacts, such as displacement?

We welcome contributions that will explore these matters in both theoretical and practical ways; a focus on local experiences and practices at the local scale will be of particular value.

**Keywords:** Housing, Affordability, Inequalities, Financialisation, Housing Policy, Planning Policy

## Track 14 | ETHICS, VALUES AND PLANNING

### **Upholding justice in an age of crisis.**

**Chairs:** Stefano Cozzolino, ILS Dortmund // Anita De Franco, Politecnico di Milano // Büşra İnce, Politecnico di Milano // Erhan Kurtarır, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul // Stefano Moroni, Politecnico di Milano // Brett Allen Slack, Politecnico di Milano

Nowadays, global challenges and crises—whether social, political, environmental, or economic—are profoundly interconnected and manifest locally, emerging with unprecedented speed and urgency. Planning interventions and measures often struggle to keep pace with these rapid developments, raising serious questions about their effectiveness. The growing awareness of contemporary crises highlights a widespread desire for a more just world and urban life. Typically, discussions jump directly to concrete solutions and transformative scenarios, while ethical perspectives and values that drive planning actions are frequently overlooked.

It is necessary, however, to engage more critically and systematically with certain background ethical questions. In particular, a new challenge that planning must deal with today is the multiplicity of interests, desires, and ideals that characterize contemporary urban societies. From this perspective, this track will explore three interrelated questions:

What ethical perspectives and values should guide planning interventions and measures?

How can justice and values be effectively operationalised in planning solutions?

How can today's diverse and highly conflicting interests and ideals coexist harmoniously?

We invite participants to contribute to the thematic discussion of the track by offering their particular experiences, perspectives and predictions (related to the contemporary crisis context, and concerning social, institutional, political, professional and environmental issues, to name a few) from their specific fields of inquiry. This track will host contributions that unfold, uphold and operationalise notions of justice and ethical frameworks of the planning discipline in the era of multiple crises.

## **Track 15 | PROPERTY MARKET ACTORS**

**Property market actors in shaping cities, challenges of financialization, policies and strategies to overcome multi-faceted crisis.**

**Chairs:** Elvan Guloksuz, Istanbul Technical University (ITU) // Francesca Leccis, University of Cagliari // Tuna Tasan-Kok, University of Amsterdam

In an era marked by planetary crises, from climate change and biodiversity loss to air pollution and urban inequalities, understanding the actors and dynamics of land and property markets in shaping cities has become more important than ever. These markets interact with adaptive planning and regulation mechanisms, influencing the trajectory of urban development. While housing has often been the focus of planning interventions, there is an urgent need to broaden our understanding of how land and property market dynamics drive urban transformations. Planning systems worldwide grapple with the challenge of regulating these markets, which are increasingly dominated by powerful financial actors whose strategies transcend local boundaries and contribute to deepening social and environmental inequities. They are also required to address actions of government actors who enter these markets in novel ways as landowners or developers by engaging state-owned property.

The financialization of cities, wherein real estate becomes a favored asset class for global investment vehicles such as sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, and private equity firms, presents profound challenges to urban governance. These actors are reshaping land markets, intensifying property speculation, and amplifying the volatility of real estate values, which, in turn, affect long-term planning efforts. Regulation in this context is complex, as cities attempt to balance attracting capital to fuel growth while mitigating the displacement and social fragmentation that financialized property markets often exacerbate.

A comprehensive understanding of property market dynamics is indispensable if planners are to act as agents of transformative change. Without this understanding, planning interventions risk reinforcing the status quo or, worse, becoming complicit in the very market forces that drive urban crises. To advance transformative action, particularly in response to the planetary crisis, planning must critically engage with the mechanisms of land and property regulation and explore innovative approaches that foster both sustainability and equity. Moreover, urban planning regulations must be better understood in relation to broader urban governance and regulatory frameworks that shape cities.

This track seeks to explore the critical intersections between planning, governance, and property studies, emphasizing the role of land and property markets in shaping cities. We welcome contributions that explore how different groups interact with market actors and negotiate with them to reshape cities. Furthermore, the track will specifically focus on how planning systems, regulatory frameworks, and policy mechanisms offer toolsets to harness social value from these market interventions to foster the co-creation of liveable, inclusive and adaptive urban environments for transformative outcomes. Key themes include:

**Public Planning Mechanisms and Financialization:** Papers should investigate how public planning mechanisms respond to the financialization of property markets, focusing on the role of land regulation, market volatility, and speculative practices. How do these regulatory frameworks adapt, and what are their limitations in steering urban growth towards sustainability?

**Emerging Adaptive Planning Strategies:** This theme explores innovative and adaptive planning strategies in the context of land and property markets. Contributions should illuminate novel approaches that planners employ to balance market pressures with environmental and social goals, such as land value capture mechanisms, green urbanism, and collaborative land governance models.

**Relational Dynamics among Public, Private, and Financial Actors:** We invite submissions that analyze the power dynamics and collaborations between public institutions, private developers, and financial actors in shaping land markets. How do these relationships influence the spatial, social, and environmental outcomes of urban developments? How do planning regulations influence these relations?

**Government Agencies as New Property Market Actors:** Papers analyzing the participation of local and central government agencies in property markets as landowners and/or developers through government-owned property are welcome. This theme addresses the consequences of these new forms of government participation on planning practice, government structure and urban development.

**Market Intelligence and Digital Technologies:** This theme invites papers that explore the rapidly evolving landscape of market intelligence and the transformative role of digital technologies in shaping property markets and the urban built environment. The rise of digital governance tools, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI) is redefining how property market actors—both public and private—interact with urban planning processes. These technologies enable the collection and analysis of vast amounts of real-time data, which in turn informs decisions about land use, investment, and regulation. The integration of digital tools in property markets is reshaping how cities are planned, developed, and governed, offering both opportunities and challenges for equitable and sustainable urban outcomes.

**Bridging Markets and Community:** Innovative Approaches to Urban Development: This theme

explores the emergence of entrepreneurial community initiatives within market-driven urban development. Papers should examine how local communities, cooperatives, NGOs, and grassroots movements strategically position themselves within market-led systems, aiming to promote inclusive, equitable, and sustainable urban growth by utilizing market tools and strategies. The focus is on how these initiatives engage with market forces, employing toolsets and approaches that mirror those of market actors—such as community-based planning models or cooperative housing—as responses to speculative practices. We encourage submissions that analyze the regulatory tools and strategies that emerge from these interactions, highlighting the market-led behavior, tools and strategies of these initiatives. How do entrepreneurial community initiatives leverage market mechanisms to advance social and environmental sustainability, and what opportunities and challenges do they face as they interface with formal planning bodies?

**Property Market Policy as Part of Government Strategies to Overcome Multi-Faceted Crisis:**

This theme elaborates government policies of land and property as part of their strategies to overcome economic, ecological and fiscal crises. Contributions are welcome that relate property market policies to policies of environment, growth, fiscal balance, welfare and wealth and income equality with an eye to the property market actors and social groups involved.

By situating land and property market dynamics at the heart of transformative urban planning, this track invites scholars to critically examine how planning can evolve to meet the challenges of financialization and contribute to equitable, resilient, and sustainable cities in the face of a planetary crisis.

## Track 16 | FOOD

**Planning for just and sustainable food systems; Food security; Food safety.**

**Chairs:** Emel Karakaya Ayalp, Izmir Democracy University // Alessandra Manganelli, HafenCity University Hamburg // Ebru Seçkin, Yıldız Technical University (YTU), Istanbul // Zeynep Ozcam, Izmir Institute of Technology

Food systems deeply interlace with contemporary crises. The incumbent food regime, uneven power relations in agri-food system, geopolitical conflicts, and both ongoing and emerging crises have exacerbated conditions of food insecurity, injustice and poverty- particularly impacting those already most vulnerable. The global food system holds responsibility in the climate emergency, contributes to the degradation of natural ecosystems, jeopardizes public health, pressures food sovereignty, affects the livelihoods of peasantry and agricultural workers, threatens animal welfare and perpetuates inequalities in food access. Alongside these structural challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic and its widespread impacts have underscored the urgency for cities as key actors to transform their food systems towards a just and sustainable future.

Food is a multifaceted issue within the sustainability challenges faced by urban areas. The problems created by the current food system in cities, along with the pressures of rapid urbanization, have compelled cities to seek solutions within their own borders as well as from external regions on which they depend for food supply. To this end, the urban and regional dimensions have become arenas where both food system struggles, promising alternatives along with grassroots practices have emerged. Sustainable Food Planning, as a counter-hegemonic practice, is embedded in the contradictions of contemporary society yet holds the potential to reveal and foster post-growth, sustainable and just alternatives: from agroecological urbanism to food planning based on (landed) commons rather than privatisation; city-region food system frameworks that rethink the relations between the cities and their foodsheds; public procurement models; and other initiatives treating food as a vehicle of recognition and restorative justice. These and other



alternatives call for a deep engagement with structural and transformative change at the urban-rural interface.

At its core, planning for just and sustainable food systems involves understanding how food is a critical field or a powerful lever for building more sustainable and just city-regions, aligning with the mission of planning as an agent of transformation in addressing contemporary planetary crisis.

The track invites contributions that advance scholarly research, propose new methods and approaches, and inform practices related to issues such as:

Innovative planning and design approaches enabling city-region food system and actions;

Socially innovative multi-level governance, new bodies, grassroots movements and policy frameworks seeking transformative food security and justice;

Interactions and synergies of food system action with other urban planning and policy domains (e.g. climate, health, land-use, transport);

Contributions from the landscape field to sustainable food systems (e.g. Agroecological Corridors, Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes, Nature-based solutions, transformative experiments etc.)

Alternative urbanism approaches related to food systems (i.e. biophilic urbanism; agroecological urbanism; plant-based urbanism etc.);

Advances, methodologies and practices in planning and architecture pedagogies for sustainable food planning.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Food Planning; food system governance; city-region food system; rural-urban interface; heterodox approaches; socio-ecological justice

## Track 17 | PUBLIC SPACE

**Transformative power of public spaces, Planning for Inclusion, Equity and Transformation.**

**Chairs:** Matej Nikšič, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia // Ebru Firidin Özgür, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul // Maliheh Hahemi Tileno, Sorbonne University

### Introduction

Public spaces have always played a central role in shaping vibrant urban experiences. They are sites of social interaction, cultural expression and political contestation. However, in an age of growing social inequalities, environmental challenges and political polarization, the question of how public spaces can foster inclusion, equity and positive change becomes more critical than ever. Public spaces have the potential to inspire hope by serving as examples of possibility and resilience in our urban environments.

This track for the 37th AESOP Annual Congress in Istanbul builds on the theme of "Planning as a Transformative Action in an Age of Planetary Crisis" by focusing on the transformative potential of public spaces. We invite scholars, practitioners and activists to explore how public spaces can be designed, managed and used to foster more equitable and sustainable urban futures.

### Themes

Reflecting the AESOP Public Spaces and Urban Cultures Thematic Group's focus on "Hope" (2024-2026), this track seeks abstracts that address:

Public spaces as sites of hope: How can public spaces nurture hope for a better future and embody aspirations for social justice, environmental sustainability and collective well-being?

Inclusion and equity: How can public spaces become more inclusive and accessible? How can planning support marginalised groups and enhance social cohesion?

Agents of transformation: How can public spaces promote transformative urban change, civic engagement and empowerment while challenging existing power dynamics?

Climate change: How can public spaces be designed to be more resilient to climate change and promote environmental sustainability? How can they contribute to a more livable urban future?

Istanbul's unique context: How can public spaces address Istanbul's distinct urban challenges and opportunities?

We welcome abstracts that critically engage with the concept of hope, examine the intersections of public space, justice and sustainability, present innovative theoretical or practical insights, and highlight global case studies, especially from underrepresented regions and contexts.

**Keywords:** public space, inclusion, equity, hope, transformation, social justice, environmental sustainability, climate change

## Track 18 | TOURISM

**Overtourism, commodification of culture and nature, responsible tourism, regenerative tourism**

**Chairs:** Alex Deffner, University of Thessaly // Ferhan Gezici, İstanbul Technical University (ITU) // Nikola Mitrović, University of Belgrade

Tourism is one of the four main leisure categories, alongside culture, sport, and entertainment. There has been a growth in mass and special interest forms of tourism, while planetary crises have accelerated the problems of the tourism destinations. Globalization and the branding of popular destinations through leisure resources and events create powerful attractions for visitors, expanding tourism and, in several cases, overtourism. A key aspect of this is the commodification of space and nature. From a digital perspective, tourist destinations and accommodations become marketable assets with different values on various platforms, turning culture, heritage, and visiting time into tradeable objects.

Instead of viewing mass tourism and overtourism only as problems, we can approach them also as opportunities. Responsible and regenerative tourism offer a hopeful perspective, extending awareness beyond damage reduction. As one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, tourism should strive to preserve cultural and natural environments and explore avenues for regeneration. This shift in perspective positions responsible and regenerative tourism as an ongoing journey, requiring place-based approaches and effective governance, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all solutions.

This track aims to set a debate around theoretical contributions and case studies posing a variety of

potential questions:

Which destinations might be most vulnerable in planetary crises, and why?

How can the principles of responsible and regenerative, tourism be integrated into current planning practices to address the planetary crises?

Given the need for place-based strategies, what role does planning play in ensuring care for all inhabitants within the ecological limits of tourism destinations?

How can spaces be reimagined to accommodate the growing commodification of culture and heritage in tourism without losing their authenticity?

What innovative approaches can be employed to turn the negative impacts of overtourism into opportunities for climate resilience and environmental sustainability?

What is the role of local communities and global powers in tourism planning for climate change adaptation and mitigation?

What is the importance of local identity and co-creation in place marketing/ branding in tourism (destination branding)?

How crucial is the temporal dimension of tourism: slow (alternative) instead of fast (mass)?

## Special Sessions

### SS 01 | Planning for Just Energy Transition

#### Organizers

Laura Grassini, Polytechnic University of Bari

Enza Lissandrello, Aalborg University

#### Presenters

Laura Grassini, Polytechnic University of Bari

Lena Verlooy, Ghent University

Pia Laborgne, Karlsruhe Institute for Technology

Katarzyna Piskorek, Wroclaw University of Science and Technology

Dieter Bruggeman, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Tijana Dabovic, University of Serbia

Enza Lissandrello, Aalborg University

Cities and urban areas play a crucial role in the energy transition as significant contributors to the ongoing climate crisis, while also serving as essential hubs for human capital and financial resources.

In numerous countries globally, mainstream policies and contemporary research frequently simplify energy transition by highlighting technocratic and market-oriented approaches to decarbonisation. Scholarly investigations often concentrate on modeling energy balances, developing renewable energy technologies, enhancing energy efficiency, and fostering consumer engagement. However, energy transition discussions seldom focus on planning perspectives, resulting in a limited understanding of urban dynamics and the interaction among key agents involved in sustainable transformation processes.

This session aims to address the limitations of current research on energy transition by exploring the complexities involved in urban processes and the socio-spatial inequalities produced in different contexts. It seeks to investigate the planning processes and the role of planning professionals in facilitating equitable energy transitions, incorporating a human-centred approach and a perspective of spatial justice into the ongoing discussions about the energy transition.

The session addresses the following questions, although additional inquiries are also welcome:  
 What are the implications of the energy transition for disadvantaged communities and neighbourhoods?

How does the current energy transition intersect with emerging forms of green gentrification, exclusionary dynamics and energy poverty?

How critical is it to understand planning for just energy transition under the lens of spatial justice?

In what ways can different forms of energy justice—distributional, representational, and procedural—be challenged by planning processes?

This session seeks to establish diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological traditions, focusing on the intersections of planning, political science, sociology, geography, and innovation studies on just energy transition in several geographical contexts. Theoretical papers critically assess the challenges associated with achieving a just energy transition, and empirical studies examine the complexities and contradictions of sustainable transitions across urban and regional contexts, both in the global North and South.

