

**DEBATE 2**

**CONNECTING  
THROUGH SHARED SPACES?**

In the functionalist approach to urban planning, the city was perceived as a huge construction plot, for distributing built objects with clearly differentiated functions. Fast transport networks reinforced this extreme fragmentation. Neighbourhood regeneration is an opportunity to go beyond this segregationist approach. The aim is to introduce links between buildings by inserting into empty or neglected spaces, areas that city dwellers can share for more communal uses.

But how do we overcome the sectorial approach of the actors involved, which separates more than links? And how, in urban processes, do we avoid the constant privatisation of local spaces, and give them instead a public dimension?

## CONNECTING THROUGH SHARED SPACES

**David FRANCO, architect, Madrid (ES), member of the Technical committee:** For European, implementation is still a strategic question. So to explore it effectively, we need to discuss it in a fruitful manner, and look at what has happened so far. Larger numbers of implementation processes have started and been successful. We need to remember first that we are the European collective, and second that we are here to provide useful information to the recent winners and client representatives. They can learn a lot about the successes and challenges, the things that went right and the things that went wrong. Our aim is to provide clues that will help new processes to succeed.

I am going to present some 8 projects relating to the idea of **shared spaces**, which have either been implemented or are in the process of implementation.

**Connectivity is usually thought of as physical connectivity, as a link between different spaces in the city or as an infrastructural issue. But in reality, the most important kind of urban connectivity is probably social connectivity.**

How do social dynamics become a tool of social connectivity? When we think about public space it is not only about creating vitality or producing a new building, but also about introducing new dynamics and creating new connections in the city. Do we really know how to adapt public spaces to these new dynamics? Or are we creating new public spaces to which people must adapt?

Do we think that it is still possible to create central spaces for everyone? Or do we need something else, something more specific, for particular members of society? Do we activate these shared spaces with building programmes or vice-versa? Do we create public space through architecture or activate architecture through public spaces? Do we need good architecture to have good public spaces?

The first example is an urbanisation project in **Rennes E6 (FR)** to recover a former military building. The former “parade ground” has been replaced by **a very open central public space that can be used by the neighbourhood’s diverse population**; existing buildings have been converted to new housing and public programs. The neighbourhood’s new residents, in all their social diversity, are somehow reflected in this big square, which offers spaces for children, open public areas, etc.

Very different, but also taking up this idea of a central space where different people can gather and meet in the old tradition of public space, is the **Reims E7 (FR)** project, with its long spaces full of greenery and its garden feeling. Social housing and also low density building... **all these different new fabrics are brought together by a big public space.** You can see here how all these different levels of semi-public, private and semi-private spaces around this void, this central shared space, also generate the notion of a shared place.

Another project, from **Straubing E9 (DE)**, takes a totally different approach to the recycling of an existing factory. **The shared spaces here were opened up in the factory’s interstitial spaces.** They were re-appropriated by the new public activities taking place here. There is a second level of integration with the city, because like a fractal at a different scale, there are also all the interstitial spaces, what we call in-between spaces, between the whole factory complex and the existing surroundings. When we refer to interstitial spaces, we don’t only mean public spaces that are small in terms of surface area; we can also speak of a different scale of public space, which creates not only an internal connection, but also a connection to the existing fabric.



above: RENNES E6 (FR) arch. Jean-François MAURAS, Cécile NIZOU (FR)  
below: REIMS E7 (FR) arch. THOURY VALLET (FR)



STRAUBING E9 (DE) arch. Marc-Philippe REICHWALD, Peter-Karsten SCHULTZ, Anita SINANIAN (DE)



A very similar project deals with the same dynamic in **Saintes E10 (FR)**, in a process currently being implemented. The project is located on a hill, in an existing hospital building, and the winning team proposed creating a very intense mesh of new uses to generate this internal connectivity. These are interstitial voids and shared spaces, but by the intensity they introduce they also create connections with the rest of the city. This generates different levels of connection. The proposal of the atmosphere between the internal spaces, a very high place, gives us a visual connection with the city. And we have these interstitials materialised in types of promenades, like new routes crossing the existing city. **The quality of the reprogramming of these linear public spaces awakens the urban potentialities that were here but not used.**

In a similar way, the project in **Barrakaldo E6 (ES)**, users all the irregularities of the fabric as an opportunity to generate fluidity, an up-and-down movement that creates itineraries, **a three dimensional promenade which merges, joins, connects this totally disconnected urban tissue.** This is an interesting case, because originally the winning project was little more than three towers and a landscape design on the river. But the transformation of the site, creating this greater complexity, was seen by the architects and the client as an opportunity to make something else. Using this landscape approach not via the river, with its disconnection from the city, but activating the city from within. It is a very interesting transformation of the idea, a transmutation of an idea in another place in a very effective way. And as you it has been recently finished.

They is another quite common case, of undeveloped interstitial green spaces on the edges of the city or strips arising from different fabrics or phases in the city's growth. This is also a new opportunity to create new public spaces and to introduce a new dialectic: how intense do we need to be? This **Freiburg E9 (CH)** project is interesting because it is a merger of projects by two winning teams. **One of them proposed strong public building and the second team proposed more longitudinal green strips, more a**



above: SAINTES E10 (FR) arch. DAUPHINS architecture

below: BARAKALDO E6 (ES) arch. MTM Architectes, XPIRAL architectes



below: E9 FREIBURG (CH) arch. Martin BRUHIN, Roland STUTZ (CH), Mona FARAG, Mark HOFMANN (DE)



**recreational area.** And the final project is an amalgam of both and works quite well. The public space is still there, healing the division between the city's different spaces, whilst the public building has a strong presence that activates the public space and its architectural methodologies or strategies are also suited to the conditions of the public spaces. It is low and wide, etc.

