

## **City Street 6 Conference**

### **“Architecture as Infrastructure – Toward Sustainable, Inclusive and Beautiful City Streets”**

**Skopje, North Macedonia**

**September 2024**

The history of the development of cities has always been intertwined with the development of the infrastructure. The foundation and expansion of cities has always been supported and dependent on the infrastructure. The choice of ideal location, the defense constructions, the water supply and the domestication of adjacent land, were the first actions to conquer the territory and the constitution of the city. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the main infrastructures were limited to paths (streets and roads), to irrigation canals and defenses (usually walls). The paths had threefold function of access, circulation and drainage of water. The walls constitute not only the cities defenses against invaders, but also served as a boundary between urban and rural/natural and as a constraint to urban growth. The city identity, its very existence as a distinctive social, cultural, military and even symbolic entity was determined by this infrastructure. The very life of the cities and the circulation of people, goods and ideas was enabled and provided through the network of city streets that were serving simultaneously as the communal infrastructure (mobility) and social infrastructure (public space).

The contemporary cities have become even more dependent on the architecture and infrastructure. New possibilities offered by modern infrastructures are present in the theories and projects from Haussmann to Le Corbusier, through Cerdà, Olmsted, Howard, Wright and most recently by Allen, Easterling and Waldheim. However, the beginning of the infrastructure of the modern city was also the beginning of the theoretical, conceptual, symbolic and material fragmentation of the city making. After the end of World War II, due to the process of reconstruction of the main European cities involved and especially in the late '50 and '60 of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century this fragmentation will become more pronounced mainly because of the increasing specialization of infrastructure and technical disciplines reserved for the engineer but also because of the gradual spread and increase of car mobility.

In the morning of July 26, 1963, Skopje was struck by a devastating earthquake that resulted in 1.070 casualties; more than 3.300 people were injured and 75-80 per cents of the city's-built structures were destroyed or damaged beyond repair; 150.000 of Skopje's inhabitants left were homeless [Nikolovski, 1975]. This unfortunate event was followed by unprecedented effort by United Nations to reconstruct and redesign the city. By the nature of emergency which prompted it, the Skopje Project was unlike any other operation of its kind ever undertaken by the United Nations Special Fund. It

was a unique opportunity to demonstrate the ability of the International community led by the United Nations for a much larger endeavor of constructing the role model of the future city.

Following this idea, a number of world architects were invited in Skopje, including Kenzo Tange from Japan, Jaap Bakema and Van den Broek from Holland and Constantin Doxiadis from Greece, to contribute to this effort with their ideas, plans and designs. The reconstruction of Skopje was a great opportunity to demonstrate the real potential of Tanges' Metabolist architecture, Bakema's Open Society and Doxiadis's Ekistics theory. They shared the belief that cities and societies can be designed and reconstructed through ideas and concepts that are inherent to architecture and urban design and are deeply humanistic.

In the Skopje project in 1965 and especially through the megastructures and Metabolist architecture of Kenzo Tange, architecture has become an infrastructure for development of the society and development of the city. These processes of cooperation and mediation between different concepts, ideas, disciplines, scales and knowledge are important not just for the attempt to bridge the gap between engineering, architecture, urbanism and policy making but also because they raise new kinds of relationship and dialogue between the researchers, scholars and citizens, so the topics of solidarity, international cooperation and support, exchange of knowledge how to make our cities better can assume again a key role in the agenda of city making.

In September 2024 University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje, Faculty of Architecture Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia in city of Skopje - the "City of Solidarity", will organize and host the interdisciplinary conference City Streets 6. The conference will invite researchers, scholars, architects, urban designers and planners, artists and policy makers to share their knowledge and experience how to make better, more inclusive, just, sustainable and more beautiful city streets. The theme of the conference is "Architecture as Infrastructure – Toward Sustainable, Inclusive and Beautiful City Streets". We are looking forward welcoming researchers and practitioners from all around the world to take part in the conference.

**Prof. Ognen Marina, PhD**  
**Dean of Faculty of Architecture**  
**University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje**  
**President of the Organizing Committee CS6 Conference**