



**AUF**



AMBASSADE  
DE FRANCE  
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*Liberté  
Égalité  
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*Liberté  
Créativité  
Diversité*

## **New Bulgarian University**

Francophone Centre for Academic Achievements

Department of Administration and Management

Department of Economy

Department of Political Science

Department of Architecture

Department of New Bulgarian Studies

### **CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

## **SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

### **CHANGING CITIES:**

### **Challenges, Predictions, Perspectives**

Sofia, 18-19 June 2026

**Working languages: French and English**

### **With the support of**

Francophone University Agency - Central and Eastern Europe

(AUF - ECO)

French Institute in Bulgaria

Urban life is already common and natural for most of the Earth's population (4, 027 billion people live in the cities, according to the World Bank statistics for 2023, with the tendency is to reach 66% by 2050 (UN 2024)). The growth of the urban population is accompanied with numerous complex changes. Conventional concepts and ideas about the Cities and urban life are being transformed. Megalopolises, rightly called "Cities-Regions", are exposed to a combination of risks arising from overpopulation, insecurity, segregation, alienation, violence, pollution and the general deterioration of the environment and the quality of life of the citizens (Lussault 2019). The socioeconomic transformations resulting from the triumph of the market economy (Polanyi 1983), produce substantial changes of social systems and public services, which further widen the gap between "losers" and "winners" of globalization, reproducing and deepening already existing inequalities (Carnovale 2017). Therefore, planning, managing and securing urban areas have become major challenges of the 21st century for Sustainable Development calling for the (re)making and even the "reinvention of the City" (Fenkel et al. 2022). On the other hand, the expansion of large cities has led to depopulation and decline of small settlements: rural exodus and the expansion of large cities are transforming the appearance, status and lifestyles of small towns and villages. Imbalances in rural/urban relations are causing substantial disparities in the quality of life and the local development dynamics. On the other hand, they are producing new kind of relationships of interdependence and proximity between town and countryside as well as between urban megacities and small and medium-sized towns (Gall et al. 2024). Thus, urban governance stands out as one of the most significant challenges facing the societies in the 21st century.

New conceptual approaches to urban planning and management such as *Smart Cities* and *Transition Towns* are trying to respond to the most significant technological, economic and environmental challenges of our time, such as climate change, economic restructuring, demographic growth, population aging and prolonging life expectancy - factors that exert considerable pressure on the public resources and finances (Krastanova & Hadjitchoneva 2020). The first approach is inspired mostly by technical and technological solutions based on advances in the digital sphere, the development of Artificial intelligence, the emergence of "smart" data networks, services and connections. The second one relies on local-level bottom-up solidarity solutions that aim to mobilize communities and territorial resources (Bellemare & Klein 2011). A number of major cities have already demonstrated excellence in this area, displaying a proliferation of economic, social, and civic initiatives, emphasizing proximity, interpersonal ties, mutual aid, and respect for the environment. The concept of the "Solidarity City" aims to reflect all these processes (Rousseau et al. 2014).

Moreover, the City is a complex spatiotemporal set of encounters of diversity in all its aspects – social, ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural; it is also the privileged arena of conflicts, controversies and struggles (ideological, political, social, artistic) which constantly (re)shape its faces and its limits and (re)draw its borders. Last but not least, it is the place of transformations *par excellence* and the agora of trials and experiments, more or less successful, establishing Global Cities as Global Civil Society actors (Sassen 2001). The analysis of organized forms of social life (associations, NGOs, community organizations, citizen mobilizations, business), as well as the spaces where public opinion is produced and propagated, is therefore essential in order to examine the dynamics and tensions that run through life in the City, determining the behavior and attitudes of those who govern it, and those who inhabit it.

The purpose of the conference is to systematize the challenges facing the modern city and to investigate the urban development prospects (from urban planning to urban governance) through panel discussions, models, projects, solutions and good practices. The complexity of the problems and their interdependence imply an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. Theoretical and conceptual models as well as models based on field research or drawn from practices that are already being applied, will have the same weight in the selection process. Academic researchers, professionals and policy makers interested in the area of the conference are welcome to present contributions related to the conference topics.

You can **propose a paper title and abstract in the following sections:**

- I. Transformations of the Urban Space Planning
- II. Demographic Transformations and Gallup Poll of the Contemporary City
- III. Transformations of Contemporary Urban Management and Policies
- IV. Socioeconomic and Financial Transformations of the Cities
- V. Citizens and the City
- VI. Transformations of Urban-Rural Relationships
- VII. Cities Within the City – Ghettoization, Openness, Diversity
- VI. Imagining and Reimagining the City: Cities of Past, Present, and Future

## References

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- Fenker, M., Gruet, I., Zetlaoui-Leger, I. (coord.) (2022). *La fabrique de la ville en transition*. Editions Quæ.
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- Krastanova, R., Hadjitchoneva, J. (eds). (2020). *Changing Cities: Challenges, Predictions, Perspectives*. Sofia: NBU Press.
- Lussault, M. (2019). Les villes-mondes deviennent des acteurs géopolitiques. *Le Monde*, le 10 juin 2019.
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- Polanyi, K. (1983). *La grande transformation : aux origines politiques et économiques de notre temps*. Gallimard.
- Rousseau, M., Beal, V., Faburel, G. (2014). *Pratiques et politiques de la ville solidaire*. Rapport de recherche, PUCA.
- Sassen, S. (2001). *The Global City*. Princeton University Press.

## Organizing Committee

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## Requirements for abstracts and contributions

**Proposals** for contributions (name (s) and institution (s) of the author (s), title, abstract of the proposal **in French or in English – 2000 signs** with spaces – 4 to 6 keywords, and **short bio of the author(s)** should be sent simultaneously to [cities.conf.2026@nbu.bg](mailto:cities.conf.2026@nbu.bg) and to [radosvetakk@gmail.com](mailto:radosvetakk@gmail.com) before 30 November 2025

All abstracts will be reviewed.

## Deadlines

Deadline for submission of proposals for papers: **30 November 2025**

Deadline for announcement of the approved proposals: **15 December 2025**

Conference dates: **18-19 June 2026**

Conference touristic tour (optional): **20-21 June 2026**

Publication of Conference proceedings: **2027**

The final papers presented at the conference will be subject to academic review with a view to publishing the Conference proceedings by the NBU University Press.

### **Registration and participation fee**

Early payment **until April 30, 2026**

Participants	80 €
Full-time PhD students	40 €

Payment deadline **June 1, 2026**

Participants	100 €
PhD Students	60 €

The fee includes participation with a report, materials and conference program, coffee breaks and a cocktail party on 19 June 2026.

The fee **does not cover transport and hotel costs.**