**Key words:** urban regeneration, community engagement, innovation communities, everyday energy practices, local communities' resistance, planners' reflexivity and practical wisdom

## **SS 02 | Discussing spatial justice from/towards a socio-ecological perspective**

### **Organizers**

Alessia Franzese, Università Iuav di Venezia

Luca Nicoletto, Università Iuav di Venezia

Valeria Volpe, Università degli Studi Roma Tre

Elena Bruno, Università degli Studi di Catania

### **Presenters**

Anastasia Battani, Università IUAV di Venezia

Elena Marchigiani, Università degli Studi di Trieste

Gabriele Leo, Università IUAV di Venezia

Renzo Sgolacchia, Amsterdam Academy of Architecture

Matteo Giacomelli, Politecnico di Milano

Marina Volpe, Università degli studi di Napoli "Federico II" - Diarc

Ludovica Battista, Università degli studi di Napoli "Federico II" - Diarc

Elena Longhin, TU Delft

Nicola Russolo, Università IUAV di Venezia

Vanessa Oblitas, Programa Municipal para la Recuperación del Centro Histórico de Lima

Longo Alessandra, Università IUAV di Venezia

Anna Pollionato, Università IUAV di Venezia

Anna Attademo, Università degli studi di Napoli "Federico II" - Diarc

Verena Lenna, VUB Bruxelles

Battista Ludovica, Università degli studi di Napoli "Federico II" - Diarc

Maria Cerreta, Università degli studi di Napoli "Federico II" - Diarc

In a world shaped by interconnected environmental and social crises, spatial justice assumes a transversal and complex dimension involving the relationships between living beings. Socio-ecological justice emerges as one of the main challenges of our time, tied to the necessity of addressing inequalities – not only economic or material but also symbolic and political – in the distribution and access to collective resources across territories and communities.

The concept of "justice" is being tested by various theoretical currents and social movements. Theories of deep ecology, as well as feminist, transfeminist, and post-colonial movements, challenge us to move beyond an anthropocentric view of justice. They remind us that within the same context, actors coexist with divergent – often contradictory and sometimes conflicting – conceptions of what is "just" and "unjust". This plurality of perspectives generates dialectical debate and potential tensions that call for governance and territorial planning of new negotiation modes.

The right to space becomes a central tool for interpreting and governing socio-ecological contexts in favor of (or on behalf of) the plural and fragile subjectivities inhabiting these territories. In this sense, urban planning practice and research take on the characteristics of agency and advocacy.

How can we rethink justice in broader terms to include the rights of ecosystems and non-human species? Is there a way to move beyond a hierarchical vision between social justice and ecological justice? Who are the subjects included in the decision-making and planning processes? Which voices are heard, and which remain marginalized? To what extent can urban planning intervene to enable emancipatory processes?

Starting from studies initiated by the spatial turn, spatial and territorial justice, the current planetary scale of urban phenomena highlights the need to delve into the spatial implications of urban and territorial policies, serving as a lens revealing the inequalities among living beings. Particularly since the pandemic, European cities have been undergoing urban transformation, driven by new initiatives and "recovery" policies such as Next Generation EU, aimed at a "sustainable, uniform, inclusive, and equitable recovery."

In this perspective, urban planning – as a theoretical field and design practice – can explore new critical approaches to understanding intersubjective relationships, as spatial dynamics can amplify and consolidate or, conversely, mitigate socio-ecological inequalities. Are these experiences potential laboratories to redefine the conditions for socio-ecological justice? How are they (or not) constructing different spatial configurations to foster alternative forms of justice and resource accessibility? How can spatial design become a device to imagine new ways or models of coexistence where plural subjectivities and ecological systems can live together more equitably?

**Key words:** Spatial Justice, Socio-ecological Perspective, Governance & Urban Design

## **SS 03 | Repopulating left-behind territories: Policies, Practices, and Emerging Pathway**

### **Organizers**

Mauro Fontana, Politecnico di Torino  
Silvia Cafora, Politecnico di Torino  
Loris Servillo, Politecnico di Torino

### **Presenters**

Lucy Natarajan, UCL  
Salvador Gilabert Sanz, Universidad Politècnica de Catalunya  
Astrid Safina, Sapienza University of Rome  
Silvia Cafora, Politecnico di Torino

Emanuele Belotti, University of Bergamo  
Sara Cremaschi, DASTU Politecnico di Milano  
Alessandro Coppola, DASTU Politecnico di Milano

In recent years, a mobility trend has seen a return to territories of smaller urbanity, bucking the 2016 Global Cities Index forecast that by 2050 two-thirds of the world's population will live in large urban areas. This phenomenon, referred to as the 'return to the small and medium' (Lang, 2021), counteracts the metro-philia (Morgan, 2014) and suggests new development trajectories for territories characterised by depopulation, demographic ageing, abandonment, decay of the built heritage and rarefaction of essential services.

Several national policies (e.g. Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne in Italy, Rural Agenda in France, Estrategia frente al Retro Demográfico in Spain) work to improve accessibility to services and promote local development. At the same time, recent studies analyse new internal migration trends. Flows today follow different trajectories: many choose to stay or return to their territories of origin, experimenting with new living models, and people with a migratory background settle in small towns at risk of depopulation.

However, emerging issues are still little debated in the scientific arena. The difficulty of access to real estate in non-urban territories is one of them. Here, the housing stock is often characterised by abandoned houses, fragmented properties or those destined for the short tourist rental market. This heritage struggles to enter the real estate market circuit despite its regenerative potential. A debate is therefore needed to define policies that favour access to housing, together with the creation of new job trajectories, local development and access to services and culture, while promoting the repopulation and regeneration of these territories.

This special session is intended to position itself within the international debate on the neo-population of left-behind territories. It lacks a clear scientific position and literature for analysis and direction.

Contributions may cover the following – but not exhaustive – topics:

Policies and practices for repopulation;

Housing stock for collaborative and affordable living in non-urban contexts (critical issues, reactivation strategies, etc.);

Local development between models and types of local and allochthonous economies/workplaces (returnees, new inhabitants, etc.);

Empowerment of communities (economy, work, services and culture).

**Key words:** Left-behind territories; Habitability; Repopulation

## **SS 04 | Planning for Twin Transition in Regional and Urban Systems**

### **Organizers**

Pedro Franco, University of Lisbon

Igor Sirnik, University of Ljubljana

Tijana Dabovic, University of Belgrade

André Alves, University of Lisbon

**Presenters**

Pedro Franco, University of Lisbon  
Tijana Dabovic, University of Belgrade  
Maranganti Sushma, Wageningen University & Research  
Besmira Dyca, Wageningen University & Research  
Eduarda Marques da Costa, University of Lisbon

Cities and regions worldwide are under mounting pressure to decarbonize and adopt clean energy systems while simultaneously integrating innovative digital solutions that enhance planning processes, improve governance, and boost public engagement. In the EU context, there are challenges in the Green Deal implementation and all the interlinked policy orientations. In line with the congress theme, which emphasizes resilience, sustainability, and inclusiveness in the face of uncertainty, this special session sets out to explore the intertwined dynamics of green transition and digital transformation, collectively referred to as the Twin Transition. However, the question remains how to ensure that these transition processes do not exacerbate existing inequalities or create new ones. The Twin Transition calls for careful, context-sensitive planning approaches that consider diverse territorial capacities, institutional frameworks, and social realities. Moreover, it compels planners and policymakers to build resilience by weaving together strategic visions for climate adaptation, sustainable resource management, and inclusive digital infrastructures. This session brings together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to critically examine a range of challenges that may enhance social, economic, and territorial inequalities. How can planners devise adaptive strategies that strengthen energy security and reduce emissions while being sensitive to local socio-economic conditions? How can digital tools (like digital twins, real-time data analytics, and participatory platforms) be harnessed to foster co-creation, transparency, and equity in urban and regional development? How might these technologies bolster resilience in urban contexts? How do the cohesion policy and national investments respond?

By sharing their empirical findings, theoretical insights, and best practices, contributors to this session shed light on how the Twin Transition can serve as both an opportunity and a challenge for urban and regional planning. Emphasizing the congress's main theme, we will discuss innovative solutions that transcend institutional and geographical boundaries while acknowledging the political and ethical dimensions of digital and green transformations. Ultimately, this session aims to chart pathways for planners, citizens, and governing bodies alike to co-create resilient, equitable, and sustainable futures, thus, harnessing planning as a force for positive change in times of unprecedented complexity.

**Key words:** Digital Transition; Green Transition; Sustainability; Inequalities

## **SS 05 | Social entrepreneurs: key agents for sustainable community-led urban regeneration and territorial innovation**

**Organizers**

Federica Scaffidi, Leibniz University Hannover  
Ezio Micelli, Iuav University Venice  
Tuna Tasan-Kok, University of Amsterdam

**Presenters**

Martina Massari, University of Bologna  
Sıla Ceren Varış Husar, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava  
Ebru Kurt Ozman, University of Amsterdam

Federica Scaffidi, Leibniz University Hannover

Sustainable urban regeneration is increasingly seen as a vital strategy to revitalise neglected urban areas while addressing contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges. In this context, social entrepreneurs emerge as key agents, combining innovative approaches with community-driven strategies to transform underutilised spaces and foster regional competitiveness and sustainable urban development. In this Special Session, we will discuss the role of social entrepreneurship in urban regeneration and its multifaceted impacts on urban planning, territorial Innovation and sustainability.

This session will explore how social entrepreneurs leverage urban spaces to drive sustainable regeneration, enhance community cohesion, and promote territorial competitiveness and innovative governance.

The discussion will address critical questions such as: What are the defining characteristics of social entrepreneurs in this field? What strategies have proven successful in balancing development with social needs? How do the socio-spatial impacts contribute to territorial Innovation and competitiveness? What challenges and barriers do these innovators face, and how can policies better support their efforts?

This session will feature insights from diverse perspectives, including theoretical research, on-the-ground case studies, and policy frameworks, ensuring a comprehensive dialogue. Highlighted examples will include innovative projects and strategies like promoting the sustainable transformation of neglected sites into cultural hubs, educational centres, and innovative spaces, showcasing the potential of social enterprises to create inclusive, vibrant communities. By focusing on the intersections of social and territorial Innovation, community-driven development, and urban governance, the session aims to generate multidisciplinary research in urban design and planning.

This special session proposal aligns with AESOP 2025's commitment to fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and exploring innovative strategies for sustainable urban futures. It seeks to provide actionable insights for academics committed to integrating social entrepreneurship into urban regeneration frameworks.

The session welcomes researchers with multidisciplinary approaches, using both qualitative and/or quantitative research methods and addressing the following topics:

The role of social entrepreneurship in transforming underutilized spaces in innovative and vibrant territories.

Strategies for balancing development and community needs.

Community engagement and inclusive design in regeneration projects.

Challenges and barriers in policy and funding frameworks.

Innovations in sustainable business models for urban development.

Socio-Spatial Innovation for enhancing regional competitiveness.

Cross-sector collaborations for impactful urban development.

Sustainability practices in urban regeneration.

Case studies on social enterprises driving social, cultural, economic and environmental urban regeneration and territorial Innovation.

**Key words:** Social Entrepreneurship, Community Needs, Socio-Spatial Innovation, Sustainable Urban Regeneration



## **SS 06 | Metropolitan Resilience: Challenges, Fields of Action and Answers**

### **Organizers**

Joaquin Farinos Dasi, University of Valencia

Petra Schelkmann, Planning of the Verband Region Rhein-Neckar

### **Presenters**

Alessandro Delpiano, Territorial Planning Area of the Metropolitan City

Sonia Cristina Nunes, University of Lisbon

Oriol Estela Barnet, General Coordinator of the Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan

Moneyba González Medina, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Valeria Fedeli, Politecnico di Milano

How to increase resilience in metropolitan regions and what can be the role of spatial development in this context? What are the main starting points to increase the capacities of metropolitan spatial governance to foster resilience? Metropolitan regions metropolitan regions are organized differently and encounter a variety of unprecedented challenges, including rapid urbanization, climate change, and widening social and economic disparities. Addressing these complex issues necessitates innovative approaches that utilize the strengths of strategic planning, regional land-use planning as well as urban planning and collaborative governance. The special session gives an transdisciplinary overview about the main research questions of the International Working Group „Resilient Metropolitan Regions” of the ARL – Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association and will also give first answers regarding the main challenges and fields of action on the territory as well as of the main fields of action on governance. How do we define and understand „Resilience”, „Space” and” Metropolitan Regions”? What are the spatial / territorial specific entry points to resilience and how do spatial aspects interrelate to the characteristics, patterns and dynamics of resilience? Which capacities and financing instruments are needed to govern towards an increased resilience at metropolitan level? These questions will be discussed from a researchers and planners perspective. The sessions is organised by the ARL International Working Group „Resilient Metropolitan Regions”. The group is set up by researchers and practitioner of German speaking countries as well as Southwestern Europe. The aim of the working group is to make a significant contribution to spatial planning theory as well as to foster practical planning knowledge and discourse. Therefore members of the working group in cooperation with practitioners and researchers from outside the group will present first results. First findings will be discussed and perspectives and experiences from outside the ARL International Working group will be included.

**Key words:** Resilience, spatial planning, metropolitan governance

## **SS 07 | Turning Nature-based Solutions into Inclusive Climate Actions**

### **Organizers**

Jannes Willems, University of Amsterdam

Alina Hossu, University of Bucharest

### **Presenters**

Andresa Lêdo Marques, University of Lisbon

Janneke den Dekker-Arlain, Utrecht University

Danielle MacCarthy, University of Amsterdam

Alina Hossu, University of Bucharest

Sara Torabi, Politecnico di Torino

Diana-Andreea Onose, University of Bucharest

The concept of nature-based solutions (NbS) has been widely embraced by both research and practice to address contemporary urban challenges including climate mitigation and adaptation. However, as saturation points which evidence the positive benefits of nature are now being reached, research is now increasingly contesting the term, and its underlying principles, values, planning approaches, and implementation. Current NbS practice commonly reveals failures in addressing urban inequalities and practice persists in serving elite actors in cities. Moreover, NbS practice tends to adopt an instrumental take on nature, in which nature is turned into a commodity that should serve societal or economic values (e.g. providing flood protection, recreation opportunities or other 'ecosystem services'). Consequently, scholars warn that nature could be (further) exploited if we fail to appreciate the intrinsic value of nature.

To address and interrogate the concerns raised above, this Special Session will examine how Nature-based Solutions can be turned into Inclusive Climate Actions (ICAs). We define Inclusive Climate Actions as actions that aim to reduce climate impacts for the most vulnerable populations, ensure a fair distribution of burdens and benefits among communities and ecosystems, and recognise the needs and desires of communities and ecosystems. We bring together urban planning researchers from different European research institutes that are at the forefront of linking the concept of NbS to questions of justice. The six presenters employ new conceptualisations of environmental justice, reflected in concepts such as intersectional climate justice, decolonial approaches, multispecies justice, and novel imaginaries of nature. Building on these conceptualisations, presenters are invited to critically reflect on the justice implications of current NbS practice in Europe and beyond, and to present more just ways forward.

To enhance engagement among presenters, each presenter will also act as a discussant for another presentation. The session will close with a plenary discussion. The Special Session organisers have the ambition to develop a joint submission for a Special Issue in a leading urban planning journal.

**Key words:** Nature-based Solutions; Justice; Inclusion; Climate Actions; Adaptation

## **SS 08 | Transformative planning actions from the South: Negotiating the past for alternative futures**

### **Organizers**

Christine Mady, Aalto University  
Joumana Stephan, American University of the Middle East  
Ohoud Kamal, American University of Madaba

### **Presenters**

Kundani Makakavhule, University of Pretoria  
Claudia Ortiz, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México  
Michelle Meza, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México UNAM  
Sadaf Sultan Khan, Institute of Development Studies  
Joumana Stephan  
Saija Hollmen

The special session is based on the International Planning Studies Special Issue on Southern

Urbanism. It presents the perspectives of the co-editors on the significance of focusing on spatio-temporal juxtapositions to understand the role of hidden and documented pasts, lived presents and possible futures. This session proposes approaching urban complexities from a global perspective, and challenging universalism, to explore diverse narratives of often forgotten geographies, under-represented urban processes, and lived experiences of marginalised societies. The session emphasises the importance of alternative insights into ontologies, etymologies, and epistemologies of cities globally, to enable deep learning from the past, mitigating present challenges, and preventing future threats. While ample research covers the Global North, similar efforts are required to put on the map literature from the Global South and enable global dialogue. Often there are unveiled pasts that do not surface in planning decisions and projects or are lost in a palimpsest of eclectic applications of urban planning, which disregard contextual histories and specificities. Regardless of how pasts are treated, and the extent of inclusive and just urban presents, the looming threat of apocalyptic futures does not differentiate between aligned or fragmented urban planning paths. Against this background, reflecting on urban complexities in both the Global South and North is essential. This session proposes to conduct this reflection through the following aspects:

Colonial pasts and alternative understandings: the first aspect explores alternative stories of coloniality's legacies through dialogues of erasure, persistence, and re-imaginings. It provides a revisit in history to unravel undocumented pasts.