Now, the last project is quite fascinating: the winning project by the German architect Saskia Hebert in **Spremeberg E9 (DE)**, which seeks to activate this whole huge scale, but dysfunctional public park, which is insufficiently active in terms of public space, by introducing very specific, small scale performances: a new station, some bridges to cross, some very delicate but strategically placed new elements. **Through a strategy of small additions, through an acupuncture of architecture and landscape, everything is activated.** The title of this project is quite explicit "Bridges and gates". One of these elements has already been constructed – a theatre recycling a former open air theatre – and is even more strategic in the expenditure of the resources but it is totally successful and has reactivated this public space.

We could use the ideas shown in the discussion: **the central voids**, and who these central voids are for; **the interstitials spaces** and **the difference between internal and external connections**, the itineraries, the new tracks, new promenades, public spaces perceived not as squares but as lines, and in the end the idea of how to activate big landscaped areas associated with the city. But first, there are the accounts by the representatives and architects of the Heraklion and Badajoz sites, which are still in development. It is interesting, especially for the young winners and new cities, to know what kind of problems or advantages you have found in the process. We start with the presentation of Badajoz and by the client presentation.

**Manuel LOZANO, representative of the site of Badajoz E10 (ES):**

This is not the first European project to be built in the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, but it is one that has reached quite an advanced stage. This process initially focused on an intense area of 45 hectares in the city of Badajoz, capital of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura. It is located on the right bank of the river Guadiana which passes through the city and is subject to a series of constraints, including one boundary on a motorway linking Madrid to Lisbon. Slightly behind, close to the border with Portugal, in the Badajoz industrial zone, called Le Nevejo.

This is a part of the city, which is in decline and requires public intervention. Most of the housing in this sector is social housing, built directly by the Government as initially by the Autonomous Community of Extremadura. So we have a series of social housing units, grouped in clusters like La Luneta, the Santa Gracia district and, slightly below, excluded from this area, the San Fernando and La Estación districts. Is a feature of all this housing is that it was supposed to be temporary. Built between the late 50s and the early 70s, it was supposed to house a new, primarily working class population coming from Badajoz, which could not afford the housing then available on the market or for which there was insufficient supply in the market. Subsequently, the scope of the project was reduced to focus exclusively on the Santa Gracia district. However, it remains by no means a small project, because the Santa Gracia district consists of 800 dwellings, 400 of which are still owned by the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, whilst the other 400 has been sold.

**All the dwellings have more or less the same typology. They are small houses built to be temporary. The initial idea was that the lifespan of the buildings would not be more than 20 years. What was important at the time was to build as many dwellings as possible to absorb the numbers of people coming into the big city.**

This model was called UVA (Unida Vecinal de Absorción), primarily characterised by a single typology. A lot of identical houses with little public space and amenities around: a church, a creche, a small shopping centre. Initially, it was a young working population, but over time that population has matured and age, and it is now largely elderly.



BADAJOZ E10 (ES) arch. Enrique ARENAS LAORGA, Luis BASABE MONTALVO (ES)  
above: the site - below: streets and negotiation



In addition, the area has been marginalised. And this situation was directly exacerbated by the administration, which relocated people here from a recent local operation, with no criteria, with the result that part of the city's marginal population is concentrated in this area. Remember that it is near the frontier, and as always with such frontier towns, there are cross-border population shifts, in our case between Portugal and Spain. The European project proposes regenerating this district to make it a modern neighbourhood, in keeping with the demands of modern society for good living conditions and affordable housing.

**Enrique ARENAS LAORGA and Luis BASABE MONTALVO, competition winners of Badajoz E10:**

We are speaking for the competition about 45-50 hectares but actually the study site is almost 200 hectares, with all the kinds of problems you find in such an area: drugs, racial issues, unemployment, poverty. This area was like the carpet under which the administration brushed everything. So we couldn't approach the project simply with a plan or a design.

**So we approached it strategically from the start, by proposing a negotiation. We said that we were not submitting a project but wanted to start a negotiation. This is what we are going to develop today.**

In a negotiation, we were not looking to control the process of rehabilitation of the area, but we wanted to control the beginning. This was in 2006, before the start of the recession that Spain is now experiencing. In North Madrid this is a typical extension operation, but our view from the start was that it wasn't the right approach. We wanted to put forward a way of planning a city that reflected the genuine, real-time needs of the city. So we developed this "Seeds and vectors" concept; "let's plan the city not in terms of boundaries or fabric, in terms of its applications points".

The aim was to identify some needs, such as more housing and a city program, etc. and then introduce a development vector. It might sound abstract, but that was our intention. Our project discourse was programmatic, expressed through pictures and collages, to show the kinds of things that could happen in this area.

So we began by planting a mass of colonisation seeds, as you

do in an empty space. The second stage was to plant **sowing seeds**. There are places where the city does not work; the tissues do not match, so we also introduced programmatic implants. The third stage, the one we are currently developing, is the **regeneration seeds**. This is what we are doing now: introducing seeds not of construction but of transformation. And we are very involved in the fourth phase, an important location at the edge of Badajoz, with **green space and nature**. So from the initial planning stage, the idea was that the City should keep space for nature and green network. As well as the concept of “seeds” we developed the concept of “vectors”. How can we steer the development of a particular intervention point? In fact, we had another very long debate in the office – we didn’t really want to design anything in particular for those 200 hectares. We designed things subsequently, but first we had to decide on the guidelines, the policies for this development. We produced a kind of manifesto: the need for real-time development; identifying needs before developing plans; a focus on the small scale. One of the problems we saw in North Madrid is that the market investors always define the scale, not the people or the needs of the city. The problem is that in this kind of city you can’t react to change, you can’t remove 150 meter high apartment blocks. But you can easily remove a small house or even a building. Then we talked about participation and the primacy of public spaces, which make the city more than just the sum of its parts. In fact, cities are defined by public spaces and not by housing. That is what is happening here now, an extension that is responsive to the needs. There was a huge park, which the city used to rebuild every three years, but before they had even reopened it, the vandals had already demolished it. But instead what you have is a small, unfenced “Urban Gardening Island”, made by local people, where they grow olives and tomatoes, which no one will vandalise. That was a very interesting outcome.

