

Executive Summary

Seeds of Recovery

On March 22nd, Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, was shaken by an earthquake of 5.5 magnitude. The old city center was severely stricken, where building structures dated from 19th century or earlier. Many people lost their homes, some temporarily and some permanently, but the impact of the quake will reach further from current housing problems. The face of the city will inevitably change, as civil engineers' damage assessment shows that over 15 000 buildings were damaged, of which 1200 were declared unusable. This could also have a negative impact on local economy which resides on tourism nested in the atmosphere of middle-European historic feel.

After the initial shock, it is time to concentrate on the future renewal. We, landscape architects, see an opportunity of recovery in a vision of series of creative projects that are using the unexpected state of "broken" city as a redevelopment generator. Transitional city-planning would give a nudge towards opening up new spaces and filling them with amenities that were missing inside the tight urban fabric. The rebuilding process will last for years, so in the meantime, sites of demolished buildings could be transformed into zones with semi-permanent structures: small parks, open-air cafes or theaters, playgrounds, biosphere patches, artist interventions, community gardens, bike paths or new pedestrian connections between various city zones, etc. As the rebuilding of the city progresses, some of the new zones will be relocated or removed completely, some might prove to be the new integral part of Zagreb character.