Everyday Urbanism and Community Perspectives: the second aspect situates and requestions north-south classifications of everyday urban dynamics within public spaces through cross-cutting experiences in different geographic contexts.

Climate Crisis responses: the third aspect provides an understanding and recreation of knowledge about the climate crisis at the local scale from different global South contexts, specifically where the impact is most severe, and examines manifestations of situated practices.

**Key words:** Colonial, everyday urbanism, climate crisis, Global North, Global South

## **SS 09 | Governing the “Carbon neutral city”: barriers and enablers for an integrated climate governance in cities**

### **Organizers**

Eda Yücesoy, Istanbul Technical University

Eloïse Deshayes, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya

### **Presenters**

Gerard Martinez Gorbis, University of Twente

Will Brown, University of Cambridge

Elşen Aydın, ODTÜ-GÜNAM

Eloïse Deshayes, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya

Oksana Udovik, Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV)

Joe Ravetz, University of Manchester

In recent years, there has been a notable surge in the number of cities globally declaring “climate emergencies” and committing to achieve carbon neutrality. These declarations highlight the role of cities, which are increasingly positioning themselves as pivotal actors in environmental governance. However, as highlighted in the literature, they usually fall short in translating into tangible transformative measures capable of effectively mitigating climate change, focusing mainly on incremental steps (Ruiz- Campillo et al., 2021).

Beyond the realm of political rhetoric, the literature on policy implementation underscores this persistent gap between policy and outcomes. Transformative actions often remain isolated

initiatives rather than integrated components of a comprehensive long-term strategy (Corrêa do Lago et al., 2023; Hölscher et al., 2019; Nagorny-Koring & Nocht, 2018). The literature highlights that barriers to achieving carbon neutrality in cities are deeply rooted at a systemic level, as the phenomenon of “carbon lock-in” create “self-reinforcing barriers” (Unruh, 2002) and strong policy inertia complicating the ability to address the main drivers of emissions at urban level (Tozer & Klenk, 2019). Examples on the ground and case studies confirm that in practice, local governments are confronted with numerous obstacles ranging from financial barriers, lack of jurisdiction, political confrontations, or technical and data-related difficulties (Huovila et al., 2022). These challenges are further complicated by the need to engage diverse stakeholders, including private companies, industries, and citizens. The governance of carbon-neutral cities also entails managing trade-offs. These include balancing mitigation with adaptation efforts, as well as reconciling climate goals with social justice imperatives. The identification of trade-offs associated with local adaptation measures (Anguelovski et al., 2016; Chelleri et al., 2015; Meerow & Newell, 2016) underscores the need to link mitigation with broader objectives such as equity or sustainability, as carbon neutrality “per se” might not be desirable. Additionally, climate policies have the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities, including by increasing gentrification and exclusion of certain groups (Rocco, 2022). Finally, there are more and more claims in the literature and policy circles to broaden the scope of action towards consumption-based emissions rather than strict territorial emissions (Lombardi et al., 2017; Millward-Hopkins et al., 2017). This would allow for a more comprehensive and equitable framework for addressing GHG emissions, incentivizing the adoption of policies that promote less carbon intensive consumption and the reduction of carbon leakage processes (Grasso, 2015).

Therefore, a holistic and integrated governance is essential to avoid negative externalities and improve the legitimacy, approval, and long-term sustainability of urban strategies towards carbon-neutrality. This session will examine these governance challenges through a multidisciplinary lens, exploring a range of critical topics from carbon-neutral reconstruction to bridging data gaps and identifying key feasibility factors for carbon-neutral policies. A diverse panel of speakers will tackle the multifaceted barriers and opportunities associated with carbon neutrality, drawing on case studies from UK, Ukraine, France, India, Egypt to Türkiye. By addressing these various dimensions in diverse cities, the session seeks to unpack the complexity of governing carbon neutral cities while shedding light on actionable pathways toward sustainable futures.

**Key words:** N/A

## **SS 10 | Shaping Regional Futures Toward Sustainable Transitions: Community Involvement In Visioning and Implementation**

### **Organizers**

Verena Balz, Delft University of Technology  
Cristina Cavaco, University of Lisbon  
Valeria Lingua, University of Florence

### **Presenters**

Anca Ioana Forgaci, Delft University of Technology  
Anke Hagemann, Technische Universität Berlin  
Tihomir Vinderman, BTU Cottbus  
Fabio Bayro Kaiser, RWTH Aachen University  
Giuseppe De Luca, University of Florence  
Cristina Cavaco, University of Lisbon  
Müge Yorgancı Ozar, Istanbul Planning Agency  
Chiara Fratini, Technical University of Denmark

In an era of accelerating global change, cities and regions face interconnected challenges, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable energy transitions, the shift toward a post-carbon circular economy, all while addressing persistent socioeconomic disparities and spatial vulnerabilities. These challenges demand approaches that balance long-term strategic visions with the immediate demands of place-based community development and daily wellbeing.

This special session aims to explore how strategic territorial and spatial planning can respond to these demands. By focusing on methods such as regional design, visioning, foresight, and other participatory practices of spatial imagination, the session emphasizes transformative actions for fostering resilient, equitable, and sustainable futures. Contributions will examine strategic and territorial practices in European and non-European cities and regions, addressing at least two of the following themes:

**Futures in sustainable transition planning:** Visioning and design practices provide fertile ground for new transition narratives and spatial imaginaries, enabling stakeholders to articulate how metropolitan areas and other regions might evolve. Rethinking spatial futures allows policymaking to adapt to the emerging needs of urban and rural societies undergoing rapid structural change: Which future is envisioned for the region? For whom is the transition relevant? What is its true focus beyond abstract ambitions such as greening, justice, and energy transition? Contributions should elaborate on how transition narratives are constructed and applied in sustainability transition planning and policymaking.

**Communities in sustainable transition planning:** For sustainability transition policies and plans to succeed, they must address territorial specificities and mobilise commitment from communities most vulnerable to transitional challenges. Multi-level governance, including active and direct social involvement of citizens and communities, is an essential component of EU, national, regional, and local place-based policymaking for just sustainability transitions. Participation fosters trust in government and reduces the risk of social unrest, which could otherwise slow or halt progress towards sustainability. Contributions should elaborate on how visioning and design practices facilitate community participation and bridge top-down and bottom-up dynamics in spatial planning and place-based policymaking.

**Operational regional design approaches:** Driving sustainability transitions requires bridging the gap between visioning and implementation by identifying pilot actions, pivotal game changers, and execution mechanisms that foster innovation and resilience in metropolitan and other regions. These approaches include embracing digital technologies, advancing ecological solutions, and promoting socioeconomic equity within regional planning and design: How do strategic plans and policies address these changes? Which role have the Cohesion and Next Generation EU policies played in enabling and providing resources and strategic directions to support transformative efforts? Contributions should elaborate on how regional design approaches are implemented, highlighting their potential to translate visions into actionable endeavours for just sustainability transition.

**Key words:** Regional design, visioning, sustainability transition, transition narratives, citizen / community participation, policy implementation

## **SS 11 | The value and role of design in planning education**

*Hosted within track 8: Education and Skill*

**Organizers**

Manuela Madeddu, University of Liverpool  
 Juliana Martins, University College London  
 Piotr Kryczka, University of Wrocław

**Presenters**

Alison McCandlish, University of Glasgow  
 Andreas Schulze Baing, The University of Manchester  
 Anja Standal, Norwegian University of Life Sciences  
 Vicente del Rio, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo  
 Christine Mady, Aalto University School of Arts  
 Kark Friedhelm Fischer, University of New South Wales  
 Anna Kaczorowska, Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
 Karla Barrantes Chaves, University of Costa Rica  
 Juliana Martins, University College London  
 Magdalena Belof, Wrocław University of Science and Technology

Planning education worldwide shares a common origin within the disciplines of architecture and civil engineering, but has evolved in different ways in different countries, resulting in a variety of approaches to the education of future planners (Frank, 2006). These approaches reflect significant variation in the relationship with the 'mother disciplines' and in the importance attached to design. Previous research has revealed that this variation can be observed not only between but also within countries (Madeddu and Martins, forthcoming) and has drawn attention to the challenges around design teaching in planning schools (Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005). It has also highlighted the importance for future planners of developing key design skills (Biddulph, 1993; Kempnaaret al., 2016). Design has an integral role to play in planning programmes. Planning is concerned with – and seeks to shape - space and place. It is therefore vital that planning students acquire spatial literacy and develop an appreciation of the spatial and place-based implications of policies and projects. Effective design teaching can equip them with these skills and better prepare them to address increasingly complex spatial challenges.

Almost 60 years after the first Urban Design Conference at Harvard, and within an entirely transformed technological context, it is appropriate to revisit the 'value and role of design in planning education'. This is the purpose of this proposed Special Session.

Drawing on contributions from researchers and educators based in Europe, the US, Australia and Central America, this Special Session will provide a space for debating:

- The definition or conceptualization of design in planning education, through reflections on how different cultures of planning shape the way design is understood;
- The value of design: why design is important in the education of planners and how it can help to address current urban challenges;
- The role of design: how design is integrated into planning education; how it provides an integrative focus in that education; how it is taught to planners; what challenges must be overcome; and what innovative pedagogies are being developed.

Linking to the Special Session, we are also proposing a Special Issue on this topic for 'Urban Design International'. It is anticipated that selected papers from the AESOP session will be included in the Special Issue.

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**Key words:** Planning education; urban design; pedagogies of design; Europe; US; Australia; Central America

## SS 12 | Rethinking Accessibility in the 15-Minute City: Global Project Insights

*Hosted within track 3: Mobility*

### Organizers

Özge Yalçın Ercoşkun, Gazi University  
Ebru Vesile Öcalır, Gazi University

### Presenters

Paola Pucci, Politecnico di Milano - DASTU  
Noriko Otsuka, ILS Research gGmbH  
Hilal Tulan Işıldar, Gazi University  
Felix Pot, University of Groningen  
Eduarda Marques da Costa, University of Lisbon

The concept of the 15-minute city has emerged as a transformative urban planning model aimed at fostering sustainable, accessible, and livable environments where residents can meet their daily needs within a short distance from their homes. This special session synthesizes insights from various studies that explore the multifaceted dimensions of accessibility in the context of the 15-minute city. The session emphasizes the need to rethink accessibility by proximity, advocating for a combined functional and relational understanding that accounts for the diverse needs of community members. By addressing potential pitfalls such as standardizing accessibility and exacerbating existing social inequalities, the studies propose a framework that integrates both normative and positive dimensions of accessibility. Key findings highlight the critical role of shared mobility services in promoting equitable transport and mobility justice. An analysis of the supply structures of car, bike, and e-scooter services reveals significant disparities in availability across socio-economic and cultural demographics. This inequity underscores the importance of addressing the digital divide and enhancing user capabilities to ensure marginalized communities are not left behind in the transition toward shared mobility solutions. Furthermore, a case study in Ankara illustrates how resident perceptions of accessibility vary significantly between districts, reflecting the challenges of implementing the 15-minute city model in diverse urban contexts. Utilizing walk-along interviews, the study captures the lived experiences of residents, revealing discrepancies between ideal planning visions and actual infrastructural realities. While some areas align with the 15-minute city ideals, barriers such as inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and safety concerns persist, particularly in less affluent neighborhoods. The other paper argues that cities, as complex adaptive systems, require a condition-based approach to encourage diverse transport and land-use configurations within flexible, normative boundaries. The last study finds that compact

cities like Vienna and Lisbon offer better accessibility to essential urban services, while lower-density and peri-urban areas face significant challenges, particularly for elderly residents. This highlights the need for urban policies that ensure equitable access to services, aligning with the principles of the 15-minute city concept. The collective insights from these studies advocate for a more inclusive approach to urban planning that genuinely prioritizes accessibility for all citizens, emphasizing the need for ongoing dialogue between planners and communities to realize the full potential of the 15-minute city. This session contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable urban mobility and highlights the importance of tailoring strategies to local contexts and resident needs from the experience of international projects.

**Key words:** Accessibility, Fair 15-Minute City, Shared Mobility, Resident Perceptions, Urban Services

## **SS 13 | Enhancing Urban Decision-Making in the Digital Era: Tools, Methods, and Innovations**

### **Organizers**

Isabella M. Lami, Politecnico di Torino  
Francesca Abastante, Politecnico di Torino  
Elena Todella, Politecnico di Torino  
Beatrice Mecca, Politecnico di Torino

### **Presenters**

Benedetta Grieco, University of Naples Federico II  
Luliia Kozlova, University of Bologna  
Ozge Ogut, University of Bologna  
Francesca Abastante, Politecnico di Torino  
Isabella M. Lami, Politecnico di Torino

The interconnected crises of climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-economic inequalities demand a radical rethinking of urban planning and decision-making. In this planetary crisis, cities are pivotal arenas for addressing these challenges, as opportunities for transformative change. Accordingly, in an era of rapid technological and digital advancements, decision-support tools play a pivotal role in navigating the complexities of urban transformation. These tools enable stakeholders to combine structured methodologies with innovative approaches to evaluate and implement sustainable urban projects. Two prominent methodological frameworks guide this discussion: Problem Structuring Methods (PSMs) and Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA). PSMs focus on structuring ill-defined and complex problems through participatory and interactive approaches, emphasizing a collaborative understanding of the issues at hand and facilitating informed decision-making in uncertain contexts. MCDAs offer a systematic way to evaluate alternatives based on multiple, often conflicting criteria, ensuring comprehensive consideration of diverse objectives and trade-offs. At the same time, the integration of global sustainability frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda and SDG11 (targeting inclusive, safe, and resilient cities) requires decision-support tools to bridge the gap between macro-level goals and the specific needs of urban-scale projects. Indicators tailored to the urban context, as well as methodologies that accommodate local specificities, stakeholder diversity, and data availability, are essential for supporting Public Administrations (PAs), planners, and designers in the operationalization of sustainable policies and strategies. This session seeks to explore how decision-support methodologies have evolved in response to complex contextual conditions and the growing influence of digital tools. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

Structuring and supporting decision-making processes for urban projects under uncertainty and complexity;

Enhancing PAs and stakeholders' involvement to foster inclusive and equitable planning;



Employing MCDA to balance ecological, social, and economic priorities;  
Tailoring global sustainability indicators, such as SDG11, to reflect local urban realities;  
Advancing decision support systems with innovative, technology-driven approaches;  
Promoting educational innovations to strengthen methodological adoption.

Through a transversal discussion of these issues, this session aims to provide a supportive framework for the design and implementation of sustainable urban projects. Addressing both the theoretical and applied dimensions of decision support tools, it highlights their continued relevance and adaptability in the face of digitisation and sustainability imperatives. The insights generated should serve to bridge the gap between global aspirations and local realities, promoting practices that prioritise both people and planet, fostering cities that are not only sustainable but also equitable and inclusive for all.

**Key words:** Urban Decision-Making; Digital Era; MCDAs; PSMs

## **SS 14 | Transforming streets for liveability and sustainable mobility through experimentation and participation**

*Hosted within track 17: Public Space*

### **Organizers**

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Imge Akcakaya Waite, Istanbul Technical University  
Gunnar Grandel, Technische Universität Wien  
Lluís Martínez, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

### **Presenters**

Imge Akcakaya Waite, Istanbul Technical University  
Hilda Tellioglu, Technische Universität Wien  
Lluís Martínez, Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
Gunnar Grandel, Technische Universität Wien  
Bahadır Kesan, Maltepe Municipality  
Çiğdem Çakar, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

Cities are facing numerous challenges regarding sustainable mobility, accessibility and inclusivity, which require rapid transformation of urban environments. However, the implementation of such transformations is often challenging, facing significant political resistance, financial limitations or regulatory obstacles. As a result, there has been a rise of experimental new approaches to enable street transformations in the last decade, such as street experiments, and the use of participatory tools.

The former can be defined as “an intentional, temporary change of the street use, regulation, and/or form, aimed at exploring systemic change in urban mobility, away from ‘streets for traffic,’ and towards ‘streets for people’” (Bertolini, 2020, 734). The latter refers to methods and techniques used to actively engage stakeholders, especially local communities, in the planning, decision-making, and implementation process (Sanoff, 1999). And, of course, the two often overlap since most street experiments are designed and carried out through a participatory process.