**The whole project also aims to re-think the role of the architect and the architectural narrative. The instrument we try to use is negotiation. Our approach to planning will always be as an instrument for discussion and rather than an imposition.**

So that, very briefly, was the competition.



Then we did the study of the area, and the government of Extremadura got involved. We began at the original site. This was very urgent for the housing, which was very vulnerable, and it was also easier. This is the less problematic aspect of the social issues. In this part of the city, the average age is over 60, mainly female, even over 80, but it is also a very lively fabric. All these houses are exactly the same, but in fact it is quite difficult to find two that are really the same. The condition is different and there have been extensions.

**We follow three lines of walks**, which are in progress, involving different measures in all three. First line: the government has European money **to work on the rehabilitation of houses**, with very high ecological standards because you can imagine that you have only 12 centimetres of brick or cement blocks for all insulation. They are currently developing a prototype for the rehabilitation process. The second line is that we had already delivered **the master plan for the rehabilitation of the whole area**, not just individual houses. The important thing is that there is a strong community living there and they are driving the process. We are helping them as much as we can. We want to show what local people themselves can do. We hope that the master plan we gave the municipality will be approved by the end of this year, and it seems to be going quite well. We did not want to produce a conventional plan that defines too much or is too much object based. Of course we drew roads and buildings but for the purposes of negotiation. We organized the planning in strategic lines. We never produce plans for the roads and housing; we wanted a plan that provides several layers of interconnected information. It was useful then to talk to local people, to show them the plans, and also to the administration or the technical resources. We talked about topics and not about objects. We talked about identity; an important strategic priority was to redefine the area’s identity, which is strong but negative in relation to the context. Also it is an old area and we want to provide space for younger people. We will introduce different typologies where all the houses are the same, like converting white rice into paella. The biggest problem here is accessibility, so we developed a whole **catalogue of solutions for little streets** that we will implement in real time. This area is very badly connected, so we are transforming the road around and the parking facilities. To revive the area, it is also important **to provide**



BADAJOS E8 (ES) arch. Enrique ARENAS LAORGA & Luis BASABE MONTALVO  
above: the landscape strategy

HERAKLION E4 (GR) arch. Socratis STRATIS (CY)  
below: the site and the actors



**new public program** not only for the housing, but also for church, kindergarten or school, and also new shops and facilities. In terms of landscape, it is a pedestrian area which requires a relatively small investment to transform it into an urban park. It is a network which is potentially very good. In the 1980s, before the municipality stopped maintaining the streets, many people came from Badajoz to take their wedding photos, because they were full of flowers. It was an interesting network.

Now we have proposed running a workshop to work on some of these implementations with the local people themselves. We were not interested in design; for example, I was fortunate enough to take part in a very problematic project in Sevilla where we just worked with local people on some interventions in the public space. The goal was to prevent motorbikes coming into the courtyard, and the neighbours themselves designed these structures. This is the kind of work we are developing with the local people. I must say that expectations are very high, we are in the papers almost every month with always the same news: "it is going to happen now!"

**David FRANCO:** The next project in Heraklion is introduced by the architect Socrates Stratis.

**Socrates STRATIS, architect NICOSIA (CH), winner E3 HERAKLION (FR):** What is very interesting about the project in Badajoz is the shift in the position of the architect. The proposal shows an architect preparing to get involved in a very complex city-making process. I think that the difference from the project I am working on in Heraklion is that we also worked with project actors, but there was no legitimate participation by the users themselves. It remains at the level of representation.

But on the other hand, when somebody starts working with public space and connectivity, you will find these kinds of complex negotiation tools. So I will talk about these negotiation tools and tactics and I will show the work we did around them. In Heraklion, we worked on a diversity of open air spaces, public programs, cultural heritage.

**Seeking how to connect should be the method, so that the project become a sort of device for connecting the actors, because the municipal actors are very fragmented. How can the program and spatial organisation help to produce these connections?**

Over the long process of implementation, many people were involved: two mayors, seven deputy mayors, five department directors, two project architects, one of whom was promoted to the position of department director, which was very good for us, and two project engineers. That is a lot of people. The architecture of the team itself is quite interesting. You win a competition, you are alone or with some friends and suddenly you are faced with a huge project. What do you do?

Now what was the competition about? We called the scenario "between city and sea". We realised that it was impossible to know all the factors relating to Heraklion. So we accepted for ourselves that we would just develop scenarios that would regenerate the boundaries between the city and the sea. It was a large area that had been left empty for safety reasons and there were a lot of industrial buildings and wastelands. So the aim was to re-develop four kinds of boundary:

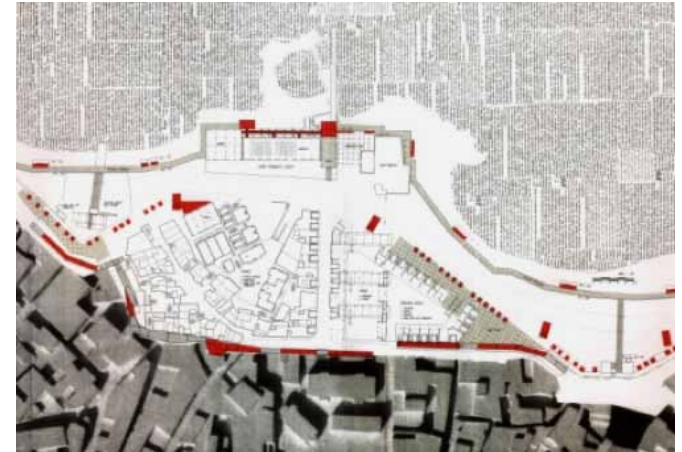
the old 1930s wall along the boulevard, the boulevard itself and the pedestrian waterfront area, including a simulation of possible events that could be introduced and an architecture that would reuse some of the structures.

