

## Laurence Douvin's message – Quito Conference

Dear Lord Mayor,  
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Elected representatives of Cities

First of all, I would like to greet you and express my sincere regrets not to be able to be with you today.

Unexpected political events are keeping me in Paris and deprive me from the pleasure of taking part in this important event which is the birth of a new entity with which IMPACTS Europe and IMPACTS North America Member cities are very happy to collaborate.

Please allow me first to thank warmly the Lord Mayor of Quito, who took the initiative of organising this conference and invited the cities which are attending here.

It is thanks to him that the participation of Latin American cities in Barcelona and Geneva conferences could pave the way for the present conference.

Then, I would like to thank especially Fredy Wittwer and Julio Garcia Ramon, who respectively represent the cities of Geneva and Barcelona because they have played a great part, both at a personal and professional level, in making this conference possible.

For eight years, IMPACTS Europe and IMPACTS North America member cities have been meeting regularly on the occasion of annual conferences and have been working together in different ways: through bilateral or multilateral exchanges, through participating in European programmes, through scanning tours and above all through reflecting on specific themes, very often the most sensitive ones which are tackled from every angle and particularly through evoking cities' experiments with their positive and negative aspects.

Indeed, we have all become aware that we face the same interrogation which is really difficult to answer: how is it possible to increase mobility in order to develop the exchanges and answer a social demand while, at the same time protecting the environment in the context of sustainable development?

All our cities are facing this problem: it is one of the highest challenges of urban civilisations and our living environment of tomorrow will depend on the decisions we take today. The difficulty of this challenge is increased by the fact that financial resources and infrastructures are often insufficient.

That is the reason why sharing our knowledge, our data and our most successful experiences is not only precious but also essential.

That is the reason why it is in the interest of our cities to determine the best chances for success in order to facilitate the emergence of common standards and the implementation of a market which would make the new technologies that can help us, affordable.

We have already studied a large panel of themes during our annual conferences. A lot of cities have, then, used the lessons drawn from these events, to put in place the measures they chose to promote.

In eight years time, these exchanges have proved their effectiveness in many ways and the IMPACTS association has regularly expanded.

In order to be efficient and flexible, a structure like IMPACTS is necessarily light. It is based upon mutual trust between its members, who experience similar difficulties in their cities. It

operates with a low but regular membership fee, which enables to have an efficient Secretariat General, necessary for organising the work of an international association.

I therefore wish you a great success. I feel very satisfied to think that, during IMPACTS intercontinental conference in Seattle, in Summer 2005, there will be three continental associations instead of two today and I hope that a number of the Latin American cities that are here today will also participate in this event.

Please receive all my warm regards.

Laurence Douvin  
President of IMPACTS Europe