This session offers a platform to explore street experiments and participatory tools and understand how they lead to transformative changes. The presentations are based on the outcomes of two ongoing research projects funded by JPI Urban Europe: ACCTRA (Evidence and Acceptance – from Experiments to Transformation) and StreetForum (Transforming streets into accessible urban oases through consensus building). Since 2023, these initiatives have investigated street interventions which target liveability, sustainability, and inclusivity.

Working closely with local administrations in Istanbul and Klagenfurt (Austria), ACCTRA focuses on street experiments as an opportunity to engage stakeholders and generate evidence on both the impact and acceptance of measures. This creates the basis to support political decision-making in favour of street transformations, inform planning processes for permanent implementation or a further roll-out, and foster institutional learning processes to adapt processes and better deal with conflicts over transformations.

StreetForum investigates the potential of participatory tools to facilitate consensus-building within local communities to support street transformation. Through a comprehensive toolkit, the StreetForum project equips communities with digital and analogue tools—such as co-design games, storytelling, modular structures and art interventions—to support street transformations. The tools have been tested and assessed in living labs in Istanbul, Brussels, Vienna, and Stockholm based on a robust evaluation framework. The project highlights how these tools can be effectively employed to foster public support for street transformation.

This session will provide attendees with:

Results of the activities in the ACCTRA project and insights into how street experiments can inform sustainable transport planning and foster public acceptance.

Insights into the development and impact of the StreetForum Toolkit, with recommendations on how to best use these participatory tools in diverse urban contexts.

Testimonials of policymakers on the use of street experiments and participatory tools for street transformation.

Interactive discussions on the benefits and challenges of using street experiments and participatory tools for street transformation.

References: Bertolini, L. (2020). From "streets for traffic" to "streets for people": Can street experiments transform urban mobility? *Transport Reviews*, 40(6), 734-753.

Sanoff, H. (1999). *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*. John Wiley & Sons.

**Key words:** N/A

## **SS 15 | Reversing the gaze: reimagining the relationship between cities and their waterways**

### **Organizers**

Manuela Ronci, Politecnico di Torino

Tymon Wolender, Politecnico di Torino

### **Presenters**

Chiara Cavalieri, Louvain Research Institute for Landscape

Alessio Mazzaro, Politecnico di Torino

Oisín Fee, TU Dublin

Tymon Wolender, Politecnico di Torino  
Małgorzata Kuciewicz, CENTRALA

Climate change and its increasingly dramatic consequences (e.g. the recent flooding events in the Province of Valencia in Spain, along with a water shortage that has been going on for months in the Italian region of Sicily) impose the pressing need to confront the scarcity or excess of water, reasoning on its rational management to cope with the widest possible range of variations.

Historically, cities have exploited their rivers for productive purposes, especially in the context of industrial processes, using water as a source of motive power and electricity, for cooling factories or for discharging waste water. Furthermore, functional reasons have often led to the channelling, covering or damming of waterways, altering their functionality or exacerbating the effects of water overflow events. The result of these attitudes has been, in many cases, the marginalisation of river territories and the displacement of undesirable still necessary productive activities right along rivers, which have lost their centrality, ecological value and harmonious relationship with urbanised contexts.

We are, however, witnessing a trend reversal resulting from the growing, global awareness – at a scientific and administrative level, as well as among citizens – of the need to rediscover a healthy and balanced relationship between the city and the rivers. A relationship no longer based on the exclusive exploitation of resources, but one that emphasises the ecological-environmental value of rivers, their potential in microclimatic regulation, and the spontaneous dynamics of their flows. Among others, blue infrastructures, water-sensitive cities, stormwater management, flood prevention, nature-based solutions impose themselves as ever more in-depth design and research themes to find innovative, efficient, economically viable solutions.

What often happens, however, is that concepts that work very well in theory – especially as a vehicle to construct scenarios for the cities of the future – in practice are difficult to translate into actual spatial transformation interventions, resulting in solutions that range between being extremely technological-engineering and highly standardised. This leads to the spatial quality being affected by safety measures, to the multifunctionality or direct relationship with water being lost, or, finally, to the underestimation of the effects of such measures on the life cycle of the non-human species that inhabit rivers.

Therefore, the aim of this session is to discuss how cities can become safe places where the community can maintain a close relationship with its waterways, intended as welcoming and suitable for the development of biodiversity and valuable as a source of recreation.

Contributions may cover the following – but not exhaustive – topics:

Reconstructing spatial, functional and emotional relationships between cities and their rivers

Redeveloping forgotten, marginal and degraded peripheral river spaces

Building climate shelters related to water spaces

Integrating water management into spatial composition

Introducing new perspectives and tools to make scenario planning practices more realistic

Developing hybrid solutions for the adaptation of urban (and periurban) space to different climate scenarios

Rethinking water as a place of experience and construction of space

Imagining water spaces as places of encounters between humans and non-human species

**Key words:** N/A

## **SS 16 | SMALL TOWNS – Big challenges and high potentials?**

### **Organizers**

Silke Weidner, Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus □ Senftenberg  
Hélène Mainet, University Clermont □ Ferrand  
Mina di Marino, Norwegian University (NMBU)

### **Presenters**

Madeleine Wagner, Karlsruhe University  
Valeria Francioli, University of Florence  
Anna Growe, University Kassel  
Silke Weidner, Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus □ Senftenberg  
Hélène Mainet, University Clermont □ Ferrand

Small towns play an essential role in the spatial planning system. The absolute and relative number of small towns in the federal states varies □ also depending on the assigned population (in Germany, for example, there are 2,100 small towns from the size of 5,000 □ 20,000 inhabitants; and around one fifth in Europe). In research and teaching as well as in political discourse, this relevance of small towns is becoming increasingly important, as can be seen in current initiatives and studies. The much □ cited “attention gap” on small town research seems to be closing more and more. In the next step, there is now a need for structuring and thematic clustering within the diverse and insightful field of small town research. The Thematic Group “Small Towns” and in particular the Special Session would like to meet this need. A specification seems particularly necessary against the background that small towns have their own challenges and potentials in times of multiple crises. The question is: are these challenges particularly great on the one hand and are the potentials in this type of town particularly high? The presentations from different countries and on various topics and dimensions (see below) can be seen as a starting point for a discussion on this. The topics all have relevance for planning □ in anticipation and reaction □ which must be set up differently in times of crisis. Through this interdisciplinary exchange of theoretical and empirical perspectives, and drawing on a plurality of methodological approaches, the goal is to explore particularities and similarities. The role of small towns is examined from a German, French, Italian and European perspective. Here, the city types are roughly comparable in terms of size (inhabitants): the session offers insights into results of quantitative and qualitative research, on cases in central or peripheral location, into specific functions and political context. As a result, research question complexes and researchers could be further identified as network nodes in order to continue the discourse in the Thematic Group „Small Towns”.

**Key words:** N/A

## **SS 17 | Perspectives on commoning mobility and accessibility**

*Hosted within track 3: Mobility*

### **Organizers**

Anna Nikolaeva, University of Amsterdam  
Luca Bertolini, University of Amsterdam  
Enrica Papa, University of Westminster

### **Presenters**

Paola Pucci, Politecnico di Milano  
Anna Nikolaeva, University of Amsterdam  
Elisa Schramm, University of Amsterdam  
Annemiek Prins, University of Amsterdam

Mobility planning has been criticised for the domination of technocratic thinking and focusing on individuals rather than communities and thus ignoring the fundamentally social, shared and interdependent nature of mobility. Some have argued that transitions to low-carbon mobility should be considered as part and parcel of a broader shift of reconceptualising mobility as a commons as only then a radical change in governing, practising and giving meaning to mobilities is possible. More recently, others have argued that it is, more broadly, accessibility (thus, combining mobility and place-based facilities) that can be and already is commoned by citizens who are not served well by either the state or the market. This thinking connects ideas around commoning to the heated discussions in academia and practice on proximity and 15min city. What is the potential of these concepts and what questions do they open up for planning discipline and practice? This session aims to sketch the state of art of the discussions around commoning mobility and accessibility and their application, explore connections with other debates in the field and open up a debate around radical ways of rethinking mobility and accessibility. Specifically, the session offers three innovative contributions: firstly, the novel concept of commoning accessibility is introduced, placed into a broader debate on commons and commoning and placed into conversation with the discussion on commoning mobility. Secondly, a feminist perspective on the debate is explored, with the attention for the role of knowledge and epistemic injustice in mobility planning, as well as the concept of care. Finally, the discussion on commoning mobility and accessibility is connected to the scholarship on post-growth planning. The papers present both theoretical advances and empirical data, opening up new novel discussions around some of the key subjects of the conference and contemporary urban mobility planning.

**Key words:** Commoning mobility; commoning accessibility; proximity; 15min city; postgrowth

## **SS 18 | Smart City as a transformative approach? Conceptualizing digital tools in spatial development in a context of ageing**

### **Organizers**

Karina Pallagst, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau  
Annette Spellerberg, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau

### **Presenters**

Annette Spellerberg, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau  
Karina Pallagst, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau  
Sascha Henninger, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau  
Detlef Kurth, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau  
Kirsten Mangels, RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau

The cross-cutting function of digitalization in the context of spatial development was manifested in the European context in the New Leipzig Charter in 2020 (BMI 2020). In addition, an international discourse has become established in research that critically reflects on the Smart City movement (Grossi and Pianezzi 2017). While it is undisputed that the use of different digital tools and the use of AI will result in new requirements for the design of planning, decision-making and participation processes (ARL 2024), it is still largely unclear to what extent spatial planning and planning cultures, i.e. fundamental methods, instruments and paradigms of spatial planning, the

requirements for data management and quality, and the skills of experts, will change in the course of digitalisation. Thus, more knowledge is needed on the role of Smart Cities as a transformative action in spatial planning. With this special session we will present results of the project 'Ageing Smart – designing spaces intelligently', funded by the Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung, in which the presenters teamed up with software sciences to research the foundations of spatial decision support systems (SDSS) in view of ageing and demographic change. The aim is to create a digital and data-based decision support system that serves as a decision-making tool for public stakeholders in planning processes. With its help, infrastructures and services are to be planned in a demand-orientated, sustainable and future-oriented manner, particularly with regard to the needs and requirements of the 'baby boomers'. Together with seven model municipalities from three spatial types (urban, suburban, rural), the development of the data-based decision support system for local and regional stakeholders is developed in a participatory mode. The session's presenters will reflect on aspects of spatial requirements in spatial decision support systems, in particular the group of baby boomers and their wishes and demands in terms of (residential) locations, mobility, attitudes and behaviour, particularly with regard to healthcare. Further, solutions from Japan, are intended to shed light on the question how smart cities might affect planning cultures. Moreover, the session will present select requirements for spatial decision support systems in the municipalities, which go beyond the availability of quality data. By this means, the session will contribute to the discourse of Track 11: 'Emerging technologies in spatial planning' by further conceptualizing digital tools in spatial development for building sustainable, fair, and resilient cities and communities through technology.

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**Key words:** Smart city, digital tools, spatial decision support system, ageing, health care, climate change

## **SS 19 | Contested Istanbul: Urban development and planning conflicts in Turkey's 'aspiring global city'**

*Istanbul Session*

#### **Organizers**

Enrico Gualini, Berlin University of Technology  
Esin Özdemir Ulutaş, Izmir Institute of Technology

#### **Presenters**

Deniz Ay, University of Bern  
Murat Cemal Yalçıntan, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University  
Erdoğan Yıldız, Urban Activist  
Adile Avar, Izmir Institute of Technology

Turkish metropolises have experienced in the last decades the impact of state-led boosterist urban policies. Istanbul is at the forefront of this process, as the largest and most dynamic metropolis of

the country in both economic and social and terms. Istanbul has taken central place as an 'aspiring global city' (Ay and Özkul 2016) in national state urban policies. This has developed into a peculiar Istanbul way to authoritarian neoliberalism, based on massive investment in support of speculative private entrepreneurialism, and on corporate-style marketing and management framed within state-led governance arrangements. At the heart of these urban policies are multiscale interventions – some already implemented, some still on the national government agenda – ranging from infrastructural mega-projects to urban renewal projects at neighbourhood level. These interventions, particularly for large-scale infrastructure investments projects, are often implemented in public-private partnership arrangements lacking accountability and citizen involvement. Framed by the national government's globalist ambitions as well as emergency arguments – like earthquake disaster prevention – and by legally supported by ad-hoc legal frameworks, these measures have strongly impacted on the historical urban fabric and on the livelihood and identity of local communities. As a consequence, a broad range of issues of contention and conflict have emerged, concerning among others:

- the centralized-authoritarian decision-making logic, restraining civil society and local communities as well as local governments from democratic involvement;
- the negative impact on local communities such as displacement and dispossession;
- the depletion of natural resources for sustainable urban development, such as water basins and forests;
- the commodification and erosion of public spaces;
- the destruction of the historical urban fabric and identity;
- social inclusion, poverty and the integration of human and more-than-human diversity in the city.

Against this background, Istanbul has experienced a long season of state- authoritarian repression of urban insurgencies – with the case of Gezi Park as a hallmark. Over time, Istanbul has also marked a nation-wide unique if troubled attempt to introduce an original neo-municipalist path to urban reform, possibly introducing opportunities for a different approach to the contradictions and conflicts generated by its recent urban development path. In this session – organized in association with the AESOP TG Planning/Conflict – we ask engaged scholars and activists to reflect on the contentious nature of urban politics and planning in Istanbul. The aim is not only to give a critical overview of current issues and their long-term causes, but also to reflect on the aftermath and heritage of democratic protest, civic insurgency and planner-activist engagement in a forward-looking perspective of generating possible alternatives.

**Key words:** urban planning; urban politics; urban insurgency; planning conflict; Istanbul

## **SS 20 | Changing the Street-Set: From Tactics to Strategies, From Streets to Cities and Beyond**

*Istanbul Session*

### **Organizers**

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We need transformative change—not just in the physical fabric of cities but also in how people live in and perceive them. This transformation must extend beyond urban spaces to shift collective mindsets. Streets, as the most immediate and shared public spaces, offer a powerful starting point for this change.

Far more than transportation conduits, streets are vital public spaces where communities gather, children play, and cultural life thrives. Streets as primary scenes for expression define fundamental environments for independent learning and mobility. However, car-centric urban planning has diminished their multifaceted roles, leading to environmental degradation, restricted accessibility, and the marginalization of vulnerable groups. Reclaiming streets as safer spaces for children and their independent mobility can address these societal and environmental challenges, turning them into drivers of equity, inclusion, resilience, and sustainability.

This session explores how experiential, tactical interventions can transform streets and inspire broader systemic change. Starting with transformation of a single street can inspire a shift in perspectives, gradually rippling outward to influence neighbourhoods, cities, regions, and ultimately, the planet. By focusing on the potential of streets as catalysts for systemic change, this session underscores their role in creating equitable, sustainable, and connected communities. Participants will examine strategies to create vibrant, inclusive spaces that prioritize children, foster social connections, and enhance climate resilience. By bridging global frameworks with local action and turning high-level strategies into actionable tactics and vice versa, participants will gain insights into practical approaches and collaborative methods that can scale from streets to cities and beyond.

Key themes include:

**Showcasing Practical Tools:** Exploring how global frameworks and design principles can be translated into tangible, local-level strategies for street transformation.

**Harnessing Data-Driven Solutions:** Demonstrating how urban data can inform planning, design, and implementation processes for creating equitable, people-centred streets.

**Turning Tactical Interventions into Final Implementations:** Exploring how tactical urbanism interventions can transition into long-term, permanent urban design solutions.

**Highlighting Scaling-Up Strategies:** Examining how localized interventions can evolve into comprehensive planning strategies to drive systemic, city-wide impact.

**Promoting Learning Circles:** Presenting a practice-oriented learning program that empowers municipalities to adopt a 'learning by doing' approach, fostering incremental change and mutual learning on a regional scale.

The session will conclude with a facilitated discussion, encouraging audience interaction to explore not just the success stories of street transformations but also the challenges of using tactical urbanism tools with strategic agents. The discussion will highlight the complexities of balancing



quick wins with long-term systemic impact.

**Key words:** Child-friendly cities, street transformation, transformative change, tactical urbanism, data driven decision-making, local action

## Roundtables

### RT 01 | Co-creating the 15-minute city

*Hosted within track 3: Mobility*

#### Organizers

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The concept of the 15-minute city has been widely discussed in literature and urban planning and design practice over the last few years. Emerging from the compact city idea, Carlos Moreno developed it further and transformed it into a more comprehensive vision. As a result, it caught the attention of researchers, local government leaders, and practitioners worldwide, with special attention paid to this in Europe.

