



PREFACE

Manfred SCHRENK

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

WELCOME to REAL CORP 2026, the 31st International Conference on Urban & Regional Development and Spatial Planning in the Information Society!

As urban and regional landscapes become more complex, planning is no longer a linear process. It is adaptive, participatory, and often unpredictable. In urban and regional development, planning is both a discipline and a gamble. This conference gathers thinkers and doers to navigate the space between vision and reality – shaping futures one decision at a time.

For three decades, the REAL CORP conference series has been at the forefront of exploring the profound impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on urban and regional development. As we navigate an era of unprecedented change, marked by rapid technological advancements, evolving societal structures, and pressing environmental challenges, REAL CORP 2026 invites researchers, practitioners, experts, activists and policymakers to contribute to the discourse on “Cherish Heritage, Plan Now, Create Future!”

We are witnessing a paradigm shift in how our cities and regions function, are planned, and are experienced. From the pervasive influence of artificial intelligence and big data analytics to the imperative of climate resilience and inclusive governance, urban and regional landscapes are undergoing continuous metamorphosis. REAL CORP 2026 provides a vital platform to critically examine these transformations, share innovative solutions, and collectively envision sustainable and equitable futures.

The REAL CORP 2026 research question is: does technology and especially AI really revolutionise everything? Even CITIES, the biggest invention of mankind?

New technologies and especially AI lead to many changes in all aspects of life, including in cities and regions and, of course, in planning processes. Still cities and regions are not primarily a playground for “new technologies” but the main goal is to have sustainable, resilient and above all livable environments. The soul of a livable future often lies in adequate density, adaptive reuse, green infrastructure, and places where communities thrive, with eco-conscious urban design, human-scale architecture, and inclusive public spaces!

All this has to be planned, created, maintained and eventually renewed.

Planning is always an effort of many contributors and planners have to be part of all urban planning efforts – be it as experts, visionaries, strategists, co-ordinators, moderators and mediators, advocates and sometimes opposers. LET’S PLAN TOGETHER!

**Welcome to Vienna! Welcome to Austria! Have a great conference!
Manfred SCHRENK, Clemens BEYER & the REAL CORP Team**



Dear participants of REAL CORP 2026!

On behalf of the City of Vienna, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all! I am delighted that such important topics as urban planning and regional development are on the agenda of such a high-profile conference. International exchange is the best way to tackle global challenges that affect us all equally.

This applies in particular to the impact of revolutionary modern technologies and AI in particular. It is no coincidence that the central research question of REAL CORP 2026 is whether these innovations will really change everything, including modern metropolises such as Vienna.

We are already feeling this change in our everyday lives: for example, more and more administrative procedures in Vienna can be completed digitally; the BRISE project, for example, is making building permit procedures paperless, faster, more efficient, more sustainable and more transparent. In addition, Vienna has become an AI innovation centre.

This process is guided by the principle of “digital humanism” – in other words, progress should make everyday life easier. The focus is on people, not progress.

In this context, education will become a key resource. Our industrial societies are transforming into knowledge societies. That is why it is so important to set the course now for the best possible preparation of our children and young people so that they are ready for the growing challenges of the digital world.

In addition, it will be important to focus even more than before on international exchange. Especially in times of national solo efforts and protectionism, it is important to keep multinational forums for communication and cooperation open. After all, science and innovation are only truly stimulated by encounters on an equal footing and by learning from each other.

That is why I am very pleased that REAL CORP 2026, a major international conference, is taking a close look at the characteristics and effects of these fundamental transformations. Especially now – when change is already becoming apparent – it is important and necessary to develop ideas about where and how far we as societies want to go. We must not allow ourselves to be driven by this innovation process, but must shape it ourselves with social awareness and clear objectives.

REAL CORP 2026 is making an invaluable contribution in this regard. I am very excited to see the results and wish you all a successful and, above all, insightful conference!

Michael Ludwig, Mayor and Governor of Vienna



Vision Education warmly welcomes participants to REAL CORP 2026!

Vision Education is honored to support the 31st International Conference on Urban Planning, Regional Development, and the Information Society in Vienna, Austria, in collaboration with CORP – Competence Center of Urban and Regional Planning. This important partnership reflects a shared commitment to advancing global dialogue and fostering academic and practical cooperation in the fields of urban planning, regional development, and the information society. As an institution committed to strengthening education and research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Vision Education supports both private and public institutions while empowering citizens to contribute to positive change. Vision Education recognises the critical role of knowledge exchange, international collaboration, and interdisciplinary research in addressing the complex challenges facing contemporary cities and regions.

Sustainable urban growth, climate resilience, and technological innovation require forward-looking approaches that integrate education, policy, and practice at both regional and local levels. Through engagement with global academic networks and institutions, Vision Education seeks to contribute to the development of informed leadership, innovative research, and practical solutions that support sustainable and inclusive urban futures.

Partnerships such as this collaboration with CORP exemplify the value of building bridges between regions, institutions, and stakeholders to foster shared expertise, mutual understanding, and long-term cooperation.

We are proud to support this leading international conference, bringing together distinguished scholars, professionals, and policymakers in Vienna, and we look forward to the continued exchange of ideas that will help shape more resilient, sustainable, and intelligently planned cities for generations to come.

Idris Nechirvan Barzani, Chairman of Vision Education



Dear participants of REAL CORP 2026!

Our cities and regions stand at the threshold of a profound transformation. Climate change, demographic shifts, digitalisation, and evolving patterns of work and mobility are reshaping how we live, work, and move. Cities and regions are therefore central arenas for safeguarding quality of life, advancing sustainability, and strengthening social cohesion for all citizens.

Our shared goal is to create resilient, inclusive, and liveable urban environments. Research, technology, and innovation play a key role in achieving this objective. They provide essential tools for integrated spatial planning, enable evidence-based decision-making, and support sustainable solutions in areas such as energy, mobility, infrastructure, and public spaces. Strategic investment in research and innovation is indispensable to steering this transformation in a forward-looking and responsible manner.

Integrated neighbourhood and district development is a particularly powerful lever in this context. By linking spatial, social, ecological, and economic dimensions, it enables complex challenges to be addressed holistically and makes the benefits of transformation tangible for citizens. Well-designed integrated neighbourhoods can serve as showcases for innovation, foster social cohesion, and act as key building blocks for sustainable urban and regional development.

In this spirit, I warmly welcome REAL CORP 2026 to Vienna. With its focus on integrated urban and regional development, the conference provides an important platform for international exchange and brings the discussion to the Vienna Otto-Wagner-Areal – a place that exemplifies transformation, innovation, a vibrant architectural culture, and the close connection between research, technology, and urban planning.

KommR Peter Hanke, Federal Minister of Innovation, Mobility, and Infrastructure