In 2002, we signed a first contract, in 2004 a second contract and very strangely, in 2012 we are signing a third contract. Everybody knows that Greece is falling apart. So when the mayor called us and said we have to do this now. I said but you know what is going on in Greece and he said, "This is not Greece"! In fact this is a nine or ten stage project: link the city along the waterfront and across. This was done with a permanent public program, a temporary program and public spaces. So a public program is developed for this shared public space. In fact, part of the cultural memory becomes a part of the public program. The boulevard introduces a waterfront, a pedestrian network, and we try to change the characteristics of the boulevard, not entirely successfully. And then the 1950s market was demolished before we started the competition. Our project also introduces new buildings. Open space that we've designed and the boulevard with the orange and yellow colours for the pedestrian.

Let's say a few words on the first phase, which was finished in 2008. It was the former food market area, which linked in with adjacent covered spaces and a diversity of open spaces, service areas and spaces protected from the weather, from the wind, and a public program connecting both with the neighbourhood, the local centre, and with the city itself. Kids use these public spaces quite extensively.

**George FOURNARAKIS, representative of the city of HERAKLION (GR):** I am part of Heraklion Municipality, in charge of the old city and the fortifications. Heraklion is one of the biggest cities in Greece, and the capital of Crete. Heraklion has a new role to fulfil today, as a metropolitan centre, with multi-centre growth, in the social and financial sectors, within a sustainable development framework. The municipality has identified this new goal and recognise the importance of planning and implementing major urban development and regeneration projects, in particular for the city centre and the coastal zone. This new approach is closely connected with the financial development and revitalisation of urban areas, improvement of every day life and environmental enhancement. In the municipality's latest operational program for 2008 and 2013, special emphasis has been placed on environmental initiatives: quality of life, social growth, tourism and culture, which means that major projects are already been planned and implemented mostly with European funds. Regeneration of Heraklion's coastal area is our top priority. A series of international, European and local architectural competitions had already added value in terms of the development and management of public spaces. Particularly when these interventions are widely accepted and appreciated, this value becomes even greater. It is against this background that the European 4 project should be seen, casting a new perspective on the coastal zone and the area of the former food market within old city of Heraklion. Two major European programs financed this complex project: URBAN II and Region operation program of Crete 2000-2006.

The initial aim of the project as a whole was the financial and the social revitalization of a downgraded area of the western urban sector of Heraklion. A strategic priority was also the radical reorganisation of the coastal front. On this basis, the primary development focus was the suburbs of Kaminia (West Heraklion), the second was a master redevelopment plan for the whole city of Heraklion, and last but not least, the third European 4 winning project, was a plan for the former food market area, the old power station and the historic gulf. The whole intervention area is called Agia Triada. It has always been a working class neighbourhood since small industries and manufactures were built along its coastal road at the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays the area has changed in many ways. Of course, immigrants and low-income earners



HERAKLION E4 (GR) arch. Socratis STRATIS (CY)  
above: implementation, the site  
below: the competition

below: implementation, the place



inhabit its main core. At this point, it is important to note that the old city itself has been designated an urban renewal area, opening the way for the implementation of a regional operational development project.

**Under the scheme for a complete regeneration plan of the coastal zone, a network of multicultural activities was to be made: the new public spaces of the former food market, with its many uses and very attractive complementary poles, for example a new Museum of Natural History, in the vicinity of the Museum of Crete with the implementation of these huge Hellenic standards programs. The project also called for the industrialized zone within the old city to be transformed to cultural activities, a parallel approach to a network of historical value.**

One of the main problems generally relating to architectural competitions is the historical aspect of Greece; the procedures are long and chaotic. Sometimes the project does not gain complete approval, general acceptance by the public. We were lucky with regard to the specific European architectural competition, in that it was accepted by the public. As soon as construction work started on the project, several issues arose relating primarily to practical matters, mainly traffic organisation in the area. It is always difficult to change people's habits, even if the changes may improve their quality of life. In that respect, the new traffic routing concept caused a serious problem, since controversial choices were made. A more serious problem, which arose during the implementation phase and is still rumbling, had to do with the fact that the coastal zone of any big city is under the jurisdiction of the Port organization. On the other hand, a good practice that made us pursue our initial plan was the general approval of the whole project not only by local people but also by the city as a whole. It was very important to design a plan where people could look at and walk along the sea, and to organise several activities in its immediate area. The project that resulted from European 4 very successfully connected the sea and the city. Even today, 18 years later, this alone is perceived as its greatest strength. The fact that the municipality of Heraklion managed to complete this project as whole by combining several European and national competitions,

, made this attempt even more successful.

**Socrates STRATIS:** It is so difficult to find projects to complete, especially in Greece, so it is even more difficult to build big scale projects. Describing the negotiation with the different actors is not easy, but I would like to explain how these public spaces went through discussion and negotiation. It was impossible to approach the project in its entirety, so we went in small steps, because the different actors had to be convinced. All the people affected by the project. That is what you have to face after winning the competition.

The first action was to try to connect by defining the boundaries of the boulevard. The Heraklion Port Authorities were in conflict with the municipality and the rest of the actors. They saw the zone between the city and the sea as part of their territory. So in trying to break down and change the geometry of the boulevard, we had to tackle this kind of conflict. We tried to downscale the boulevard, without success because the electricity authorities and traffic engineers were opposed, because the Heraklion's road networks is not mature enough to accept such changes.

**We shifted the road in order to create public space by the sea and what we proposed was a big urban ramp that bridges the seven metre difference between the city level and the sea level, and under that ramp we put the city's public buses. The ramp was the roof of the public bus route.**

This project could not be pursued because of the engineering work that had to be done in the sea, to provide protection from the waves. So we had to find a consensus in the negotiation by implementing a sort of temporary project, that would be transformed to the final one when the conditions were right. So we had to move the road, then there was these nice piece of land that was created on the sea. Then there was a conflict between the mayor and the port authority, which has gone to the courts. The project continued with temporary structure that can be removed, which people are using. This was in the newspapers a lot, because there was a storm one winter which threw up garbage from the sea onto the ramp. Citizens went to clean the area. It was the best part of the project at that time.



