



PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN

LANDSCAPE DEMOCRACY

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IFLA EUROPE

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

SILVER JUBILEE 35 YEARS CARING FOR LANDSCAPE

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BERNARD CAPELLE
secretarygeneral@iflaeurope.eu

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treasurer@iflaeurope.eu

Vice-President Education
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vpeducation@iflaeurope.eu

Vice-President
Professional Practice
ANDREI CONDOROS
vppractice@iflaeurope.eu

secretariat@iflaeurope.eu
<http://iflaeurope.eu>



A N A LUENGO
IFLA EUROPE PRESIDENT
president@iflaeu.eu

All of us living today are witnesses of a **unique historical moment** characterized by an exceptionally quick urbanization process, which has brought onwards an accumulative degradation of environmental values, introducing a new global configuration.

Traditionally, the tight integration which existed between individuals, social and political institutions and the –quite intangible- perception of belonging to a determined geographical area insured social cohesion. However in the 18th century, a massive migration from countryside to cities forever changed the historical links with the landscapes we dwell in.

In the last hundred years, the development of economic liberalism favoured housing *en masse* as its provision insured a continuous production which retro-fed the system. Since the 1980's onwards, the adjustment of the aforementioned model to world market economy gave way to neoliberalism, which in turn advocated the reduction of the State's role in economics. Its impact has been tremendous: cities have grown exponentially, environment has been ravaged, new institutional, administrative and commercial centres, as well as multinational building complexes, have asserted themselves everywhere.

Nevertheless, **the current critical state of global affairs** points towards the end of neo-liberalism: it is likely that we will see a new economic paradigm emerge within the next handful of years. Meanwhile, the consequences of this former model will lie heavily upon our landscapes -poverty, misery, lack of employment, precarious housing, social conflict, violence-, and are only likely to intensify with the unrelenting migration of people to cities and the continued liberalization and decentralization of global markets. Possibly, it will be one –if not the- greatest challenge we will encounter as landscape architects.

But regardless of the daunting nature of these challenges, it is within this panorama of change and uncertainty that we must elaborate **our vision of tomorrow**. We have the responsibility to translate common, social needs into policies and then into action. As landscape architects, we are able to set things into perspective; confront the situation and envision a new model of what we –society- would like to be.

Precisely these issues are the focus of the **Resolution on Landscape Democracy** which has been signed by IFLA EUROPE's 34 National Associations of at our General Assembly in Oslo, last October. You will be able to find more on it at our web page, or at the web pages of your own National Associations, translated into your language, in due course. We hope you find it useful to urge your authorities to develop a holistic vision beyond political borders. All these scales need to meet in our work, favouring ecological integrity, economic development and social justice. Let us insure all of them remain at the core of our profession.