The same applies to various approaches to public participation and the co-creation of contemporary cities. Coming from the original concepts emerging from the “ladder of participation”, they found their way to planning practice and have become some sort of a standard. In addition, the more developed concepts of co-creation of urban spaces have been developed.

However, there is still little experience in applying this co-creation philosophy to the process of shaping the compact, 15-minute city. In addition, there is also little connection between the process of shaping the 15-minute cities and employing the innovative tools, methods, and techniques associated with participation, including Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality based ones.

Within this session, there will be discussed issues in shaping the usage of these innovative tools, methods, and techniques associated with public participation in the process of shaping the 15-minute city and placemaking. In addition, the possibility of combining them with more traditional ones – including usage of the physical models and maps – will be discussed.

These presentations and follow-up discussions will be based on the preliminary results of the on-going Driving Urban Transition ENACT (Envisioning Neighbourhoods and Co-Creating Thriving Communities in the 15-Minute City) project based on four Urban Living Labs, organized in Trondheim, Gdansk, Valencia, and Oxford. The objectives of the project include:

1 - To understand how co-creation methods and state of the art tools can be used in combination to achieve more inclusive, accessible, attractive and sustainable public spaces, streets and neighbourhoods.

2 - To develop, test and validate physical and operational interventions that will influence people's ability to use active transport in (sub)urban areas within the context of four different Urban Living Labs (ULL).

3 - To disseminate recommendations for realizing the 15mC and identify how barriers to their implementation can be overcome, to maximize transferability and scalability.

As a result, the proposed round table will allow discussion on the creation of the people-centered 15-minute city and how digital tools can be associated with stimulating and enabling public participation and co-creation of space and placemaking.

**Key words:** Co-creation; 15-minute city; public participation; innovative participation tools

## **RT 02 | What is new in Comparative international planning: Why, What, and How?**

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In this roundtable contributors to a forthcoming compilation - the Routledge Handbook on Comparative International Planning - will discuss the current state of the field of comparative international planning studies.

Comparative international planning research has a considerable history and the reasons for undertaking such work have been well rehearsed in the literature from at least the 1970s. The comparative impulse can derive from multiple and often complementary motivations. For example, from an interest in studying and learning from other places as means of general or personal enrichment; comparing the governance performance in different places (e.g. in meeting sustainability goals); studying different planning approaches and their effectiveness in addressing particular planning themes; improving understanding of different situations and planning contexts; developing theories or shaping and influencing agendas and supporting government lobbying. A distinct feature of international comparative studies in planning is that these are not the sole preserve of academics. In fact, there is a significant amount of comparative work being undertaken in planning practice both by the public sector as well as large international consultancies. Planning education is also characterised by varied methods of comparative international studies and the teaching and learning of the subject in Higher Education is explored by a section and contributions

in the compilation with a particular emphasis on dissecting methodological approaches.

The roundtable will stimulate critical reflections across these three domains of planning - research, practice, education – including interrogations of power relations amongst global regions and the potential for the adoption of decolonial perspectives. Though it will highlight the value of adopting a comparative approach, it will also highlight its possible limitations. The roundtable will emphasise that a comparative approach must be grounded in a good understanding of the local context, and that the methodology adopted, level of analysis, scope, scale, language, transferability, and the direction of flow of ideas (considering the decolonial perspective mentioned above) all require considerable attention.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 03 | Rethinking Democratic Urban Planning: Reflecting on Equitable and Ethical Approaches for the Multi-Crisis Era**

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Despite a growing number of urban policies promoting multi-sectoral cooperation, robust theoretical foundations on collaboration, justice, and social inclusion, and emerging co-production, co-creation, and co-design approaches, adverse global political and economic trends continue to erode democracy in urban development. This erosion manifests in poor policy implementation, the critique of collaborative planning as a smokescreen for unilateral decision-making, and the sporadic rather than systemic application of cooperative planning practices.

This roundtable examines the erosion of democracy in urban development as a critical challenge in the context of the multi-crisis era of the society, marked by climate change, economic instability, social inequality, and political polarization. A core consequence of this erosion is the contested legitimacy of urban planning. Instead of serving as a tool to protect the public interest, contemporary urban planning increasingly struggles against populist and authoritarian political regimes, as well as neoliberal economic pressures. Thus, we will explore the concepts and methods of democratic urban planning aimed at rebuilding public trust and reinvigorating planning as an essential tool for equitable and ethical urban development.

The discussion will address the following questions:

1 - How can we comprehensively assess democratic urban planning across Europe, considering varied historical paths, planning traditions, and the interplay between global trends and local dynamics? Which stakeholders are essential to enabling democratic urban planning, and how can their roles be strengthened?

2 - To what extent do various planning policies and practices emerge as democratic when examined through the lenses of formal planning frameworks (institutions and instruments) as well as cultural norms deeply embedded in society? How can we ensure that these frameworks and norms align with principles of justice, inclusion, and equity? How can we localise and operationalise the general frameworks?

3 - How can we facilitate knowledge transfer across diverse social spheres? How can academic insights be translated into democratic planning principles, how can these professional tenets be integrated into citizens' daily lives, and how can deliberative planning tools become embedded in administrative and procedural frameworks to improve democratic urban planning?

4 - What lessons can be learnt from comparing democratic and non-democratic approaches to urban planning, and how can ethical codes of urban planning ensure accountability in decision-making processes? How can ethical principles guide the transformation of urban planning practices globally, drawing on European experience?

By convening scholars and practitioners from diverse academic, cultural, and professional backgrounds, this roundtable will identify key barriers to implementing democratic and ethical principles in urban planning. It will also explore how lessons learned from Europe can contribute a global agenda for equitable and sustainable urban development. The discussion will emphasise the need for new practical methodologies of urban planning to combat corruption, ensure inclusive planning, and rebuild public trust in planning institutions. Ultimately, this roundtable aims to open a path toward meaningful transformation by fostering dialogue, sharing best practices, and developing actionable recommendations for democratic urban planning in an increasingly interconnected and crisis-prone world.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 04 | Radical alternatives to climate urbanism: towards socially and ecologically just cities**

*Hosted within track 1: Postgrowth Urbanism*

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Cities are critical sites for developing responses to climate change. However, popular climate change solutions in the city have not been successful in radically transforming the urban system. Celebrated climate change mitigation solutions like high-tech low-carbon buildings, electromobility and renewable energy remain materially intensive as well as socially exclusive. Similarly, adaptation efforts in cities largely address economically well-off areas, while increasing vulnerabilities for others. Cities continue to remain places of capital accumulation and unsustainability, creating inequalities within the city as well as beyond the city boundaries. While

the critique of the mainstream idea of climate urbanism is now well established, open questions remain on alternatives that are socially and ecologically just.

Building on the theme of the Congress, "Planning as a Transformative Action in an Age of Planetary Crisis," this roundtable adopts a critical approach to climate urbanism and re-centre social and ecological justice at the heart of the urban response. We would like to learn from both material and social practices drawing from, but not limited to, perspectives of justice (spatial, social and ecological), degrowth, urban political ecology, urban social movements, post-development that challenge as well as create alternative solutions for infrastructure, housing, energy, food, mobility and greening within and beyond the city boundary.

In conversation with the contributors, we will discuss:

- a) Why is it necessary to re-center social and ecological justice in the urban response to climate change?
- b) What do alternative responses to building a just city look like?
- c) How do these alternative responses interact with existing urban planning practices?

The contributors, experts in thinking of justice and climate action together, will broaden the understanding of climate urbanism that is not limited to reducing greenhouse gas emission through techno-fixes, rather dares to address the systemic and root causes of unsustainability and build their responses from the ground up. The roundtable will lay the foundation for a special issue on the topic in the journals *Local Environment* or *npj Climate Action*.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 05 | Circularity and/or Sustainability? Imagining Transformative Strategies and Actions for the Urban Transition**

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As cities face multiple challenges from climate change, rapid urbanisation, and resource scarcity, urban transitions have emerged as a critical framework for planning and rethinking urban futures. Circularity and sustainability are pivotal in these transitions, offering transformative approaches to managing resources, fostering resilience, and creating more equitable urban systems. However, how do these concepts translate into actionable actions and strategies for urban development, and can they truly address the pressing social, economic and environmental crises cities face today?

This roundtable builds on AESOP 2025's theme of "Planning as a Transformative Action in an Age of Planetary Crisis", focused on environmental, social and economic global challenges by exploring the intersection and complementarity of circularity and sustainability. It seeks to provoke a dialogue that moves beyond technical solutions and engages with urban transitions' systemic challenges and opportunities. While circular economic models, adaptive reuse, and zero-waste initiatives have demonstrated localised success, this session interrogates their scalability, temporality, and inclusiveness. Are circular and sustainable urban models accessible to diverse communities, or do they risk perpetuating inequalities? And how do we balance the focus on circularity with the imperative to reduce overall consumption and rethink innovative growth paradigms?

Participants will engage with critical questions such as: How can circularity contribute to the broader goals of urban transitions? What governance frameworks and policy innovations are needed to align circular and sustainable actions and strategies? How do circular practices address socio-economic inequalities and promote inclusivity in urban spaces? What role do cultural and behavioural shifts play in advancing sustainable urban transitions?

The session will feature contributions drawing on theoretical insights and empirical research which investigates planning policies, strategies and practices, on one or more of the following topics:  
The intersection and complementarity of circularity and sustainability;  
Policy and governance innovations supporting circular and sustainable urban transitions;  
Case studies highlight both successes and limitations;  
The integration of circularity and sustainability with social justice and innovation in urban development;  
Circularity and sustainable nature based frameworks;  
Behavioural and cultural changes required for systemic transformation.

Aligned with AESOP 2025's theme of rethinking urban transitions, this roundtable aims to inspire new perspectives and actionable strategies for cities navigating the complexities of the 21st century. Critically examining circularity and sustainability through the lens of equity and innovation will foster a deeper understanding of the pathways to transformative urban futures. Together, we will explore how to translate circularity and sustainability into inclusive, scalable, and impactful practices that redefine our urban future.

**Key words:** Circularity, Sustainability, Transformative Strategies and Actions, Urban Transition, Social justice and innovation

## **RT 06 | Learning through instituting. Impacts of civic action on institutions and the potential for the production of public value in planning**

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There has long been a debate on whether and how civic action can contribute to redefining the role and functioning of institutions. Institutional change is not merely a rational or regulatory process; it is a path of trial and error. This process can lead to changes not only in the set of rules, procedures and methods of labor division in a given organization but also in the actual system of power, affecting relationships of conflicting interests that drive institutional dynamics (De Leonadis, 2024). Institutions can be seen as both cognitive and practical routines, embodied in the habitus of social agents, guiding their action along already marked paths shaped by the flow of past actions. They are therefore often taken for granted as they are, so much so that their inertia very often leads to an impoverishment of the cognitive repertoire of the actors themselves who compose it. However, this does not mean that they cannot change (Ibidem, 2024).

Institutions are supra-individual units of analysis, with properties that cannot be reduced to the aggregation of individual motives or interests (Powell, Di Maggio, 1991). Processes of learning and change strongly depends on the nature of institutions, which are products of intentional human action. This action does not occur in a vacuum, but it is immersed – anchored or embedded – in a socially and culturally structured field. Social ties, regulatory technologies, moral considerations, material objects and places influence how institutions and decision making processes occur (Lieto, 2013). Focusing on institutional learning and change do not mean to shifting attention away from civic action. On the contrary, the potential for learning and change within institutions heavily relies on how civic action is organized, shaped, and infused with competencies and visions. Despite for years, planning scholars have focused on the relationship between civil society and institutions (Friedmann, 2011) – ranging from collaboration (Healey, 1997; Forester, 1999) to harsh conflict (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Miraftab & Wills, 2005), from coproduction (Albrechts, 2013; Balducci, Mäntysalo, 2013; Watson, 2014; Ostanel, 2024) to agonism (Mouffe, 2005; Purcell, 2008) – we think it is time for a step forward. Based on these premises, this roundtable aims to understand the preconditions, mechanisms, and outcomes of learning processes within what have been defined as 'instituting processes' (Esposito, 2021; 2022; Li Destri Nicosia & Saija, 2023), emphasizing the various impacts of civic action on the body of institutions and discussing the real potential for driving institutional change and the production of public value.

We seek scholars and researchers who aim to join us and discuss these main issues.

How institutions of different kinds and at different levels can 'learn' in the field of urban transformations being confronted with civic action?

What are the outcomes of this process of change in the institutional body, thus considered not only a procedural fact but a very complex environment made by routines, cultures, competencies, instruments and decision-making processes? What's the outcome on the production of public value?

How is the potential learning relation organized and shaped and how possible routines or instruments be seen as facilitators/translators?

This roundtable is organized in the framework of the Project of National Interest PNRR 2022 RESISTING - REconnecting Social innovation with InSTitutions in urban plannING.

**Key words:** Planning, Institutions, Governance, Inclusion, Democratization

## RT 07 | City-Making Beyond Crisis Management: Toward Just Urban Policies

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Urban policies are not static—they evolve, adapt, and sometimes fade away. Their lifecycle is shaped by “middling actors”—urban professionals, activists, and bureaucrats—who navigate complex socio-political landscapes while co-producing and implementing policies, mediating between diverse stakeholders, and drawing on successful precedents. Yet, their work is fraught with tensions arising from land commodification, climate crises, and armed conflicts, all exacerbated by neoliberal urbanism and urban extractivism. This roundtable critically examines the lifecycle of urban policies, the agency of those involved, and the conflicts they navigate. Inspired by Brazilian philosopher Nego Bispo’s phrase: “O começo, o meio e o começo” (“The beginning, the middle, and the beginning”), we propose a processual approach to urban policy design and implementation to explore negotiation, adaptation, and resistance.

#### 1 - Power Dynamics in Urban Policy Formation

Who are the middling actors, what are their positionalities, and how do they negotiate power within multi-level urban governance? How do policies emerge from these interactions, and how do unequal power dynamics shape or hinder inclusive decision-making? When does participation reinforce exclusion rather than fostering just urban policies?

#### 2 - How Urban Policies Travel, Adapt, and Move Forward

How do policies travel across different contexts while retaining their core values, and what role does political agency play in their adaptation? How can urban policies remain relevant in rapidly changing environments while overcoming power imbalances and institutional inertia? How do shifts in political power influence the interpretation and implementation of existing policies?

#### 3 - How Urban Policies Fade Out (or Not)

How can trust and stewardship be sustained beyond funding or political cycles? How to create policies for maintenance? What does a “good death” for a policy look like, and how can its lessons be carried forward?

#### 4 - Making Change: Towards Justice-Oriented Urban Policies



How can middling actors push urban policies beyond tokenistic participation toward structural transformation? What strategies can make city-making more equitable? Drawing on feminist and Global South perspectives, this session explores creativity, trust-building, and collective vision in urban policy-making—while avoiding romanticised notions of participation and foregrounding the conflicts that shape urban transformation. Guided by the questions above, we will address various cases and discuss different scales and scopes of practices, from neighbourhood-level to ecosystem-level planning, considering the lifecycle of urban policies. Within this roundtable, we will critically engage with how urban planning can shift from reactive harm mitigation to proactive justice-oriented practices, fostering policies for equitable and inclusive urban environments.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 08 | Strategies for increasing heat resilience in cities – Where do we go from here in planning research and practice?**

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Planning and preparing for heat stress and heat waves are high-priority issues in cities across Europe and elsewhere – at least in theory, if not in practice. Efforts of dealing with heat stress and heat waves are closely related to efforts of climate change adaptation as one component of climate policy (the other component being climate change mitigation). Increasingly, researchers seek to assess the state of art and activity level of cities with regard to climate policy in general, climate change adaptation in particular (e.g., see the survey of Otto et al. 2021 on German cities, Reckien et al. 2018, Galderisi et al. 2020, Reckien et al. 2023 on European cities, see Araos et al. 2016, Berrang-Ford et al. 2021, Fu et al. 2024 with regard to a global perspective). Against this background, the Round Table addresses issues of strategies to increase heat resilience in cities from the perspective of strategic spatial planning (Healey 2009). The term resilience covers efforts of adaptive as well as transformative resilience. Input statements of researchers from Northern and Southern Europe provide insights into the state of work in cities like Athens, Dresden, Frankfurt, and Vienna. Input statements and contributions to discussion may refer to qualitative and quantitative research on planning (in the sense of small- and large-N research, Goertz & Mahoney 2012). The Round Table is organized to suggest some issues of high priority for future work in planning research and practice.