HERAKLION E4 (GR) arch. Socrates STRATIS (CY)  
above: implementation, the place

below: implementation, the parkway and the ramp





The western part is another operation that shows the use of negotiation to connect to these pedestrian paths. We proposed a pedestrian lane on the waterfront, connected to the existing pedestrian routes, and we are working now on a new one that connects to the city walls, seven metres above sea level. Our proposal works a little bit like a series of connectors between the city's existing main networks. It is an area with a narrow pedestrian bridge that has to go through the obstacle course of negotiation. You negotiate with some actors, then you agree on something, and go to the next stage, and then the next. The issue was about a water boulevard to go from ancient walls, listed buildings... The water boulevard was wide, too wide and had no pedestrian access. So we had to negotiate with the mayor and the municipality in order to get these cross routes. We had to take a tactical approach. For example: the ancient walls were falling because of passing trucks. So foundations had to be built to protect the ancient walls. So if they could accept this, then they could accept the pedestrian walk that connects the two sides of the city, and the tactics worked quite well.

Now if we go to the the most recent 2012 study, it is the connector between the beautiful walk on the walls with the waterfront walk, a long ramp and a double bridge. Images of it had to be submitted to the Archaeology Centre, since a regulation in Greece says that if a project runs close (about five metres) to ancient walls, it has to be submitted to this Committee of 17 archaeologists. Although the Mayor approved of the project, the negotiation with the Archaeology Centre went badly. They greatly disliked it. They said it was an insult to the walls... The bridge is gone but this sort of trans-bridge became a sort of "martyr" to negotiation: "Ok we do not want that, but you can keep this!" In any case, it was impossible for the project to be accepted as it was. So finally this is going to be implemented, the mayor called yesterday, and said, "You have to push this". When I asked, "where will you find the money?" he said "I can deal with that!" That's why reconnections between people can go back to connections in public space it self.

**Aglaée DEGROS, architect Rotterdam (NL), member of the Scientific Committee:** It is a very beautiful project and I recommend going for a walk in Heraklion. It really connects two parts that were, in essence, totally divided by



HERAKLION E4 (GR) arch. Socratis STRATIS (CY)  
implementation: step 3, gateway



this huge highway. The two projects at Badajoz and Heraklion tried to connect uses of public spaces in two different ways. Can you explain what you have learnt from competition to implementation during the European process? If you had to do the competition again, how would you improve your initial idea?

**Enrique ARENAS LAORGA:** I think that **our projects not only create physical links but also social communication.** During the process, you have to change perceptions about the place. In Badajoz, this part of the city is really degraded, with all sort of problems. How do you change an area from underbelly to forefront is the main question?

**Socrates STRATIS:** What is interesting here is the advantages and disadvantages in the architect adopting this position. In reality, you are moving into the area of urban planning, but using architecture as your tool. I think because of the legislation, in Spain some things are allowed that would not be allowed in Greece. The position that one takes depends very much on what the country allows. But on the other hand I think that in doing this, you are taking a bottom-up approach in this area, trying to make the informal official by taking the steps, setting a framework for what the inhabitants themselves can do. This is very important and I think that the municipality itself seems to feel much more comfortable with that. And then there is a question of making public space more active, and this is a question for all of us. It is a question of being consistent about what makes citizens appropriate a space.

**Enrique ARENAS LAORGA:** You said that the region accepts the possibilities... But in fact we had to push it. It is not so flexible in maintaining open procedures. It also involves negotiation.

**Luis BASABE MONTALVO:** In answer to your question on public space, why it is that public space is the main topic in architectural conferences? I would like to answer with one of your pictures, when you said it was the best moment in the process. When all the people came together and acted to support and defend those ramps. We cannot see "public" as an isolated concept, it is always part of a complex system. Every use means some kind of privatisation, not in terms of

legal ownership but in terms of use. I like the fact that those streets are neither public nor private. They are in use, the public does not maintain them, and they are not used by anybody other than the users themselves. They use it as a transit way. I think it depends on the projects but we try to use public space as a tool to activate the project.

**Manuel LOZANO, representative of the site of BADAJOZ (ES):** In the case of the city of Badajoz, the Santa Gracia houses a significant population, with 800 dwellings. Part of this consists of public housing, the rest of private housing. So there are private owners on one side, and local government on the other. Nothing can be done without the agreement of both parties. In the light of this, it was reasonable to approach the project as Luis and Enrique did, and to submit it to the municipality without knowing whether it would be accepted and how it would be received. A whole section of this multidisciplinary study focuses on the day-to-day life of each family. It is a population, which has a strong relationship to the neighbourhood and is not too fond of change. Nobody likes change, except when it is to make things better. And this improvement comes through individual rehabilitation. This means that the citizen, the home-owning neighbour sees that the improvement will affect them directly, for example with housing upgrades, improvements in the condition of their house, etc.

**Carmen IMBERNON, European Spain (ES):** Originally, European was about small volumes of dwellings. Then it became about rethinking public space. So the scope of intervention was wider. What was not difficult in terms of implementation is that the jury and the client agreed with the winning project. They did not really know what they wanted when they took part in European and the project is now being implemented, so they saw that the main point was the public space. The response was not to build dwellings or demolish existing housing, but to tackle this huge space and try to do something else with the public space. What the general director said is that both the architects and the public authorities had to invent the tools. It is a process that takes 2 or 3 years, they have to learn from local people what the real needs are. In that case, for European Spain, our mediation is not really required. It is a project that has to be done in a continuous conversation between client, architects and inhabitants.

**David FRANCO:** This discussion is a good moment to jump to the second circle, to the winners of E11, who are starting this process now.

