

RT09 | THEME: PUBLIC SPACE AND URBAN JUSTICE

Chairs

- Matej Nikšič, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana;
- Ceren Sezer, Delft University of Technology, Delft.

Speakers

- Christine Mady, Notre Dame University of Louzine, Beirut, Lebanon.

Description

Public space as a theoretical construct and a practical matter of urban planning has received increasing attention in urban research, policy and public debate, as a facilitator of urban justice. The UN Habitat New Urban Agenda focuses on public space as a promoter of sustainable cities that facilitate inclusiveness, connectedness, safety and accessibility in the cities. Good public space is seen as a supporter of the idea of urban justice by contributing to a sense of community, encouraging interaction across social, cultural and economic boundaries, increasing mobility, contributing to better health and wellbeing and not least city's economic performance. It is also seen as a space in the city that can balance the ever-existing inequalities by offering enjoyment of a good quality of life to people from all walks of life.

But the question remains: what are the ways of studying public space to promote urban justice in the city? By properly studying and understanding public space as a potential facilitator of urban justice, we can develop urban policies and concrete design interventions better and avoid idealization of its role in the urban justice agendas.

To explore this question with some cases from the cities varying in their size, historical and contextual backgrounds, Matej Niksic (Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia) and Ceren Sezer (Delft University of Technology) prepared a Special Issue for the journal Built Environment entitled "Public Space and Urban Justice" (forthcoming June, 2017).