



## **PREFACE**

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## **WELCOME to REAL CORP 2024, the 29<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban & Regional Development and Spatial Planning in the Information Society!**

Since the beginning of industrialisation, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has been steadily increasing due to human influences. Currently, an increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere of almost 50 percent compared to the level of pre-industrialisation has been recorded. Without taking into account the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the observed warming of the climate system cannot be explained. The problem of climate change is therefore caused by humanity itself and can therefore be counteracted by humanity itself.

It is, therefore, all the more important to take selective countermeasures wherever possible. If measures against climate change are combined with modern technologies, additional short-term effects can be achieved, such as an increase in the (urban) quality of life, a mitigation of traffic problems or savings through reduced resource consumption. These and other aspects can be achieved under the umbrella of the Smart City, and Mannheim has decided to become a Smart City and is on a successful way: as the first German city, Mannheim received the #EUMissionLabel as part of the “100 climate neutral and smart cities by 2030” programme by the EU Commission.

But what does this step mean for the citizens on the one hand, and for planning and administration on the other? Smart Cities use the potential of digital technologies and intelligent data networks to increase the quality of life simultaneously moving into the future in a resource-saving and efficient way.

Smart cities collect vast amounts of data, which can be used to inform policy making and city planning leading to more effective urban and regional governance. Also the economic aspect must be considered as Smart Cities can attract investments and businesses, creating job opportunities and stimulating economic growth. They can also foster innovation and entrepreneurship through technology hubs and incubators. This contributes to the development of services by delivering public services more efficiently, such as healthcare, education, and public safety. This enhances the overall well-being of residents and can contribute to social development.

Clustering promotes progress, and Mannheim has been leading the way in this area for some time. With the initiation of the Network Smart Production, Mannheim has created an innovation platform. Industry, research and solution providers are brought together and can initiate a variety of B2B and funded applied research projects. The combination of a strong production location and a strong green tech location makes Mannheim a hotspot of the green and smart industry. Last but not least,

Mannheim's Smart City movement is strongly supported by a university landscape with a network of co-operating universities with diverse and interdisciplinary research focus.

This year we brought together some 200 participants from more than 30 countries worldwide. The main goal of the REAL CORP conference series is to bring together leading experts in the field of spatial planning, geoinformation and related disciplines to exchange their knowledge, share their ideas, discuss current developments and get together for face to face networking leading to the development of new thoughts, partnerships and projects.

The success of the REAL CORP conferences is – clearly without doubt – the result of the efforts of participants, reviewers, and the conference organising team. We would like to acknowledge the Reviewer Team and Programme Committee members for their valuable voluntary help with the review process. Our thanks go to all participants and authors of the submitted papers as well. The programme of this year's conference contain around 100 scientific contributions; 63 of them were selected after a double-blind, double-stage (for both abstracts and full papers) peer-review process for publication and presentation at REAL CORP 2024. The non-reviewed papers were accepted by the programme committee after a double-blind abstract review.

**Welcome to Mannheim! Have a great conference!**

**Manfred SCHRENK, Clemens BEYER & the REAL CORP Team**