

IFLA NEWS



The IFLA Europe General Assembly is to be held in Bucharest, Romania from the 2nd to the 4th of June. The following is an excerpt from our colleagues in ASOP, the national association of Landscape Architects in Romania.

Bucharest is a city often described as an “in-between orient and occident”. And so it might be considered, as it is a European city with an un-usual structure for both space and building traditions. The Bucharest landscape is dominated by collage, by strange juxtapositions of striking modernity, bucolic tradition (king of rural bourgeois space), concrete totalitarian cuts, sub-urban half improvised neighbourhoods and Parisian ersatz. Its tissue is an amazing outcome of an already traditional, “cut-and-run” urban politic. It is a hard-to-see city, hidden from the impatient tourist’s eye and one that needs tender and long strolling to reveal its soul.

Its huge patched body is scattered by green spots. Some of them are parks “à la française”, some of them are “communist-modern” parks, lots of derelict areas full of mystery and, most of them, cosy private gardens filtered by more or less indiscreet fences. This green structure is also a result of mixing logics. While the old core of the city full of little courts and gardens came from the historical development of a rather oriental city, the main parks are a result of 19th Century French model both from a spatial logic and design point of view. The flatness of her site is crossed by two watercourses. The first is the very central Dambovită which in her long history became, from a wild branched and full of vitality river, a sordid canal in concrete

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This week IFLA news comes from President of IFLA Europe Tony Williams

the bus into a chain of lakes which structure a green urban flow.

Today, this rich urban landscape seems to be threatened by a blind passion for commercial architecture that slowly covers what rests for the old beautiful Bucharest. Urban politics seems to ignore (except theories and discourses) all idea of landscape, patrimony or beauty. The logic at work is one of (too) late modernism, recalling all huge western mistakes of the '50s or '60s. Narrow functionalism is still on and green space is considered as space and a money-consuming urban function, non-profitable in a city that seeks to show its "western nerve". But people begin to regain the public space, to use and transform it. The Bucharest chance seems to be more in the vital vernacularism than in the rigid old-fashion planning, at least for the moment.

From our members: CTLAS announce a joint design exhibition of landscape architecture students in Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, Taipei, between May 20th and 23rd. More information can be found [here](#).

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