

## THEME OF EUROPEAN 12

### ADAPTING THE CITY AND ARCHITECTURE TO URBAN RHYTHMS

#### CITIES ON THE MOVE

Europe's cities are engaged in a radical transformation: they need urgently to **reduce their ecological footprint** to help resolve the energy crisis, combat the greenhouse effect and preserve nonrenewable resources. This transformation applies both to their morphology (form) and their metabolism (including all energy expenditure), and is highly dependent on the ways of living they provide. To achieve this, all these changes have to be thought out quickly, and that is why European 12 proposes to explore the **question of time with a view to making the city more adaptable**.

#### RHYTHM AND LIFE CYCLES OF URBAN SPACES

This entails, for example, **providing new ways of sharing collective space** and methods of governance. This requires a chronotypical approach, **blending the spatial and temporal dimensions** and, for example, establishing temporary projects for spaces. This also means developing a **sensitive form of urban planning, where different places can be used at different times**, and rethinking the quality of the spaces from that perspective. This raises the question of the **"hospitality" of urban spaces and their transparency for users of the city**. It is also important to think about intensive development projects, to connect them better with the realities of today's city. It is also about **considering the multiple uses the city, and in particular the question of the sharing and recycling of buildings**, to avoid excessive consumption of space and thereby to **promote a sustainable city by exploiting time in its full range**.

In fact, today it seems that the question of land, of the city and of architecture needs to be considered in relation to the timeframes of use and of urban planning. **Incorporating the dimension of time into urban policy is a factor that needs to be worked on, because it affects the two principal characteristics of the contemporary city: sprawl and fragmentation**. The city now spreads not only in space but in time, and the emerging feature of the modern city is that of one that is continuously active, 24/7. Urban sprawl, for its part, affects our experience of the city, which can also be perceived in terms of segregation. Time therefore reflects the reality of the fragmented city, a polychronic city that operates to different timeframes.

#### A RESILIENT AND ADAPTABLE CITY

So for European 12, **the emphasis is on reflecting the rhythms and life cycles of urban spaces** so that they can adapt to change, without losing their identity, can slow down and speed up, adjust to cycles and transformations in the context of an uncertain future. So it is about anticipating the inevitable impacts of change, allowing a plurality of uses, but also being capable of making creative use of what already exists. And therefore **adjusting to what is already there while developing visions of the possible that take account of both permanence and variation**.

The specific priority of this session, therefore, **in projects of an urbano-architectural scale, is to explore time in its relation to space by making the city resilient and adaptable**.

***Resilience** is the capacity of a space to recover a function or a development after experiencing a trauma.*

***Adaptability** is the quality of a space that can be easily adapted to harmonise with the changes of use that it undergoes or may undergo.*

The city has to **regenerate** after experiencing divisive urban operations or **accelerate** to adjust to rapid development or conversely **be revitalised** in terms of its uses. To do this, however, urban projects need to **acquire a capacity to adapt** to new timeframes of use, which are better coordinated between themselves.

The notion of an “adaptable city” is of a city that can be worked without breaking, capable of extending its possibilities and retrieving its forms, in space and time. In this case, the underlying question becomes: **how do you introduce time into urban projects?**

### **PROGRAMMES BETWEEN LEGACY, INVENTION and REVERSIBILITY**

In terms of programme, it is less a question of flexibility or functionality than of **scenarios for appropriate transformations between legacy** (the history of places), **invention** (innovation in spatial arrangements that accommodate a plurality of uses) and **reversibility** (temporary developments). It is less about technology than a method of **establishing links between natural and cultural environments and finding compensations and connections**. This means, for example, that plans for new buildings need to include measures for nature and landscape and new projects need to be capable of harmonising with a system by adding meaning and purpose (re-connection).

To achieve these objectives, time and the effects of time need to be considered and incorporated into a responsible and inventive analysis of urban rhythms. For this, one needs to **evaluate/assess what is already there, and think about the future within an open programme that incorporates different timescales**: for example, different rhythms of life, the rhythms of day and night, of the seasons and of successive generations.

## **2- SELECTION CRITERIA FOR EUROPEAN 12 SITES**

### **ACCELERATED OR OBSOLETE SITES**

This future-directed culture emphasises the **processes of metamorphosis at work on different types of sites** and constitutes a framework within which to look for sites for the European 12 competition.

- **sites that are exposed to acceleration** or the necessity of change and are therefore threatened or stimulated by those changes;
- **sites whose uses have become obsolete and whose potential need to be rethought** in terms of different life cycles in the natural and cultural environment, and which are seeking to enhance connections;
- **sites that are traumatised** as a result of previous bad decisions that have generated divisions, segregation, pollution.

### **PROGRAMME TYPES:**

The idea is to articulate these site characteristics with **analytical frameworks in which urban and architectural projects are conceived around lines of force that can incorporate the notion of time and evolution**:

- so that the space adapts to changes of use, to move towards greater urbanity;
- so that the same space can accommodate several successive uses, to move towards greater intensity and more economical employment of land;
- so that space can evolve over time around sustainable strategies, but with the capacity to adjust to programmatic unpredictability.

## **SCALES: STRATEGY, IDEAS AND PROJECTS**

The diversity inherent to the conditions, not to say to the specific problems of each participating European country, means that three different scales need to be distinguished between the surrounding area and the specific location:

- 1 - **Global strategic scale** (the scale communicated to the competitors)
  - The metropolitan area (spatial conurbation consisting of autonomous and interlinked urban units) and the city (urban space of activity and habitat with a diverse mix)
- 2- **Ideas scale** (scale used by competitors to establish the set of problems for resolution)
  - The neighbourhood, its territorial determinants and its relations with its environment.
- 3- **Urban and architectural project scale** (focus of the design process) - The emerging urban fragment.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SITES**

These scales correspond to spaces of different sizes, which will need to be defined precisely for each site and on the basis of the contexts provided.

Each European 12 site pack will therefore contain **three types of information** for entrants, corresponding to the three scales:

- **The political priorities of the municipality or conurbation** in terms of sustainability (economic, social and cultural) together with the major territorial determinants (infrastructures, uses, density, etc.), whether current or future.
- **The specifics of the area** where the site is located and the major factors determining its transformation, in particular with regard to its urban rhythms, whether in terms of uses or of staged transformation over time.
- **The actual project site where operations are likely to occur after the competition**, with all the information needed to understand existing conditions and the desired changes, and a programme highlighting the project's priorities in terms of the timeframes of use.