Event Details

Title of Event
Soft-power in the governance of urban design: a new approach for achieving quality in cities

Organization Details
Organization: University College London
Organization Country: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Summary
Good urban design is a crucial ingredient to promote quality of life in cities, economic prosperity, social cohesion, environmental responsibility and cultural values. However, steering urban development towards qualitative models tends to be much more challenging than it originally appears, as urban places in cities do not result from a single intervention but from a complex accumulation of factors, behaviors and decisions from multiple stakeholders. Promoting a vision of quality-oriented, sustainable urbanization requires going beyond “traditional” regulations. It requires creating a common urban culture among the diverse stakeholders that contribute to the design and management of the built environment. This session will explore innovative ways of generating urban spatial quality by focusing on the "soft power" modalities of urban design governance: those approaches where public authorities act in a semi-formal or informal capacity as enablers or brokers rather than through regulatory or direct investment powers. Based on the preliminary results of the research project URBAN MAESTRO, the event will showcase how selected cities have demonstrated their ability to shape urban places through enhancing a collective culture of good urban design. Supported by the European Research and Innovation Programme “Horizon2020”, this project looks at innovative governance arrangements and tools that are used by the most dynamic European cities for generating urban places of higher quality. Examples of tools that were identified so far include initiatives such as creating an independent position for a “bouwmeester” or chief-architect, creating space for informal negotiation with real-estate developers, supporting design processes through community-led or expert quality teams, adopting place quality standards, activating urban design policy debate through creative promotional campaigns, on-site testing of alternative urban design solutions, supporting placemaking initiatives or adopting new ways of organizing architectural competitions. Considered jointly, these seemingly punctual interventions start forming innovative urban design policies that reveal their potential for enhancing a genuine culture of quality in the built environment (sometimes referred to as “baukultur”). Throughout the session, case studies brought by European partners will be contrasted with various geographic, political and cultural contexts and practices. Engaging a structured dialogue with the audience and activating co-learning mechanisms, the session ambitions to conduct a first exploration of informal urban design governance tools in developing, emerging and crisis contexts, questioning both their relevance and transferability across cultural divides.
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<th>First Name</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Carmona</td>
<td>speaker</td>
<td>UK, University College London</td>
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<td>Karina</td>
<td>Landman</td>
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<td>South Africa, University of Pretoria</td>
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<td>Kristiaan</td>
<td>Borret</td>
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<td>Belgium, Bouwmeester Maitre architecte, Brussels region</td>
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<td>Alejandro</td>
<td>Restrepo Montoya (TBC)</td>
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<td>Director of Strategic Urban Projects - City Architect, Medellin</td>
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<td>Arnoldas</td>
<td>Milukas</td>
<td>speaker</td>
<td>Head of Unit 'Horizon 2020 Environment &amp; Resources', Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), European Commission</td>
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<td>Pablo</td>
<td>F. Longoria</td>
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<td>Frederic</td>
<td>Saliez</td>
<td>moderator</td>
<td>Programme Officer, United Nations Human Settlements Programme</td>
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