european CONNEXTION

Editorial note

Athens!
Many images come up to mind when this magic name is mentioned. For some it will be the 2004 Olympic Games, for some the Acropolis, for others Perikles and Pheidias but for all it will be related to THE city. The Forum could hardly have found a better location to discuss urbanisation.

This broad topic has been divided into to five topics by your working group colleagues. After a lengthy search we have put together an impressive panel of speakers.
Dr. Konidaris has kindly agreed to be, once again, the general moderator of the Forum. The Forum Fellows will be the moderators of the five parallel working sessions. And there will be an additional item for the parallel working session presented by James Mitchell.
I feel very excited about this meeting which will bring an additional element to the public policy debate we all want to be part of.

This year we will be very pleased to welcome Sir Stephen Gomersall, who became Chief Executive for Europe last October. The Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, the Japanese Ambassador to Greece and several key Greek officials will be joining the Forum official opening, adding momentum to our ultimate goal: to make the Forum a player in the EU public policy debate.
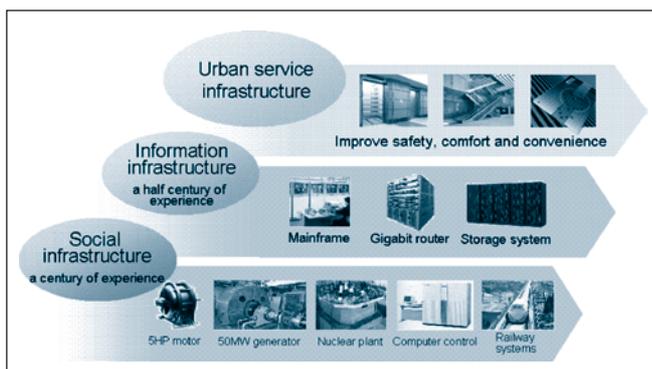
See you in Athens !

Norikiyo Koide
General Manager
Hitachi Corporate Office, Europe

Hitachi's Technologies for the creation of new urban communities

Urban communities where many people live and work are also grounds for a variety of new cultures and traditions. Currently, Japanese society and its economy are experiencing their most rapid changes: a change from an industrialised society to a knowledge-based society and the development of an aging society. In the face of such drastic changes, Japanese urban communities are facing new challenges in how their styles and roles should evolve. In the age of extraordinary economic growth after World War II, Japanese urban areas' most important role was to provide places where the economy could increase its efficiency. In the years ahead, urban communities will be required to construct social infrastructures which allow all the inhabitants to enjoy fulfilled lives, share high quality culture, and maintain an attractive, sustainable, and stable society. The Japanese government's "Vision of Japan in the 21st Century" has reminded us of the importance of the technological innovation that is required to sustain the vigour of the Japanese economy while handling the decreasing labour force. The government's report also expects that such technological innovations will lead the improvement in urban communities' functions.

Since the end of World War II, the restoration and development of Japan have been supported by various social infrastructure developments, ranging from conventional electric power, water, and transportation infrastructures, to the recent information and telecommunication infrastructure. Since Hitachi's establishment nearly one hundred years ago as a motor manufacturer, our company has long been taken part in facilitating infrastructures, including electric power generators, power generation plants, railroads, elevators, and the latest information and telecommunication infrastructures which support the diverse services of financial, distribution, and public entities, promoting and assisting economic activities as well as peoples' lives in urban areas. Now, IT and energy-related technologies on which Hitachi had continuously focused have entered a period of drastic innovation. We see the possibility that technological innovation may create a means of great importance and strength for urban communities to play their new roles.

In the IT-related field, "ubiquitous technology" is now the centre of attention. This technology has great potential to change the use of IT from the industrialised society's efficiency-oriented applications into comfort and convenience-oriented daily living applications. The core

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purpose of ubiquitous technology is to render IT services available "anytime, anywhere, by anyone," while allowing each individual to enjoy services presented "only now, only here, and only for you."

