



PREFACE

Elke KAHR

Mayor of the City of Graz

Welcome to Graz!

As the Mayor of the City of Graz, I am very pleased that the 30th anniversary of the REAL CORP conference is taking place here in Graz, allowing us to welcome world-renowned experts from the fields of spatial planning, geoinformation, and related disciplines.

As the second largest city in Austria – in fact the largest city in the country if you count our capital city Vienna as a federal state – Graz sees itself as a medium-sized agglomeration in global terms, with just over 300,000 inhabitants, even when considering the functional urban region around Graz. We are therefore all the more pleased that this year's REAL CORP is focusing specifically on the challenges and needs of medium-sized cities. Unlike large cities, metropolitan areas, or capital cities, the framework conditions of medium-sized cities and their urban regions are unique.

This begins with their financial capacity and extends to the provision of central functions and services of general interest for the whole region. Urban morphologies are also less dense, yet the challenge under growth conditions is to make sensible and efficient use of the limited urban space available and to allow developments that improve or at least do not reduce the local quality of life.

In Graz, great emphasis is placed on ensuring a high quality of life and that the benefits of the city are accessible to all its residents. Graz is a diverse and culturally appealing city. It is crucial that living and housing costs remain affordable for the population and that social cohesion is highly valued. This commitment to inclusivity and affordability helps maintain the city's vibrant community spirit and ensures that everyone can enjoy the advantages of living in Graz.

REAL CORP participants will be exchanging knowledge and ideas on precisely these kinds of topics for the 30th time this year here in Graz. Current developments from the global to the local level will be discussed, and new ideas, partnerships, and projects will be developed. As a central science and business location in southern Austria, Graz has traditionally acted as a bridge to southern and southeastern Europe. For this reason, we are particularly pleased about event formats such as REAL CORP, which allow us to look beyond our own horizons and provide us with inspiration.

I wish you a successful conference and would be delighted if you take home a positive image of our city – and maybe come again.



PREFACE

Judith SCHWENTNER

Deputy Mayor of the City of Graz

Actively meeting the challenges of climate change

Climate change affects us all and is fundamentally changing our lives. It is essential that we respond to it in both small and large ways. A front garden with bee-friendly flowers may be a small measure, but it is just as important as international cooperation. Medium-sized cities like Graz in particular play a key role: they may not be as big as metropolises, but their large number and combined expertise means that together they can have an enormous impact. The exchange of experience and knowledge between these cities makes it possible to spread sustainable solutions globally.

Of course, the framework conditions and challenges differ from city to city. Graz holds the title of UNESCO World Heritage Site and therefore has a special responsibility to preserve its historic centre. At the same time, the city is growing rapidly, bringing new challenges in the areas of climate and health-oriented urban development, environmentally friendly mobility and the clean energy transition. However, Graz is actively facing up to these challenges and is resolutely committed to the fight against the climate crisis.

I am therefore all the more pleased that REAL CORP 2025 is taking place in Graz this year. As hosts, we have the opportunity to present our achievements while also discussing upcoming challenges with international experts from administration, science and business. I am looking forward to an inspiring exchange that will provide valuable impulses for the sustainable future of our beautiful city.



PREFACE

Harald GRIESSER

*Styrian Government
Head of Provincial and Regional Development*

Welcome to Styria!

Since my student years the REAL CORP conference – at that time a small event at TU Wien – has been the meeting place for discussions related to the topic of digitalisation in spatial planning. Many years later, topics such as digital planning processes, artificial intelligence in planning and the actual use of digital instruments have become part of our daily working routine.

Since the beginning REAL CORP has remained, developed and internationalized as a platform for lively scientific debates and inspiring interactions with colleagues from all over the world. At this event, you can still get a feel for the state of the art in regional planning and urban development and get a glimpse into the future “hot topics” of digital planning.

It is a special honour and pleasure for our province that REAL CORP is stopping in Styria this year. We hope that all participants will spend some interesting days in Graz. Above all, however, we hope that these days will convey to all participants the Styrian way of life – halfway between the Alps and the Adriatic – and that this will be a reason to return, both professionally and privately.



PREFACE

Manfred SCHRENK,

*Conference Director,
President CORP – Competence Center of Urban and Regional Planning*

WELCOME to REAL CORP 2025, the 30th International Conference on Urban & Regional Development and Spatial Planning in the Information Society Technologies at the University of Applied Sciences Joanneum in Graz, Styria!

Not only is the world's population constantly growing, many cities around the globe are also subject to permanent growth, even in countries and regions with constant or even shrinking population numbers. Global urbanisation is not only creating new challenges in terms of infrastructure, mobility, housing and spatial planning, but especially in climate mitigation and adoption, in technological change – especially digitisation, in resilience towards multiple natural and man-made challenges and in inclusion and accessibility to improve the quality of life even under adverse conditions.

In world's megacities, such challenges have to be tackled on a large scale – with all the technical, organisational, administrative hurdles that have to be dealt with. What about medium-sized and smaller cities? Can they be faster, more flexible, more efficient than the “big tankers” when it comes to innovations? Can they lead the way to a bright future? Can they take us to solutions that help us to boldly go where no cities have gone before, especially when it comes to the criteria of sustainability, resilience and especially quality of life for the whole society? Can solutions developed on a smaller scale be upscaled to metropolises on the one hand and even trickle down to small cities and rural regions? Can measures be easily scaled up and down or do they require completely different approaches?

Traditionally we are keeping the range of topics at REAL CORP conferences very broad – as we are convinced that it is advantageous and necessary to use the conference to hear about other topics, to get inspired by similar and maybe totally different approaches and very important: getting to know experts and personalities with the same and also different professional, organisational, cultural backgrounds and networking with them – to possibly develop new ideas and – by URBAN INNOVATION help cities TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO CITIES HAVE GONE BEFORE.

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 as well to all 200 participants and authors of the submitted papers from 31 countries worldwide. The programme of this year's conference contain around 160 scientific contributions; 98 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 2025. The non-reviewed papers were accepted by the programme committee after a double-blind abstract review.

Welcome to Graz! Welcome to Styria! Have a great conference!