

Sharing Cities Summit 2018

Auditori MediaTIC

Good evening.

At the end of the 20th century, Pasqual Maragall, looking back over his term in office as mayor of Barcelona, published a brilliant insight into the future of cities.

He said,

«If we look down upon Europe from a satellite we will see a constellation of points or specks of light. What we will not see are borders between states or regions. The constellations we see are our constructions, our physically existing cultures. Simply by taking in this image we learn something useful about the world, something that the concept of global village doesn't tell us.

The organization of these specks of light, which are the reflection of our cities, traces certain paths, pointing out concentrations and revealing empty spaces [...]. The only road that leads from the present world of states to the global world, to the open world, to the world without borders, is precisely this».

Maragall gave us a powerful metaphor that transformed cities into nodes of light, of knowledge and of freedom; that transformed the world's urban network into a neural network, where each city is a neuron for creation, transmission and multiplication.



«Today, the word 'network' has become a catch-all, a concept that inevitably arises when talking about both the immediate present and the distant future.»

Examples of networks include the city of Barcelona itself, now renowned as an international node for digital innovation. So are the sessions here at the Sharing Cities Summit. Or the book on platform-economy policies coordinated by UOC professor Mayo Fuster, as part of her work in the Digital Commons research group.

It is at this crossroads of networks, knowledge, future, research and cities that the UOC's presence as co-organizer of this summit on urban issues is particularly apt.

Because the UOC began as the world's first exclusively online university. And there was a commitment for the UOC to stand out for its creation and exchange of knowledge, and its clear desire to make an impact socially so that we could advance towards sustainable development models more quickly.



«We need this coming together of knowledge and public policy.

We need this meeting of research institutions and administrations.»

It might not be the easiest path, but, again in the words of Maragall, it is: **«the only road that leads from the present world of states to the global world, to the open world, to the world without borders».**

Right now, as some seem bent on the dark selfishness of borders or the over-simplification of self-absorbed prejudice, meetings that look to let cities join forces to shine their light on the world, to generously share the spark of knowledge, are, I believe, an urgent and necessary alternative.

Thank you very much!

Josep A. Planell