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**Key words:** Adaptive resilience, Heat wave, Strategic spatial planning, Transformation

## RT 09 | Integrating Digital Transition and Territorial Development: A Co-Evolutionary Approach

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The concept of the digital divide was introduced and evolved in parallel with the development of the internet and, more broadly, the digital ecosystems that have shaped European societies over the past three decades. Several strands of research can be identified, each contributing to the evolution of this concept through complementary perspectives that have helped shape the multifaceted understanding attributed to the digital divide today. The digital divide has traditionally been understood and studied with a focus on individuals, social groups, or organizations. However, re-framing and interpreting this concept at a regional scale introduces a new set of challenges and opportunities for analysis. Much of this research is conducted at the national level, but such studies often fail to capture the complexity of regions as socio-institutional entities—a dimension that is typically better understood in studies focusing on nations or cities. Unlike nations or cities, regions require a more nuanced approach that considers their unique socio-economic, cultural, and institutional dynamics. This gap in research is particularly pressing, as the digital transition continues to transform how territorial and regional development is conceived and governed. The

digital transition refers to the ongoing shift from traditional systems and practices to those driven by digital technologies. This process encompasses not only the adoption of digital tools but also broader transformations in economic structures, institutional arrangements, and social dynamics resulting from the integration of digital technologies into everyday life. Importantly, the digital transition unfolds differently across regions, sectors, individuals, companies, and public administrations, depending on varying local conditions and capabilities. While the concept of the digital divide can, to some extent, be conceived as decontextualized from specific geographical settings, the digital transition is always inherently tied to a specific territorial scale. The regional digital divide extends the concept of the digital divide to focus on disparities between regions or territories. These disparities encompass inequalities in access to digital technologies, the ability to utilize them effectively, and the socio-economic impacts of digitization. The way in which digital technologies are integrated into a particular region is shaped by the unique socio-economic and institutional characteristics of that region, making the digital transition a spatially contextualized process. This interplay highlights the need for approaches that integrate digital policies with territorial development strategies. Yet, planners often address these domains independently, leaving the digital policies to be set and implemented independently of territorial development. The main concerns: It is a shared vision that socio-economic development at the regional scale is consequent to the advancement of digital infrastructures and services, while the idea for a co-evolutionary vision would guarantee more efficient investments, equitable territorial attractiveness, and reduced territorial fragility. The roundtable aims at discussing how to develop research methodologies and policy approaches that can support such a co-evolutionary vision.

**Key words:** Digital Divide, Digital infrastructure, Digital transition

## **RT 10 | Urban Living Labs in Education – Hybrid and transformative settings for collaborative learning and research in cities and regions**

*Hosted within track 8: Education and Skill*

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In recent decades, co-design and co-production working methods have been increasingly developed and tested in planning and architecture as an alternative approach to spatial production. These are still individual pilot projects. At the same time, the question of promoting this approach in education is being discussed and projects are being carried out in various living lab settings. The roundtable will demonstrate the range of these practice-oriented educational approaches. The aim

is to shed light on different aspects and to relate them to each other and to the "classical" world of planning and architecture. These range from the confrontation with practice right from the start of the projects to an active relationship between theory and practice. From working methods, organizational forms and structures, responsibilities in project work and laboratory operations. From inter- and transdisciplinarity to openness and flexibility in teaching across university and institutional boundaries. From dimensions of collaboration in design and research. And last but not least, a new type of public-civil cooperation as a "third mission" in education through direct cooperation with communities, civil society or the local economy. The roundtable will collect project examples, discuss structures and methods, tactics and strategies, and network interested stakeholders with the aim of strengthening co-educational approaches.

**Key words:** Urban Living Lab, Transdisciplinarity, Third Mission, Co-Production, Co-Education

## **RT 11 | Roundtable on Co-Production of Knowledge for Transformative Action**

*Hosted within track 8: Education and Skill*

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The escalating planetary crises, including climate change, rapid urbanization, and social inequality, underscore the urgent need for transformative actions in urban planning. To address these global challenges, the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge co-production and cross-sectoral partnerships to create innovative solutions tailored to the diverse needs of communities is increasingly emphasized and explicitly stated in the Cairo Call to Action, which captures the key messages of the recent World Urban Forum.

In this roundtable, we will focus on universities' role in the co-production of knowledge building on the findings and networks established during the past four years of research under the international, transdisciplinary funding priority SURE – Sustainable Urban Regions, bringing together researchers and knowledge networks across Europe and Asia. One of the key takeaways from this research is that knowledge co-production in urban research requires transdisciplinary teams and integrated efforts to build knowledge grounded in local realities while addressing global challenges. Localized data plays a central role here, enabling communities to provide grassroots insights that inform and refine urban planning efforts.

Universities, as "engines of knowledge," can play a pivotal role in supporting and involving communities in the generation, review, and analysis of data. However, effective co-production depends on mutual validation: local communities must review data to ensure relevance and accuracy, while open access, shared definitions and harmonized methodologies are necessary for comparability and to scale local impact across different regions. This inevitably raises the question

about the transferability of knowledge - what can be transferred, and how, for example, methodologies can be adapted to different local conditions. These issues will be critically discussed in the roundtable by representatives of universities and knowledge networks with diverse international project experience.

To sum up, the roundtable will explore the challenges and opportunities of knowledge co-production in international urban research focusing on the role of universities and their networks. By emphasizing collaborative research that leads to tangible outcomes, the discussion will critically examine how universities can serve as catalysts for transformative action, driving progress through partnerships with local communities and policymakers and fostering international knowledge exchange. The session aims to build an international network of urban researchers advancing knowledge co-production through innovative methods, tools, and strategies. By uniting researchers from diverse networks, we seek to form strong coalitions to contribute to the pressing global and interconnected challenges that cities worldwide face today.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 12 | Beyond the Process: Difficulties for theorisation within planning research and practice**

*Hosted within track 10: Theories*

### **Organizers**

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This roundtable brings together contributors to the ARL Working Group; 'Beyond the Process – Finding common ground for a discussion on planning's substantial foundation', to discuss the difficulties associated with grasping a common theoretical foundation for spatial planning.

Spatial planning activities often struggle for legitimacy in the face of populist politics, neoliberal forces and moves towards automation and digitisation, exacerbated by their often lacklustre contributions to addressing multiple crises (e.g. environmental, housing, economic etc.). Consequently, a lack of substantial theoretical foundation can be framed as undermining the discipline's continued existence; without a substantial foundation how do we effectively communicate the positive contribution made by spatial planning and those that practice it in the face of such powerful forces? How do we communicate the importance of spatial planning to those who might be interested in practicing it in the future?

Reflecting on the importance of theory in educating future planners, John Forester writes about the normative role of planning theory:

*"I take the task of planning theory only in part to do justice to the experience of contemporary planners facing the uncertainties, conflicts and political complexities they confront. But planning theory should do more: it should address possibilities for still better planning, possible directions for innovative work, avenues toward greater social welfare and lesser exploitation and domination, avenues toward lesser environmental degradation and toward more beautiful human environments. I take the challenge of planning theory to be not simply deconstructive, exposing false promises and self-serving rhetoric of ideologues, for example, but reconstructive, informing possibilities for human and environmental betterment."*

(Forester, 2007, p.242)

Yet, the starting assertion for the roundtable is that our body of planning theories has become overly focused on procedural approaches, whilst being, simultaneously, often impracticable for practitioners and belying a lack of agreement amongst academics about what constitutes a substantial foundation for spatial planning. Starting from this premise, each contributor will discuss their perspective on the 'sore spots' of planning theory:

What is missing or lacking from our current constellation of planning theory?

Which aspects of spatial planning require further attention in planning theory?

What theoretical approaches can move us away from the tensions between theories of planning focused on substance and procedure?

Ultimately, the roundtable aims to stimulate discussion around the state of contemporary planning theory and consider whether a common theoretical foundation for planning is possible or desirable.

#### Reference

Forester, J. (2004). Reflections on trying to teach planning theory. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(2), 242–251.

**Key words:** Planning theory, substantive theories, procedural theories

## **RT 13 | Fundamental? Or best forgotten? Contemporary perspectives on the public interest**

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The concept of the public interest has long been bound up in debates about the purpose of, and justification for, planning activities. Yet, writing at the beginning of the 21st Century, Campbell and Marshall (2000) highlight that:

*“What constitutes the public interest has always been contentious but its value as a legitimising concept has been increasingly called into question in the recent past. It is a term which has often been used to mystify rather than clarify...it is frequently used as a device to cast an aura of legitimacy over the final resolution of policy questions where there are still significant areas of disagreement.”*

(Campbell and Marshall, 2000, p.308)

The concept is simultaneously a carrier of many meanings and of no meaning; its inherent lack of content beyond the vague notion of serving the public leaves it open to being appropriated for less than normative purposes and, despite a lineage debating back to Aristotle, its practical application remains contested. On the other hand, it remains a justification for action that the discipline of planning clings onto; without a remit to serve the public what reason is there for spatial planning to exist?

Using the theory and practice of spatial planning as a basis, the aim of this roundtable is to present a range of contemporary perspectives, some optimistic, some less optimistic, about the relevance of the concept as we move further into the 21st Century. Each contributor will be asked to respond to the following questions:

Does/should the public interest remain a relevant as a conceptual basis for spatial planning?

How should the public interest be theorised or conceptualised?

Is the public interest a relevant concept for practitioners?

To what extent is a consensus needed around around who or what constitutes the public?

Some contributions will focus on the relevance of the concept in practice, whilst others will explore how the theorisation of the public interest has evolved. Specifically, we want to draw out the contrasts and dissensus between viewpoints and generate debate about whether the public interest remains an important foundation for planning theory and practice.

#### Reference

Campbell H. and Marshall R. (2000) Moral Obligations, Planning and the Public Interest: A Commentary on Current British Practice. *Environment and Planning B*. 27 (2), p.297-312.

**Key words:** Public Interest, Planning Theory, Planning Practice, Legitimacy

## **RT 14 | Project management in cross-border initiatives: practices, challenges and opportunities**

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This roundtable will focus on the role of project management in addressing the challenges faced by EU cities, with a particular emphasis on cross-border urban projects. As cities contend with pressing issues like climate change, energy transition, digital transformation, and sustainability, effective project management is important for fostering collaboration, optimizing resource use, and achieving long-term goals.

Project management frameworks, based on global best practices, provide structured approaches, method, models and tools to planning, executing, and completing projects efficiently within defined timeframes and budgets. Frameworks such as Agile, PRINCE2, and PMBOK are effective in managing resources, risks, stakeholder and team collaboration. They incorporate planning and monitoring tools, such as Gantt charts, project dashboards, and key performance indicators, to ensure tasks are scheduled, tracked, and adjusted as needed. By utilizing these frameworks and tools, projects can maintain clear timelines, monitor progress, and address complex challenges effectively while delivering practical, sustainable results.

The discussion will highlight how management practices can bridge gaps between stakeholders, align diverse interests, and ensure that urban initiatives deliver sustainable and equitable outcomes. From the project management side the discussion can emphasise specific project management tools and approaches that fit best the needs of EU cross-border projects. It will also delve into the complexities of managing urban transformation projects in the EU, for example how cities must navigate a variety of regulatory frameworks, cultural differences, and competing priorities. Topics will include how to overcome governance fragmentation, address funding uncertainties, and drive innovation to build resilient and inclusive urban spaces.

Key topics for discussion include:

Best practices in managing cross-border projects.

Governance, funding, and stakeholder coordination challenges.

The use of project management tools and methods to improve project outcomes.

Lessons from successful EU urban projects and partnerships.

**Key words:** Project Management, Urban Transformation, Cross-Border Collaboration

## **RT 15 | Planning professionalism and re-building trust in a post-truth era**

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This roundtable will look at trust in planning and trust in planners with a focus on professionalism and expert knowledge in a populist, polarised “post-truth”, era, where the sense of “public interest” remains vital but is in dispute. In a broader international context, trust in institutions and experts is often deemed to be under pressure. However, looking more closely to trust in institutions studies show that this is only true among specific groups in society (e.g. those geographically far from governments seats, marginalized groups etc.). However, exemplified by traditional and social media, feelings of distrust of an ongoing crisis in trust in institutions and experts effect planning and planners. Especially, as trust in planning matters because planning is at the heart of increasingly contentious – and at times polarising - debates about tackling global challenges around climate, access to housing, health, and inequality. This round table, It will enable critical consideration of the commonalities and differences in the role of planning and the planner in different contexts.

It will draw on divergent experiences in Switzerland, the Netherlands, South Africa and the UK outline differing relationships with residents, governments and knowledges; to seek commonalities and difference between practice and practitioners. We seek new framings of how relationships of trust vary over time and context, and aim to add more conceptual and empirical depth to these questions of key social and academic importance.

Critically, this discussion aims to explore how and if we can learn through international comparison to re-building trust, critical for ensuring planning’s positive role in tackling key global challenges.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 16 | Post-Growth, or The Return to the Fabulous Fifties? Evidence of Fundamental Contradictions between Theory and Practice of Planning**

*Hosted within track 1: Postgrowth Urbanism*

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Despite growing recognition of environmental and social challenges requiring a shift from traditional development paradigms, planning tools and practices remain fundamentally growth-oriented, largely unchanged from their mid-20th century features. This contradiction manifests differently across planning traditions and national contexts.

Across Europe, from South to North, we see that in major Italian cities like Rome and Milan, while explicit suburban expansion has declined, the “zero soil consumption” rhetoric (similar to “no net land take” policy in EU and “land use neutrality” Initiative in Norway), masks a continued prioritization of private development interests similar to 1950s practices. This perpetuates traditional pro-growth patterns through density maximization, green space reduction, and regulatory

exemptions that favor private property owners over public planning objectives. Moreover, this seemingly degrowth strategy is evidently used to greenwash and legitimize growth-oriented agenda. Norway presents an interesting contrast between urban and rural contexts. Major cities experience “spontaneous” growth driven by economic and demographic trends, requiring no special stimulation. However, rural municipalities actively promote development through permissive regulations and simplified land conversion processes, essentially using planning policy to attract growth.

Common patterns emerge across different countries, even as urban growth shifts from expansion to densification: Frequent plan exemptions and derogations; Maximized building density; Inadequate provision of green spaces; Developer-driven location choices; Compromised collective space programming. Despite environmental messaging, contemporary urban development practices continue to prioritize private interests and deregulation, much like during the post-war building boom. This approach fundamentally contradicts stated objectives of addressing socio-environmental crises.

The key question becomes: How must planning tools evolve from their “Fabulous Fifties” origins to effectively implement different paradigms? Specifically, how can planning systems be redesigned to pursue objectives of sufficiency, reduction, and downscaling, rather than perpetual growth?

**Key words:** Pro-growth / Post-growth Paradigms, Planning Theory and Practice, Post-growth Transition in Planning

## **RT 17 | Demonstrating the Application of Digital Twins in Urban Planning: Ensuring Citizen Centric Impact**

### **Organizers**

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Digital Twin (DT) technology revolutionises urban and spatial planning, providing dynamic, real-time digital replicas of physical environments. This technology enables planners to simulate, analyse, and optimise urban spaces. By integrating data from various sources, such as models, sensors and IoT devices, DTs offer a comprehensive view of urban systems, facilitating informed decision-making.

Incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics, DTs can predict and maximise opportunities within cities, including areas of growth, locations for investment, and mitigate traffic congestion, pollution, and infrastructural damage. This AI synergy enhances the accuracy and efficiency of urban planning, ensuring sustainable and resilient cities.

This proposed roundtable session draws on lessons from multiple European Commission funded DT research projects from across Europe including BIPED (Building Intelligent Positive Energy Districts), TIPS4PED and Twin4Resilience.

Reflections from BIPED, funded under Horizon Europe, will demonstrate how DTs assist urban planners in navigating the energy transition and decarbonisation requirements within their city/urban environments. BIPED's ambition is to manage this transition by developing and scaling Positive Energy Districts (PEDs), a key building block in achieving city-wide climate neutrality, in the city of Aarhus, Denmark (and other cities in turn). At the core of the solution lies the advanced digital twin technology complete with AI-driven optimisation tools for better urban planning and citizen engagement.

