ERSA Conference 2011 in Barcelona

SESSION TITLE: ‘THE NEW URBAN WORLD’ in One-Day

High Level Group Panel: ‘The Big Thinkers’ & ‘The Big Five’ in One-Day

We propose to organize a special High Level Group session annex panel. The main theme of this special high Level Group will be focused on ‘Urban World’ and ‘Innovation Challenges’ in the areas of urban systems from a trans-disciplinary perspective. Global trends, such as (rapidly) increasing urbanisation, put pressure on the urban system, giving way to negative externalities such as pollution, congestion, security issues, and social degradation. The Economic Crisis and resulting economic uncertainties and fiscal austerity intensify the need to understand the direction of the Urban World. Demographic and climate change further impact the system, making it a necessity for scientists and policy makers alike, to look at effective ways in dealing with a fast-changing societal, economic and environmental reality.

The main idea is to explore an URBAN WORLD vision by consider future urbanization patterns in Europe and worldwide as vehicles for new opportunities to realize smart transport systems and land use, eco-friendly mobility, sustainable energy supply, economic vitality, and broad social participation. Cities tend to become – in the age of globalization – spearheads of global competitiveness, innovation and creativeness, and it is therefore of critical importance to develop new concepts for mobilizing local resources and potential opportunities of urban agglomerations worldwide.

Is it possible to map out the future of our urban world? The current urbanization is essentially the result of a very complex force field that is closely interwoven with demographic, socio-cultural, political, economic and technological drivers at all geographic scale levels (from local to global). Cities go through ‘normal’ business cycles, with upturns leading to booming agglomerations, but also with possible downturns leading to socio-economic decay and social exclusion. A blueprint of the urban future is hard to design. But by means of a strategic foresight analysis it may be possible to identify underlying trends, interlinked drivers, possible impacts and policy challenges in the above mentioned multi-faceted force field of future settlement patterns in our world. The main question will be which world-wide challenges and which metropolitan mega-trends prompt the need for new strategic perspectives on urbanization in Europe, and outside Europe/worldwide.

Special High Level Group Panel
The High Level Group Panel itself is a mix of invited plenary speakers of informed ‘big thinkers’ by well-known experts, from different parts of the world, in the field on dedicated themes which have relevance to the urban world continent and interactive discussions. And the group of ‘The Big Five’, which will be drawn from RSAI Fellows members (5 fellows). The panel of ‘The Big
Five’ has to prepare each 3 statements on ‘THE FUTURE OF THE URBAN WORLD’. The discussion will centre around these statements that will be circulated in advance to all registered participants (participants should register in advance). Thus, active participation of all attendees during this One-Day gathering will be foreseen, which could, as you mentioned before, offer some really nice ideas in a panel.

The Big Thinkers in the main session ‘URBAN WORLD’ topics:
- URBAN AFRICA
- URBAN JAPAN
- URBAN CHINA
- URBAN AUSTRALIA
- URBAN MIDDLE EAST
- URBAN LATIN-AMERICA
- URBAN INDIA
- URBAN DUTCH
- URBAN CHALLENGES
- URBAN SPIKY WORLD
- URBAN AMERICA
- URBAN EUROPE

The Big Thinkers in the sub-session on ‘URBAN WORLD’ based on the Triple P principle topics:
- URBAN-PROFIT
- URBAN-PEOPLE
- URBAN-PLANET
- URBAN INNOVATION
- URBAN SCIENCE ALL-OVER

The Big Five in the panel on THE FUTURE OF THE URBAN WORLD’:
The 5 Big Thinkers will be participants from the RSAI fellows

Registration:
Speakers and participants should register via the ERSA regular registration procedure for this session annex panel group, and in advance by filling out a registration form, which will be sent with the invitation.
**Closing High Level Group Panel:**
We will close the High Level Group Panel with drinks (only for the (invited) participants).

**Organizers:**
Organized by Peter Nijkamp, Mark Partridge and Karima Kourtit

For additional information and registration, please contact:
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Best,
Karima, Mark and Peter