In the meantime, urban communities will have to establish "autonomous" energy supply systems. They will need to change city areas' energy supply method into "local generation and circulation" systems. To enable this, a

diversified, sustainable energy system composed of clean fuel cells, wind, and solar power will be the key method.

Until the present, urban infrastructures have been utilised for respective purposes. In the coming years, however, such infrastructures will be networked and combined with human resources for further improvements in convenience. A network for remote monitoring, developed for the maintenance

services of our escalators and elevators, is now being utilised in combination with our human resources, as part of the security services for office and apartment buildings, in addition to the buildings' and equipment's maintenance services.

Kunihiko Ohnuma
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Planning and Development
Systems, Hitachi, Ltd.

NETWORKING: Not just a technology term!

It was a normal working day, when I received the invitation to the Hitachi Science and Technology Forum in Stockholm last year. At first I was surprised, and then wondered why I received such an invitation, but after few minutes the surprise turned into a pleasant smile.

Over 6 years had passed since I finished my Executive Training Programme in Japan, and consequently also my unforgettable 3 months kenshuu at Nissei Sangyo (now "Hitachi High Tech") in Tokyo. Yet, after such a long time I received the invitation to attend the forum.
Although spending over 5 years working in Japan, it still amazes me how the Japanese culture and the Hitachi group in particular, give so much attention to human relationships and people networking.
I am sure that one of the key points of Hitachi business success is the importance the management gives to human relationships, both within the company and with the outside world. During my kenshuu in Japan, I was so impressed to see the facilities that the company provides to its employees. In particular I remember the Training Centre of Hitachi High Tech, a facility (like a small hotel) built in a quiet place outside Tokyo. Employees used to attend, on a regular basis, business training, lectures, business games, etc. as part of the company policy to improve the management skills of their employees and, at the same time, create strong bonds between them. The facility also provided all the activities necessary to stimulate personnel during the daily trainings and during the evenings (Bar, Ofuro, etc). How long will it be before European Companies (and in particular Italian ones) understand, not only in theory, that human networking is such

an important factor to a company business success, to start investing time and money on it?

So coming back to the Hitachi invitation for the Stockholm meeting, I was very happy to accept the invitation for several reasons:
- since my training in Tokyo was organised in a professional manner, I was sure that also the Stockholm meeting could only have been a positive and enriching experience as in fact it turned out to be;
- I saw the unique opportunity to meet highly professional people and together with them listen to and discuss interesting and up-to-date topics;
- the possibility to briefly visit a marvellous city.

As expected the meeting in Stockholm turned out to be a very positive one. Not only we had the possibility to visit interesting places (i.e. the Stockholm traffic centre control) which are usually closed to the general public, but also it was enriching to hear distinguish guests expressing their broad views on the topics.

The experience was so positive that I welcomed the news to become a working group member for this year meeting in Athens on "Urbanisation". I look forward to attending this year's event and hope that other members can work round their working schedules to come too. We will gain much from listening to the guest speakers and Hitachi management expressing their views and hear everyone's views on the technology developments required by today's society.

Marco Morgandi
Marketing Director, Qetre srl - Italy

"Agathopolis"
At this year's Forum, the Parallel Working Sessions will take will take the form of a role-plays, where each Group plays the role of a government department for the fictional city of Agathopolis. The aim is for each group to construct solutions to the city's problems, from the point-of-view of the respective government departments. By brainstorming in this way we hope to provide solutions that could be implemented within a typical city council's bureaucratic structure.
Agathopolis is designed to be a generic European City, i.e. vibrant, architecturally stunning, full of culture…but with a number of problems that seem to afflict many of today's overcrowded cities. These problems often hit the headlines, and so a selection of newspaper articles from the Daily Agathos newspaper will be provided to give a flavour of the problems to be solved.

Dr James Mitchell
Assistant Director, Rabobank
Environmental Financial Products

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