TIPS4PED is a Horizon Europe project designed to showcase an Integrated Assessment Platform (IAP) that will help municipalities in the creation of PEDs. This platform will empower cities to make informed decisions by enabling the design, development, and efficient management of PEDs using DT technology. With an intuitive dashboard, users can easily visualise different scenarios and results. Furthermore, the TIPS4PED platform will incorporate AI-driven modules, designed to optimise the creation and management of PEDs, while also integrating smaller-scale management tools like Building Management Systems (BMS) to enhance overall performance.

Twin4Resilience (T4R), INTERREG North-West Europe co-funded project, brings together 14 partners from 6 European countries to explore the use of Local Digital Twin (LDT) for a wide variety of applications in urban areas. Moving away from technology-driven solutions, T4R focusses on wider uptake of LDTs through a jointly developed resilient implementation strategy comprising 4 transformative frameworks – technical design, governance, ethics/inclusion/democratisation, and training. Dublin, one of the pilot and frontrunner cities, will highlight various challenges and ethical dilemmas which need to be addressed before/during the implementation of LDT projects and use cases. It will also share best (data) governance practices for an inclusive and democratic approach to LDTs.

This roundtable will explore how applied methodologies facilitate the development of smart, sustainable societies by enabling precise modelling and simulation of urban environments. Our roundtable consisting of DT experts and urban/ spatial planners will explore how DTs can enable urban planners and other built environment specialists to predict and optimise energy usage, reduce emissions, and enhance the overall quality of urban life for the betterment of the citizens and the whole of society.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 18 | Territorial Resilience in a Transformative Planning Approach**

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Alberto Giacometti, Nordregio Research Institute

In our changing world, cities, regions and territories are vulnerable and increasingly exposed to rapid and slow on-setting disasters and events: environmental and climate changes, economic and financial crises, social inequalities, and geopolitical shocks. The present age of crisis raises new challenges for territorial policy-making, positioning resilience as an increasingly crucial objective of European policies, besides competitiveness and cohesion. This is witnessed by the 2020 Strategic Foresight Report, that puts forward resilience as a "new compass for EU policies", clarifying that Europe needs to decisively act on this matter.

Within this framework, territorial resilience is an emerging concept to inspire decision- and policy-makers at all territorial levels to adopt multidisciplinary, holistic perspective that may lead to mitigating vulnerabilities and strengthening the transformative capacity of cities.

Aiming at providing a contribution on this matter, the ESPON project Territorialising Resilience: Transforming Europe for an Age of Crisis (TERRES) examines resilience through a territorial lens, aiming to develop a comprehensive framework to support the development and implementation of policies. It includes a pan-European analysis of territorial trends at the regional level, encompassing the entire ESPON programme area, upon which the ESPON TERRES territorial resilience policy framework is pivoted, and tailored recommendations at local, regional, and EU levels have been developed to enhance long-term resilience strategies.

This roundtable serves as a platform for discussing the project's findings, providing an opportunity to present its theoretical framework, key outcomes from the case studies, and insights gained from the Future Workshops conducted during the research.

The discussion will focus on the following questions:

How can a territorial understanding of resilience assist European states in overcoming their most pressing challenges?

How can the territorial conceptualization of resilience be effectively operationalized in spatial planning?

What role does governance play in this context, and what characteristics define a governance system that promotes territorial resilience?

What are the key resilience capacities that not only help to maintain the functionality of territorial systems but also drive transformative policies, strategies, and actions?

How does the strategic planning dimension influence territorial resilience, and how should its spatiality be implemented?

**Key words:** Resilience, spatial planning, functional areas, ESPON

## **RT 19 | City, diversity and toleration: the legal and political geography of pluralism**

### **Organizers**

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 Carlo Fabian, University of Applied Sciences and Arts

The roundtable arises from the conviction that the issue of “pluralism” – and the connected question of toleration – is today, more than ever, a crucial theoretical and practical problem in need of critical debate. The roundtable discussion is based on the recently published book “The Legal and Political Geography of Pluralism Supporting Diverse Public and Private Spaces in Contemporary Cities” (2025), by Francesco Chiodelli and Stefano Moroni. This book addresses questions of pluralism in a time of increasing ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in the public and private spaces of our cities, by analysing different types of regulation – property rights, municipal ordinances and urban planning. In the same vein of the book, the roundtable reflects on the kinds of rules public institutions should adopt in relation to “private spaces” as well as which ones they should promote in relation to “public spaces” in order to protect and support pluralism.

**Key words:** Toleration, diversity, public space, pluralism

## **RT 20 | AESOP-India Planning Exchange: Towards Global North-South relation in knowledge production**

### **Organizers**

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 Saebom Sophie or Marjan, YA CT  
 Oren Yiftachel, UCL  
 Bruce Stiftel, Georgia Institute of Technology

The roundtable is proposed at the background of the AESOP International PhD Workshop in India in 2026. In the past, AESOP members have advocated for learning about planning education and practices from countries/continents beyond the boundary of Europe, and especially from the Global South and East countries. One of the main aims of forming the Global South and East thematic group was that the budding planners of AESOP has a lot to learn from the complexity of the Global S&E countries. The international workshop is a step towards that direction with innovative pedagogy. The focus of the workshop will be on the proposed eleven industrial and economic corridors in India. While such corridors are not always about planning, in Indian context, these corridors are the catalyst for rapid urbanisation, economic development, and are strategic and spatial planning tools. With this background, we will frame our discussion around the following questions:

- a. Why India is a significant location for such an international workshop from an urban and regional planning perspective? (Chandrima Mukhopadhyay, Coordinator of Global S&E Thematic group)
- b. An in-depth explanation of Indian planning practices (and urbanisation process); (Sandip Chakravorty, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)
- c. The legacy of hosting an international workshop for AESOP and YA; (YA CT member- name TBC)
- d. The importance of bringing multiple international development organisations on board to collaborate; (Chandrima/Bruce Stiffler, Georgia Institute of Technology, US)
- e. What is the implication of the workshop for the Global North- South relationship in terms of knowledge production about south, research grants, publications about southern urban issues in international high-impact journals etc? (Bruce Stiffler & Oren Yiftachel, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in Beersheba & Honorary Professor at UCL)

The discussion could conclude with a presentation on the format of the workshop including pedagogy, and locations.

**Key words:** International, PhD workshop, India, Strategic and Spatial plans, Cross-border learning

## **RT 21 | Coping with uncertainties and the poly-crisis within Europe: The Metropolitan arena**

### **Organizers**

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Donato Casavola, Politecnico di Torino  
Kristi Grisakov, City of Tallinn & Tallinn University of Technology

The challenges regarding European Metropolitan Regions are growing in these times of a polycrisis: climate change adaptation, the energy transition and a turn towards a post-carbon-economy, and variegated socio-economic and spatial fragilities, are all building up stress levels in those regions. What happens in the 'power houses' of modern urban societies, and how can we navigate these areas between strategic positioning and providing everyday life worlds? How are urban policies coping with these challenges, and what impact does the Next Generation EU policy play in addressing transformations and transition?

The RT will address related issues in a critical inquiry but also by outlining some pathways to the future of the European Metropolitan Space. Against this backdrop, the RT intends to explore three dimensions of the current transition, focusing on the nature of the game changer and the possible implementation mechanisms for innovative policy and planning responses: Urban policies dimension: Is there enough understanding of the configurations of socio-spatial-ecological formations that result from the processes of territorialisation, deterritorialization and

reterritorialization within the pathways of contemporary capitalism(s)? Spatial imaginaries: What are the new spatial imaginaries, either produced by experts and institutions at EU level, but also by people, as collective constructions with a performative and normative role, in response to the 'polycrisis'?

Pathways to the future of the European Metropolitan Space:

Which conceptual and methodological challenges result for public policies and planning, as conceived so far? Which scenarios can be sketched for the future of the metropolitan regions in the coming decades and under what enabling conditions can policy and planning foster just and sustainable urban regions?

The RT will bring together authors contributing to a special issue for Territory, Politics, Governance.

**Key words:** Europe, metropolitan regions, strategic planning, game changer

## **RT 22 | Living with water at the time of multi-risk conditions**

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The interconnected risks faced by water cities—such as river basins, deltas, lagoons and coastal landscapes—require integrated approaches that transcend traditional planning methods and administrative boundaries. These areas, marked by ecological fragility and social vulnerability, are emblematic of the need for multi-risk and multi-scale adaptation strategies. Accelerating climate change exacerbates existing geological, hydrological, and environmental hazards, while anthropogenic pressures amplify the challenges, creating additional layers of complex to deal with risks. Despite decades of effort, the reliance on outdated planning frameworks and insufficient localized knowledge has hindered policymakers from effectively addressing these risks. This gap has led to unsustainable urban growth, escalating social inequalities, and intensifying environmental threats. A rethinking of urban metabolism and governance models is essential to foster circular development and future resilient scenarios. This contribution proposes a transformative methodology, developed within the PNRR-financed MIRACLE project, which integrates multi-risk analysis, vulnerability mapping, and scenario development into experimental urban laboratories. By leveraging tools such as community engagement, gaming, and artificial intelligence (AI), these laboratories foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders to co-design adaptive strategies. We invite contributions that address the complexities of multi-risk conditions, focusing on innovative frameworks that integrate spatial, social, and technological solutions. How can water cities adapt to evolving hydrological risks while promoting inclusivity and ecological balance? Contributions may explore methodologies, case studies, or governance models to advance knowledge and practice in multi-risk planning.

**Key words:** N/A

## RT 23 | Neighborhoods for Transformative Action

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Neighborhoods are more than mere physical spaces; they are dynamic socio-spatial assemblages that reflect the interplay of identity, diversity, and community while serving as key loci where space and society become tangible. Often overlooked in urban planning, neighborhoods are increasingly recognized as critical platforms for addressing today's multifaceted crises, such as climate change, social inequality and public health crises. Serving as the nexus between individual households and broader urban systems, neighborhoods hold unparalleled potential to shape the future of cities through local governance and social interaction with the advantages of proximity and interdependence.

The diversity of European neighborhood experiences and how neighborhoods can foster resilience, encourage participation, and drive community transformation will be explored in this roundtable. By fostering cross-country dialogue within Europe and its wider region, urban planners and policymakers can utilize diverse approaches to address challenges and enhance neighborhood-driven transformation.

Transformative actions at the neighborhood level hinge on bridging grassroots initiatives with top-down policies. Collaborative governance models demonstrate the potential of integrating citizen-driven innovations. The roundtable will focus on three themes:

- 1 - Participation: Neighborhoods provide accessible platforms for community engagement, enabling residents to co-create solutions and influence decision-making processes. The panel will explore strategies that empower marginalized groups, amplify local voices, and bridge the gap between top-down policies and grassroots initiatives.
- 2 - Resilience: Neighborhoods are essential for fostering resilience in economic, social, environmental and governance crises. Panelists will present examples of adaptive strategies that promote social cohesion, mutual support, and long-term recovery.
- 3 - Transformation: Beyond resilience, neighborhoods can act as laboratories for transformative change. Discussions as digital technologies, data-driven tools and urban labs will highlight how neighborhoods redefine urban living, foster innovation, and create inclusive, equitable futures.

Panelists will provide insights from Türkiye, Central and Eastern, Western, Northern and Southeastern Europe and the Balkans:

Türkiye: Exploring the dimensions of community resilience, the ability of communities and neighborhoods in navigating multiple crises.

Central and Eastern Europe: Highlighting neighborhood dynamics in post-socialist urban contexts shaped by unique historical and cultural factors.



Western Europe: Showing innovative, community-driven, participatory approaches to sustainability and governance.

Northern Europe: Resource sharing focusing on a reshareability index for sustainable planning and 'reshared' neighborhoods to apply circular principles.

Southeastern Europe and the Balkans: Offering comparative insights to broaden understanding and applicability.

In the quest to transform the neighborhood from being a passive policy recipient to becoming an active change agent, panelists will provide economic, social, environmental and governance frameworks and case studies that will lead the redefinition of the neighborhood in spatial planning.

The roundtable outcomes are envisioned to have significant implications for the 2025 Ankara Urbanism Biennial organized by İlhan Tekeli Urbanism Culture Trust, offering a comprehensive understanding of neighborhoods as critical sites for fostering inclusivity, resilience, and adaptability in urban environments. By synthesizing insights from diverse contexts, the roundtable will help identify key themes for the biennial, ranging from social equity and grassroots democracy to sustainability and urban innovation. Finally, an edited volume will consolidate theoretical and practical knowledge on neighborhoods as essential building blocks of urbanism.

**Key words:** Neighborhoods; Transformative Action; Sustainability; Resilience; Participation

## **RT 24 | Has the pandemic boosted innovation? Urban transitions after the Covid transition**

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The COVID-19 pandemic created a brand new social, economic, urban environment. Actors, at any scale and nature (public, private, firms, associations...), experienced completely unpredictable contingent situations and indefinite horizons. The fuzziness of the situated exigences was concurrent with the strictness of the policy and laws to limit the spreading of the virus. In the frame of transition studies and the spatial turning literature, the round table discusses what followed the pandemic shock, evidencing hints from case studies and theoretical reflections on transitions. The aim is to debate changes in times of poly-crisis, and if those have the potential for a permanent restructuring of spatial practices and imaginaries. Evidence from case studies at the table will discuss the role of the space in recovery policies with respect to four specific sectors (cultural and leisure activities and tourism; people and goods' mobility; higher education; manufacturing activities), while the theoretical contributions will reflect on (possibly new) roles and approaches in planning theory to deal with the post-pandemic poly-crisis and transitions.

In the frame of a National Interest Research Project (“Plastic or elastic? Exploring the spatialities of post-Covid 19” coordinated by Valeria Fedeli, Politecnico di Milano), the organisers put on the (round) table the following questions:

- 1 - What role have the crises, here namely the pandemic by COVID- 19, in restructuring the relations of people, firms, and institutions with spaces?
- 2 - Do the crisis and the externalities produced by them have an impact on innovation? Which actors and which fields are more responsive in these processes? And if so, which role has the space in prompting or experiencing innovative practices?
- 3 - What is the role of the public in enabling or disabling new relations of actors with the space for boosting innovation?

Results of the RT will be valorised in the deliverables of the Research Project. Moreover, depending on the interest and results of the discussion, the organisers will draft a theoretical manifesto to challenge Italian policymakers and actors coping with systemic disruptive change by generating collaborative governance of transition space.

**Key words:** Transition studies, crises, space, governance, innovation

## **RT 25 | UGoveRN: From Policy to Practice: Innovative Regulatory Tools for Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis**

### **Organizers**

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The roundtable we propose will explore innovative regulatory tools and practices addressing the affordable housing crisis within fragmented governance systems, with a focus on their implementation, benefits, and challenges in diverse country contexts. While housing market trends and urban development processes vary significantly across nations, this session aims to foster a comparative analysis of actionable policy instruments that have demonstrated potential to stimulate affordable housing production while addressing equity and sustainability goals.

In the context of the global housing crisis, particularly in the Netherlands, Turkey, Portugal, the U.S., and France, discussions on the most effective public policies and planning tools have gained urgency. A nuanced analysis of specific regulatory approaches within these fragmented governance systems is essential to formulating innovative strategies.

This roundtable will pursue three key objectives:

- 1 - Highlighting Innovative Tools: Exploring specific regulatory instruments and policies being used to address the housing crisis in different contexts.
- 2 - Evaluating Contextual Effectiveness: Understanding the conditions under which these tools operate and the factors influencing their success or failure.
- 3 - Fostering Adaptability: Discussing the potential for adapting and scaling these tools across diverse governance systems while respecting contextual specificities.

Additionally, the roundtable will aim to establish a set of key metrics and issues to support future comparative research, potentially leading to a broader international publication on this theme, comprising a larger number of countries.

Structure of the Roundtable:

### 1) Introduction and Comparative Data

The session will begin with a brief overview of the affordable housing crisis and its relationship with fragmented governance systems across the different case studies. A comparative statistics dataset will set the stage, helping to understand the different contexts on which the different policy tools operate.

### 2) Policy Tool Presentations

Each speaker will present one innovative regulatory tool currently in use in their country. Presentations will focus on:

- a. Tool Design and Implementation: A detailed description of the regulatory tool, including its goals, mechanisms, and governance structure.
- b. Impact and Challenges: An evaluation of the tool's effectiveness in addressing the affordable housing crisis, with attention to equity and sustainability.

The tools presented may include:

The Netherlands: The 40-40-20 rule, which balances social, mid- income, and market-rate housing in new developments.

Turkey: Urban transformation projects incentivized through public- private partnerships.