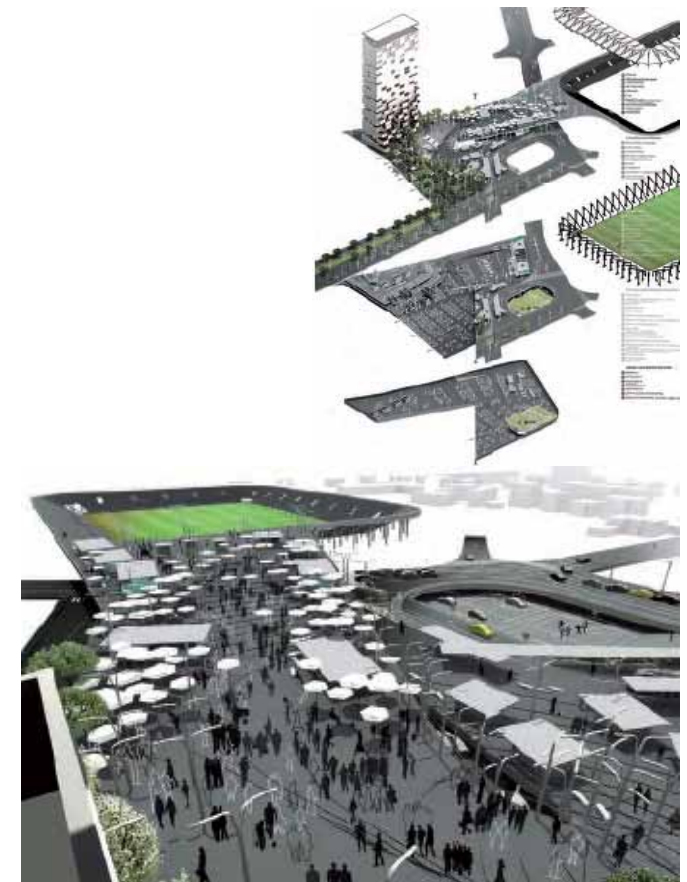
**Gilbert BERTHOLD (AT), Stefan GRUBER (DE), Philipp SOEPARNO (AT) lauréats GRAZ (AT):** The name of our project is "Magnetic urban fields". What I found interesting in the discussion is that these projects take so long, that you basically need an attitude towards the situation.

**I think that what links both projects presented and the one we propose for Graz, is the landscape thinking behind. Not necessary greenway or vegetation but in terms of slow implementation. The notion of landscape thinking relates to something that can easily be shared by many different actors and public, but can also respond flexibly to change.**

Essentially I consider our project as a park facility for the stadium with 1500 parking spaces for big events and the train station. We try to think of this car park as something that is not only some kind of vacant public space, but that can also work at downtimes when there are very few people. We decided to work on the urban sprawl-scape aspect, fun objects like kiosks, street lanterns, landscape elements... In this discussion of the role of the architect as mediator or designer, we understood from the brief that there was a need for some kind of image, or iconic gesture, so we sketched a high-rise that would be able to finance the whole development. For me, your question about being a designer is interesting, and I think it is more about proposing a syntax that can constantly change. I will try to mediate this and not think about working bottom-up or as a designer but instead propose something that is more like a language, that can transform the attitudes towards those specific urban conditions.

**Aglaée DEGROS:** Daniel Benyahia, representative of the site Toulouse E11, you liked taking part in the European competition because you received some input. But how is the municipality dealing with the process?

GRAZ E11 (AT) "Magnetic Urban Field" arch. Stefan GRUBER (DE)  
above: the site  
below: the project



**Daniel BENYAHIA, Vice-President, Planning and urban projects Grand Toulouse (FR):**

I am a politician, not an urban planner or architect, although I spend so much time with them that we share something of a common language. I suspected that urban planning is a long process, and with this presentation I am now totally convinced that it is! Second observation, I am learning that many architects also need to be negotiated, politicians, diplomats, etc. Like you, I deplore the fact that it is so complex. Which takes me to my city, Toulouse, and I am extremely pleased to do my job in a city that works a lot more simply. We are currently in the process of conducting an ambitious urban program on the city centre with the Catalan urban designer, Joan Busquets, the big Garonne project, also involving the Sterm office and Henri Bava from the Ter office. All these are 20-30 projects due to get off the ground immediately. We are in constant dialogue with the local players, architects and contractors, who are keen to see that implementation begins now. I would say that all the difficulties that have been described previously, we don't have because the power of decision in the hands of the urban community and the municipality, with the same chairman and politician responsible for both, myself. We do not have the problem of having to negotiate with other bodies. To talk about European, we have the privilege of having two European projects, one in an outlying community at Seilh and the other the Raisin project. The latter E11 project is substantial. Firstly, the municipality controls the land. All we have to do is move the existing occupants, which will happen over the next few years. It is a project that will be built in the next 3 to 5 years. It is located near the Matabiau multimodal hub (high-speed train, subway, bus, etc.), which will soon have the high-speed train.

**The city is going to be remodelled around this new hub. The site we are talking about is located between the railway line and a number of older, high-rise buildings. It is a big challenge for us, because the aim is to build a certain density of housing here (150 habitants per hectare). In our view, public space is an essential factor in creating a smooth running city.**

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TOULOUSE E11 (FR)  
above: the site  
below: winner project "Poésie de l'aléatoire"  
arch. Estelle BOURREAU, Jean-Baptiste COLTIER, Aurélie FABRE (FR)



**Aglaée DEGROS:** Now let's go to Monthey (CH), where there is a kind of display of public life. The winning project uses these tools of public space to structure the site. The project creates a connection between three main functions. Around that public space that links those functions we have a display of dwellings. I am really curious now about the process of negotiation that you have entered now that the competition is over. What is really essential for you in the project, which is quite flexible? What will be the things that you'll negotiate?

