



29 March 2010

Dear All,

Istanbul, with its multi-layered structure, has offered inspiration for its inhabitants and visitors throughout history. These inspirations paved the way for a city of mixed cultural and architectural character.

The architecture of Istanbul displays layers from Byzantine, Roman, Genoese, Ottoman and Republican times dating back almost three millennia. The monuments from various periods of history — castles, city walls, towers, religious buildings — are displayed in the city, reflecting Istanbul's rich architecture.

Among numerous travelers, travel to the East was a dream for a nineteenth century English writer and traveler, Julia Pardoe. She travelled to Constantinople with her father in early nineteenth century and described her excitement about this voyage in a book titled *The City of the Sultan*:

*"...we anchored in the Golden Horn; my long-indulged hopes were at length realized, and the Queen of Cities was before me, throned on her peopled hills, with the silver Bosphorus, garlanded with palaces, flowing at her feet."*

The skyline of Historic Peninsula, or "Queen of Cities" as Pardoe named it, is still dominated by towers, city walls and minarets today. The Bosphorus offers glimpses of the past with yalis, summer palaces and castles set among the trees, while the overall effect of metropolitan Istanbul is perceived as a mega city with business districts and residential quarters dominated by high rise structures designed by local and world architects.

I am pleased to welcome you to Istanbul for this AIA Continental Europe 2010 International Conference. As Istanbulite or a first-time visitor, you will find some points that interest you as an architect or a non-architect. We are here to observe, imagine and share for an Istanbul utopia. It is stimulating for all of us to share our knowledge, observations and visions for a city of 12 million inhabitants.

Regards,

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Chair, Organizing Committee