

About the 18th INURA Conference – October 2008, Athens

As it was decided in the London assembly, the next INURA annual conference will be hosted in Athens. The meeting is scheduled to take place on 3 - 10 October 2008 (days are Friday to Friday).

A few words about the main theme of the conference:

We are approaching this year's INURA as an opportunity to reflect upon different experiences and viewpoints that relate to our specific Athenian (Greek, Southern European, Balkan, Mediterranean etc.) context. We are working on various focused approaches that will give light to different aspects of this 'reality'. Approaches that could be organised as sub-themes, to function as informative "entry-points" for the texts and the field trips: City and nature/ Identity and space/ Culture and cultures / Capital transformations - real estate development / Governance/ Control and security.

Athens, as other cities of Southern Europe, has developed through different forms of urban regulation and informal mechanisms of production of space.

Those processes have been evaluated as, on the one hand, providing a democratic redistribution of urbanised land-rent, providing access to self-owned housing to a wide range of population, and contributed for many years to social integration and social cohesion, providing space for survival strategies until today.

On the other hand, those mechanisms have been criticised for creating an "anti-urban" petty-bourgeois, small ownership class and a widespread ideology of land valorisation and speculation. Moreover it has produced a degraded - or even "chaotic" - urban environment, in terms of green areas, public transport, conflicting land uses etc.

This process has continued to evolve through a number of "interesting regulatory" devices, "loose" planning policy etc. – although such mechanisms are today mediated / reformed in a neoliberal political context. The absence of established planning system has evolved so to favour uncontrolled big capital speculation without democratic control and endless city-expansion to the Attika countryside.

Some of the issues occurring for INURA to reflect upon are:

- * Coming to the recent years, how do globalised wider transformations (international capital, migration dynamics etc) take form in such a context
- * How can a radical approach of democratic planning be pursued

We hope that during the 18th INURA meeting, we will have the opportunity to debate upon these and more questions.

See you in Athens!!!