**Mehdi AOUABED (FR), Alberto FIGUCCIO (IT), winner at MONTHEY (CH):** For the moment, we have not begun negotiations. We have been invited by the municipal authorities to meet the region's economic and political players. This is a region with a strong industrial history. The regeneration of this industrial hub involves a large number of companies and investors. For the moment, the approach with the municipality of Monthey has been to introduce ourselves and to explain the project through press conferences, to respond to all the concerns of the people involved and to understand what their role maybe in the future district.

**Aglaée DEGROS:** Dieter Albrecht, representative of the site of Linz (AT), would you comment on this issue of public space and on the different ways to go through to implementation?

**Dieter ALBRECHT, Department of urban planning, Site representative E11 LINZ (AT):** If we relate the topic of debate to the Linz project, within the public framework of Linz municipality, it would seem that the topic of public space is in fact the reinvention of public space. Until 2009, the "Arial" factory was a cigarette manufacturing plant, which went out of business. It is a construction jewel from the 1920s, built at a time when it was not recognised as a famous building. Only after it ceased manufacture and could be seen from inside, did very different impressions emerge. Of course, people knew where it came from, but it was not really clear to the population how the building worked and what value it had.

**For us, in the competition, and it was important that it should be perceived firstly by the**



MONTHEY E11 (CH) "Trois portes, trois mobilités"  
arch. Mehdi AOUABED (FR), Alberto FIGUCCIO (IT)



above: LINZ E11 (AT) Site  
below: COPENHAGUE E11 (DK) Site



**municipality as offering development potential for expansion to the east, and secondly as a starting point for developing other public spaces.**

It consists of a very large courtyard, and its new use offers the opportunity, so to speak, for certain of these spaces to be open to the public, which was not the case when it was an industrial plant. So this really involves a redefinition of a thematic problem of space, which did not exist previously when it could not be expressed.

**David FRANCO:** I would like to hear feedback from the representative of the city of Copenhagen, on this potential innovation in the legal and planning tools. How can it be used for you as an agent in European in the process of implementation?

**Mads ULDALL, representative of the site of COPENHAGEN (DK):** We wanted a strategy for the transformation of the whole neighbourhood. A plan for the transformation of the central square, and we ask the citizens to develop the square. On those three different tasks, some of the competitors responded to all three, some were stronger on one or two. The transformation of the area next to the site will take a long time. It depends on private interests or investors. The transformation of the square is very complex because it is quite an experiment with new ways to deal with green borders. We will undertake a lot of analysis and negotiate how to develop this. But the strategy is easy. The winners have to be strong and they are working on that now with the plans for the renewal of the building around the square.

**The thing that is very interesting with the winning project, the way that it takes a very pragmatic and innovative approach.**

We are interested in situations like this where a lot of citizens are affected by this renewal project, and we will also like to tackle different traffic and environmental issues.

**Aglaée DEGROS:** We would like to start discussion with the public. Does anyone want to react on issues of public space?

**Eric CITERNE, Director of Planning, Department of Urbanism and Housing, representative of the site of REIMS (FR):** I would like to comment on the process and the conditions for the success of an urban project. There is a conjunction between the architectural team and clients, i.e. the politicians, the people who award the commission. The backing of the project is very important to success. Between the timing, the procedures, the feeling of the operation; between the backing of the project, political objectives and the work of the design teams. The second success factor is economic realism. In other words, the response to a tender, the response to opportunities, feasibility when the brief is to build a certain number of public amenities, the scale of these amenities relatives to municipal reality.

**It is apparent that there are a large number of projects that go relatively far in the design phase but, when it comes to implementation, notably in terms of business constructions, housing typologies, they hit a brick wall because there are no investors, no economic reality.**

In order to succeed for five years after the launch of a project, three elements need to be in place: politics, economics and the design team.

**Eero LÖYTÖNEN representative of the site of PORVOO (FI):** I think it is very interesting to see what kinds of process have started and how long they have taken in different countries and cities. That is the rule: we need time. In Porvoo, we have succeeded in using the competition as a tool to start a process. It is also difficult to find a way to go on, but we can continue the planning process much better than before, because the area is very central and beautiful by the river. But it is an area where it is difficult to build because of the soil conditions. But on the subject of public space, I think it was interesting to see that foreign competitors did not understand how important the river and its banks are in Finland. Because the river in Porvoo is, in different parts, a living room for citizens, a free space for recreation, etc.



REIMS E11 (FR) "Ville aux talents multiples"  
arch. Tadas JONASKIS, Justina MULIUOLYTE, Lukas REKEVICIUS (LT)

PORVOO E11 (FI) Site



It is very important, if you want to win this kind of competition in the future, that you should have a close understanding of the local actors, politicians and citizens.

**David FRANCO:** I think that on the European site, there is the relation between the local and the trans-national. That is inevitably an issue. There is some kind of new approach coming from outside which can offer something different. We have been through a lot of problems, like the relationship with the locals, finance related problems, issues of people the society.

**Socrates STRATIS:**

**If you compare the French and Greek project paradigms, it is interesting to look at the positive aspects of the Greek paradigm. It is a wider negotiating frame, which is good and bad at the same time. The frame is not defined; you have a huge space in which to operate. That is why there were all these big problems with urban space in Greece. But on the other hand, for us it was useful to introduce new way of working with the municipality.**

We approached it informally; we created a program for them. Their usual practice was to appoint somebody to create the program, so it was easier for us to do it with the competition, with the concept, because we knew the site quite well. On the other hand, we were foreigners to Crete, coming from Cyprus, but we speak the same language. We were not part of the local architectural community so we were allowed to tackle very difficult problems that they had. But we were sufficiently distant not to get come up against these local dead ends. It is all about adapting to a specific context. European projects take a very long time, but it is the long timeframe that makes the project very contextual. It gives time for all the different factors to emerge.

**Didier REBOIS, General secretary European Europe:**

In the competition, whether in Badajoz or Heraklion, in both cases there was no formal, overall vision of the future project. There were just attitudes and multiple approaches that could be developed.



