

Cities grow too

“Large cities are a disaster for people.”¹ This sentiment by a famous Slovenian architect, printed on a bench in a narrow Ljubljana street, catches my eye as I go past. I am inclined to agree with it because problems do seem to grow together with cities.

There are so many studies and views on life in a city or the countryside, on what determines a high-quality living environment, and where one lives and feels better. But is it even important where people live as long as they feel at home there?

These are the questions that the articles in the December issue of *Urbani izziv* address, each in their own way. They cover topics that also, directly or indirectly, involve social aspects of spatial development, urban growth and the changes this growth causes for various groups of residents: illegal micro-apartments in Hong Kong, which are the only viable option for many people; one's own home as the most desirable living environment for the elderly in Slovenia; sprawl processes and their effects in post-Olympics Athens; the attempt to equalise development disparities in Hokkaido, Japan, through policy transfer and the application of international development strategies; residential segregation of the Roma in Hungarian cities; and the significant changes in the mobility of young people that coincide with the intense motorisation of Slovenian towns over the past thirty years. In the last section of the journal, these topics are rounded off by a review of a book that discusses the city as commons intended for all, regardless of their different characteristics and needs.

Wherever the end of the year finds you, whether in a city (perhaps even the one that the great Jože Plečnik helped create) or far away from its hustle and bustle, I hope you also find time to enjoy and appreciate the best that your surroundings have to offer. If we know how to value quality in our built environment, we can help maintain and create it.

Damjana Gantar,
Editor-in-chief

¹ One of the thoughts by the architect Jože Plečnik painted on benches in Teutonic Knights Street (Križevniška ulica) in Ljubljana in summer 2017 as part of a project of urban intervention and greening the street carried out by Mini Teater and local participants.