Portugal: Affordable rental housing programs targeting middle- and low-income households.

U.S.: Inclusionary zoning policies and housing trust funds.

France: The ZAC (Zone d'Aménagement Concerté) model for integrated urban development and affordable housing production.

### 3) Discussion and Interactive Engagement

The open discussion will examine the benefits, limitations, and transferability of the described tools across governance systems. Participants will critically assess how these fragmented yet innovative approaches can address housing affordability while advancing equity and sustainability goals.

To make the session more engaging, interactive elements such as small group exercises or real-time polling may be incorporated. For example, participants might propose adaptations or new

tools inspired by the cases presented and collaboratively discuss their feasibility in different governance contexts.

**Key words:** affordable housing, regulatory tools, fragmented governance, urban development, comparative analysis

## **RT 26 | AESOP Quality Recognition (QR) Programme: A European Planning Education Platform for Transformative Reflections, Learning and Action**

*Hosted within track 8: Education and Skill*

### **Organizers**

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Doruk Özügül, Yildiz Technical University  
Marco Picone, University of Palermo  
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The AESOP Quality Recognition (QR) Programme was initiated in 2006 after reflections on the needed transformations of planning programmes under changing requirements, and often challenging conditions for the planning profession and academia. After years of efforts invested by many colleagues and working groups, the Programme moved in 2015 from its Pilot Phase into the Standard Phase in 2019 following the main intention: AESOP will offer member schools its institutional support by certifying recognised qualities of fostering the European dimension in planning education programmes, as well as in nurturing a certain planning specialisation/distinctiveness within their national and regional context (Lo Piccolo, 2017; Galland and Chettiparamb, 2020).

Emerging from previous rounds of evaluations and consultations, the AESOP Excellence in Education Board (EEB) was officially established in 2017 and was assigned to develop further the QR Programme. In 2020/2021, the QR Mission, Ethos, Timeline and Criteria (AESOP QR, 2024) were defined to enable peer-to-peer sharing and mutual learning concerning the programme's curriculum identity, contents, settings and pedagogies, championing programmes' best practices, and fostering an ethic of quality enhancement amongst the programmes' staff.

The work "among peers" is two-fold: on the one hand, applicants and assessors (assigned EEB members) exchange their recognitions of the planning programme's adherence to the criteria, and on the other, assessors reflect, identify and integrate into the QR Programme qualities emerging from the previous assessments. This way we are continuously framing and sharing recognised qualities of planning education needed to prepare future professionals and scholars to address global and local multidimensional challenges and opportunities in constantly changing spaces and places.

The purpose of the Round Table is to discuss how the QR programme can guide and inspire joint reflections, learning and action needed for the planning programmes transformation in Europe and beyond, now and in the future.

Past and potential QR applicants and several EEB members/assessors, as speakers of the Round Table will discuss:

The mission and ethos of the QR programme;

How the QR Application form and Timeline guide the interactions among the programme representatives and between EEB assessors and applicants towards the recognised quality of a planning programme? How is the process seen as "transformative" from the side of the applicants? How is it seen from the side of EEB assessors?

How is sharing the QR documents, reports and articles, with the organisation of the QR events at the AESOP HoS meetings and Congresses fostering future transformations of planning programmes and how can it be developed further?

In a general sense, by revealing speakers' motivations, reflections, learning experiences and actions, we aim to open the discussion on the merits of QR to the AESOP community and to explore its existing and possible transformations as the European Platform for enhancing the quality of planning education.

References:

Lo Piccolo, Francesco (2017) A narrative of the AESOP Quality Recognition Programme in the field of planning education. *disP – The Planning Review*, 53 (4), pp.90-92.

Galland, Daniel and Angelique Chettiparamb (2020) Enhancing Quality in Planning Education Across Europe: Towards an Ethos of Sharing and Mutual Learning in AESOP Quality Recognition. *disP - The Planning Review*, 56(4), pp.140–147.

AESOP QR (2024): <https://aesop-planning.eu/activities/quality-recognition/aesop-qr-process>

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 27 | Transformations to post-growth – Positions, perspectives, and prospects for people and planet**

*Hosted within track 1: Postgrowth Urbanism*

### **Organizers**

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In the context of critical and looming change toward a post-growth society– one that aligns ecological imperatives with social equity – planning plays a pivotal role in shaping viable pathways forward. In recent years, postgrowth ideas have gained significant traction within planning discourse. However, this shift raises serious questions about the suitability of existing planning paradigms, their underlying logics, and their capacity to drive systemic change. Understanding their contextual relevance and legitimacy is essential in responding to the profound challenges of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

This roundtable will engage with these discussions from three consecutive perspectives:

A key tension in planning for sustainability and transformation lies between top-down governance and bottom-up participation, in particular moving beyond studying them in isolation. A major challenge for future research is to better connect insights from local experiments with broader policy implementation. This panel will explore the trade-offs, contradictions, and potential of hybrid governance models that bridge these perspectives, offering original pathways to move beyond growth dependencies.

Current planning paradigms reach limits and systemic barriers, highlighted by post-growth and degrowth critiques. Many of these challenges arise at the intersection of planning's deep-rooted growth orientation and the broader economic and societal frameworks that reinforce it. By interrogating these dynamics, we aim to uncover opportunities for rethinking planning approaches beyond conventional growth imperatives.

Established roles and practices seem insufficient to meet contemporary societal and environmental challenges effectively. The panel will reflect on how post-growth planning approaches can enhance institutions, tools, instruments, and governance structures. This includes reimagining the role of planners in coordinating diverse and often conflicting demands while navigating the increasing complexity of policy landscapes and public expectations.

The roundtable invites panellists to share insights from their research and practice, examining the paradigms and theoretical foundations that shape their work. We encourage the audience to critically engage with the potential of spatial planning as a transformative force, reflecting on its capacity “to shift our thinking and adopt alternative approaches that prioritize people and the planet” (AESOP 2025, Call for Papers). Through this dialogue, we aim to explore the diverse approaches that position planning as a critical catalyst for systemic change in an era of planetary crisis.

**Key words:** Post-growth planning, transformative agency, ontological and epistemological perspectives, experimentation, role of planners

## **RT 28 | Publishing Planning Research: A Conversation with Editors**

### **Organizers**

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### **Contributors**

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Tuba İnal Çekiç, Technical University of Darmstadt

Asma Mehan, Texas Tech University

Theme: This session aims to explore the process and challenges of publishing in planning research, featuring editors from planning journals, such as: Habitat International, Progress in Planning, Journal of Planning (Planlama) and plaNext. Each editor will have 10–15 minutes to share advice on publishing—highlighting their do’s and don’ts of submitting a paper—and offer their critical perspective on the future of publishing in planning academia. Key questions to be addressed include: What makes a good (international) paper? What should authors be mindful of when submitting a paper? Who should be the co-author of a paper? What is the ‘best’ journal to publish and how significant are metrics in choosing where to publish? What is the most effective way to respond to reviewers’ comments? How long should the review process take? What is the role of AI in the future of publishing?

While publishing remains a critical aspect in terms of developing as a scholar, the publishing landscape is becoming increasingly complex and confusing, especially for early career researchers. Challenges include the proliferation of journals—both legitimate and predatory—rising publication costs, delays in the review process due to the growing workload of academics and increasing levels of submissions, and contentious metrics for evaluating journal and article quality, ranging from citation counts to social media mentions. At the same time, structural inequalities persist, such as the underrepresentation of global south contexts and universities on editorial roles and in published outputs, compounded by the dominance of English as the primary language for international dissemination, which creates its own distortions in terms of knowledge construction.

Rather than avoiding such complex issues, the purpose of this roundtable session is to engage in a moderated Q&A with researchers—particularly PhD students and early-career scholars—and to facilitate a constructive discussion on this evolving landscape, while providing practical advice for navigating its challenges.

Structure: We aim to structure this roundtable with a short introduction by the organiser (explaining the purpose of this discussion and introducing the speakers), an initial response from all the editors (10 minutes each, approximately 40-50 minutes in total), followed by a Q&A with the audience. The Q&A will be moderated by the organiser.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 29 | ‘Conversations in Planning Theory and Practice’: a collaborative e-publication by AESOP’s Young Academic network**

### **Organizers**

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The Conversations-in-Planning YA-AESOP booklet series, an initiative of AESOP's Young Academics (YA) network, foster meaningful dialogues between scholars on theories, concepts, ideas, and practices in spatial planning. This series provides an interactive platform for YAs to develop their academic and intellectual skills through an intergenerational knowledge share. Each issue delves into the evolution of planning approaches, draw lessons from experiences practitioners, and encourages reflection on the future of the discipline.

The roundtable focuses on four key objectives:

- 1 - Promoting the editorial project Introducing the booklet series while addressing the challenges and opportunities of this bottom-up, collaborative initiative. This project emphasizes discussion and learning through active engagement within the scientific community.
- 2 - Discussing the cultural significance Highlighting the project's outcomes and identifying new directions, including potential contributors, relevant topics, and compelling case studies for future issues.
- 3 - Presenting the latest booklet Showcasing In the Mirror of Urban Landscapes: Sharing Experiences and Grounding, authored by Prof. De las Rivas, Ana Ruiz Varona, and Federico Camerin.
- 4 - Introducing the special issue "European Planning Contexts" Announcing the second special issue in the series' new format, following Planning Practices and Theories from the Global South (2021). This edition will address critical topics such as climate change, housing challenges, and feminist cities; featuring contributions from both experienced scholars and young academics.

The roundtable aims to foster open discussion by engaging contributors, participants, and the audience, enriching the dialogue on the discipline's core challenges and innovations.

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 30 | Discussing the Future of Publishing and Ways to Support Early Career Researchers: A Decade of Planext Journal and Insights from Leading Journals in Planning**

### **Organizers**

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Loris Antonio Servillo, Politecnico di Torino  
Olivier Skyes, University of Liverpool  
Katie McClymont, University of the West of England  
Feras Hammami, University of Gothenburg



In an ever-evolving academic sphere, the role of journals in shaping the future of research and discourse in the planning field is more critical than ever. On the other hand, for early career scholars, academic publishing can be a difficult terrain to navigate. This roundtable will explore the broader challenges and opportunities within academic publishing in planning with a special focus on early career scholars.

Topics will include the evolving dynamics of open-access publishing, the impact of digital platforms on dissemination and collaboration, and the growing importance of interdisciplinary approaches in responding to global challenges such as climate change, urban and regional disparities, the increasing pressure of the impact factor for early career researchers planning for a future in the academy.

This roundtable also celebrates the 10-year legacy of Planext, a journal dedicated to supporting young academics in planning and fostering inclusive, quality scholarship. Reflecting on the journal's journey, the roundtable features a discussion on the upcoming special issue, "plaNext in Transition 2015–2025: Special Issue for the 10th Year of the Planning for the Next Generation Journal," edited by Chandrima Mukhopadhyay, Elisa (Lizzy) Privitera, and Sila Ceren Varış Husar, celebrating a decade of transformative contributions and envisioning the journal's future trajectory.

Representatives from several leading journals in the planning field will join the dialogue and share their perspectives on the future of academic publishing. Together, the panelists will look into how journals can better support early-career researchers, promote equity in publishing, and adapt to changing expectations around impact, accessibility and relevance.

The panelists for this roundtable include:

Dominic Stead: European Planning Studies, European Journal of Transport and Infrastructure Research, Journal of Planning Education and Research, Journal of Planning Literature, Planning Practice and Research, Urban Policy and Research

Loris Antonio Servillo: European Journal of Spatial Development

Olivier Skyes: Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning

Katie McClymont: Planning Theory & Practice

Feras Hammami (previous Editor-in-Chief) and current Editorial Board members: Planext - Next Generation Planning

The panelists will be asked how early career researchers can find their place in the publishing world, how the discourse in the planning field is being shaped, and what their future insights are for the evolution of planning research and publishing.

This roundtable advances a collaborative and forward-thinking conversation, inviting the audience to contribute insights and questions. By reflecting on Planext's decade-long commitment to young academics and engaging with diverse perspectives, the session seeks to envision a sustainable, inclusive and equal future for publishing in planning.

**Key words:** Academic Publishing; Inclusive Scholarship; Early Career Researchers; Interdisciplinary Approaches; Equity

## **RT 31 | Planning, Publishing and the Planet: Academic Planning Publishing in Times of Planetary Crises**

### **Organizers**

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### **Contributors**

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Katie McClymont, University of the West of England Bristol

Dominic Stead, Aalto University

Tuna Tasan-Kok, University of Amsterdam

This roundtable will address the role of academic planning publishing in today's world of multiple and protracted crises. It will include perspectives from editors of leading planning journals such as *Planning Theory*, *European Planning Studies*, *Planning Theory & Practice*, *European Journal of Spatial Development*, and *disP - The Planning Review*.

By engaging with the Congress theme, this roundtable will discuss the role of academic planning journals in today's age of planetary crises, what these journals can and should do to approach these world of multiple interlinked crises (such as climate change, biodiversity loss, related social exclusions and socio-spatial inequalities, and ongoing wars and displacements) and whether and how they can contribute to transformative action. We will discuss whether these global crises are well represented, reflected and analysed through the lenses of planning in planning journals and what could be future approaches to make our planning journals more relevant for transformation action. We are sure that planning research has much to say about how these crises are playing out, affecting different regions of the world and different populations in different ways. We will also ask whether we have enough diverse perspectives represented in planning outlets; and how we can engage with diverse disciplines, all of which are relevant to analysing these crises and proposing transformative action, despite being already a highly interdisciplinary field.

We will also discuss important issues about the future of academic planning journals: What are new publishing formats, article types, and processes to be more innovative, inclusive and equitable? How can early career researchers and voices from practice and community organizations be better integrated? How can we better incorporate the perspectives of planning scholars from different regions of the world, and what role can AESOP and other international planning associations play in facilitating academic planning publishing?

All in all, we will ask substantive and procedural questions for how to produce and disseminate planning knowledge relevant for better understanding these planetary crises as well as formulating transformation strategies, tools and pathways for approaching these crises. After some initial reflections from various editors of planning journals, we will open the roundtable for comments and questions from the audience. Please come and ask questions that interest you!

**Key words:** N/A

## **RT 32 | Reflexive Urban Governance for Inclusive and Ecological Urban Futures in Green Istanbul**

*Istanbul Session*

**Organizers**

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In the context of escalating climate change, deepening inequalities, and complex global crises, Istanbul's urban governance has sought to respond with transformative and inclusive strategies. This special session, hosted by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, will delve into the city's innovative policies and initiatives—such as Green Istanbul, Wild Istanbul, and Play Istanbul—that foster interactions among soil, water, flora, fauna, and human ecosystems. These initiatives aim to establish a more integrated urban mobility framework, incorporating both human and natural systems to comprehensively address ecological and social challenges.

Green Istanbul focuses on enhancing urban greenery and biodiversity through extensive reforestation projects, green corridors, and eco-parks that reconnect urban dwellers with nature. Wild Istanbul is a pioneering initiative that aims to protect and promote urban wildlife by creating habitats within the city, ensuring that biodiversity thrives amidst urban development. Play Istanbul seeks to integrate play into the city's public spaces, designing environments where children and families can engage with nature in safe and imaginative ways, fostering a deeper connection to their surroundings.

A central theme of this session will be the revitalization of public squares, blue public spaces, and designated play areas through participatory processes, design competitions, and tactical urbanism. These efforts are designed to ensure that urban spaces are not only functional but also inclusive and adaptable to the needs of diverse populations. By involving communities in the design and decision-making processes, Istanbul aims to create spaces that reflect the city's rich cultural heritage and dynamic social fabric.

The session will also examine the role of flexible governance models and international collaborations in shaping visionary frameworks. Istanbul's governance strategies emphasize the importance of traversing administrative silos and spatial boundaries, fostering a holistic approach to urban planning. This includes engaging with international bodies and city networks to exchange best practices and co-develop solutions to common challenges. The city's involvement in projects such as the Istanbul Biodiversity Project demonstrates its commitment to preserving natural ecosystems while enhancing urban resilience.

Additionally, the session will explore how governance innovations can enable equitable and sustainable urban transformations in the face of planetary crises. Emphasizing institutional learning,

community practices, and generative conflicts, the discussion will highlight how adaptive governance frameworks can respond to emerging challenges, ensuring that policies remain relevant and effective.

By reflecting on these initiatives and frameworks, the session aims to provide valuable insights into how cities can balance ecological preservation with social equity, paving the way for a sustainable and inclusive urban future.

**Key words:** N/A