PORVOO E11 (FI) "Embroidery"  
arch. Jouni HEINÄNEN, Valtteri HEINONEN, Pia SJÖROOS (FI)



There is a sort of awareness at this stage of the project of ideas, that the outcome would not be about only constructing a building, but that it would be a long process.

What is being said is: "European can help to formulate the commission, through a vision of the future, although we know that afterwards, that image will be negotiated and reworked." The question is about representation, even at the step of the competition. We can see that what the Spanish team submitted is a long narrative analysing the site, a series of attitudes with no hierarchical order, like a catalogue of strategies showing through very interesting but fairly abstract drawings. Ultimately, in the process that was implemented, were you able to apply all these micro-strategies?

To what extent was the fact that you did not show an image of the future with which people could identify a strategy in itself? It is a question that concerns the winners of E 11 session: did you ask yourself about this question of representation, because this type of submission, whilst providing no finite image, already gives an idea of the process?

**And a question for the municipalities, what do you expect from the competition? It is difficult to understand. The teams look at their site in a particular way. The municipalities then have to decipher that approach and explore it to see what they can take from it, what can be developed, and then negotiate with the designers, but also with a whole series of actors.**

And that question can also be extended to the development of the representation during the negotiation. It is often said that politicians do not like to show – although they are happy to see – images of a future to their citizens, for fear that they may be perceived as frozen images, a reality that is already decided. So I think that in the negotiated project the question of representation is very crucial.

It is clear that all the European projects are halfway between the urban and the architectural. In particular with respect to public spaces, this demands long procedures, multiple players, although it's good news that this has been simplified in Toulouse. However, there is still the need to find an almost contractual framework within which these negotiations can

take place. In general, standard project management contracts take little account of this dimension of project duration. For example, I would be interested to know what commission you have in Badajoz, to be able to work long-term? Are you able to make money out of the project, to keep your practice going, given that these projects that demand enormous energy and time?

**Manuel LOZANO, Chief Housing Executive for ESTREMADURA (ES):** Ultimately, many of these projects are in the hands of local government, and local government operates with financial resources, with money. When local government departments receive the winning European projects, there is satisfaction. In general, the projects are well received. These projects always contribute something to local government in terms of improving quality of life, environmental quality, housing quality... After that, there is always an economic criterion. In the case of Badajoz, the project involves a lot of people and structures. Urban planning cannot be done with a single body, with a single person. Changing urban rules is a complex process. And then there is a basic question, which must not be forgotten, the question of finance. When the municipality has resources, it can act; without them, it cannot. In the case of Badajoz, the money we are thinking of using comes from a European project that has been dropped, and must therefore be used for the renovation of this district, first the housing and then the public spaces. So the basis of any project is its funding.

Finally, in this period of crisis when, as you all know, all European administrations are obliged to make savings, it is important that these European projects should take into account the economic aspect, the time aspect with different phases that entail a better distribution of the implementation costs.

**Carmen IMBERNON:** As regards the competition, it is true that the Badajoz submission seems abstract. There is a project there, but it is a project that is not shown using the traditional representational forms of architecture. When the representative of the Extremadura government saw the project, I think he felt that he could be part of the process. He understood that he was being invited to take part, and also that it was not a project that could be formally presented in advance. Other projects were submitted, designed for 20-hectare platforms, architectural projects... But here, by

contrast, it was apparent from the start that there was a possibility to work together over time and for the municipality to be involved. A project that could continue over the long term on such an enormous site.

**Daniel BENYAHIA:** You asked two questions about what politicians want, and about the representation of the project.

**The purpose of Europan's involvement is to bring local politicians an outside, innovative perspective. In other words, these young planners-engineers-architects bring something to the table that a traditional competition would not have brought. I think that as young architects, your mission and your function is to take risks.**

With a more traditional project, with promoters, contractors, architects, on the other hand, the primary issue is profitability. That is the first point.

For the second point, on representation, the answer is multilayered. Firstly, you are judged by a Europan jury made up mostly of architects, but also including a few politicians. Here, you are among professionals. Here, the language can be more hermetic. And you architects and urban planners are not always easy to understand. We politicians sometimes have to make an effort. But we are also not afraid to say: "I don't understand". But the next chapter of the story is that politicians who are not in Europan juries have to take ownership of an outside graft.

**Because once this fine project has been approved by the Europan jury, the municipal team will only want to implement it if they can identify with it. And whatever the quality of the relationship with Europan, there still has to be the desire to implement the project. And the last part of the story plays out with the population.**

It has been said before, you can't implement a project against the people. And you have all been faced with that problem. For us, consultation with the population is part of the project. In the projects we have conducted, we have had a clear

dialogue with citizens and put the project out for all to see. You need to be as clear as possible. There is no need to go into the details of urban form. It should be understood that it is a proposal, and this is something that everyone can understand.

On the basis of the Europan project, what is important is the climate of trust with the client and the population, and the desire to build together. Using your proposal as a starting point, we need to listen to people, refine things. You will get the right conditions for implementation if there is mutual understanding. So your proposal must be sufficiently clear to arouse enthusiasm. You'll never start a project of significant scale if you don't get people dreaming. I am convinced of this, and this is what we expect of Europan.

**Thomas SIEVERTS, President Europan Europe:** The most important words in these remarks were "desire", "fun", "pleasure" and "dreams". If you are not able to convey fun and dreams, you will not succeed. This shows that people are the most important resource. People, personalities, are the resource of success. Presentation is a tricky thing. On the one hand, you have to show that it works, with technical drawings; and on the other hand, you have to leave many things open. The dreams of populations and politicians can feed into the mix, to develop further ideas. This was excellently done in both the cases presented. You have the feeling that you have something more. Even if you don't know exactly what it was, some kind of extra element beyond an ordinary program. These are the qualities we expect for Europan entries.