pnd 1/2028

Call for Abstracts
The Self-Conception of Planning
Upheavals, Perspectives, New Strategies

Spatial planning, as a cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and future-shaping discipline at local, regional and state levels, has always evolved in various phases and stages – and thus also through disruptions, upheavals and diverse crises (Albers 1993, Selle 1995). Two decades have passed since German and European debates surrounding *Planning in Crisis?* (Schönwandt 2002) and the call for *Rethinking Planning* (Selle 2006) led to the Leipzig Charter (BMUB 2007) as a commitment by European states to integrated urban development planning and the regeneration of existing built environments. A few years later, influenced by the emerging debate on global sustainable development within planetary boundaries (Rockström et al. 2009), the planning disciplines increasingly focused on the transformation to sustainability. The updated version of the Leipzig Charter in 2020 reaffirms and addresses the ideal-typical principles and objectives for urban development policy (BBSR 2021). Despite recurring doubts about the relevance and effectiveness of spatial planning, its complex professional foundations, or its limited political recognition, the power of planning has been repeatedly invoked.

At present, society and planning face further serious challenges: we are recognising the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on social trust, on people, health and cities. More recently, the numerous regional geo-economic conflicts and wars, as well as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, are affecting energy shortages, globalised markets and their supply chains, and thus security of supply. The World Economic Forum (2026) provides an annual overview of the perception of key global risks. Geo-economic confrontation, misinformation and disinformation, and social polarisation dominate short-term perceptions. However, in the long term, extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and the collapse of ecosystems, as well as critical changes to Earth's systems, are most pressing. The spatial and planning disciplines sometimes find themselves caught between their own aspirations for shaping the future, the perceptions of other stakeholders, and global realities. Political and planning institutions are testing and experimenting with ideas for faster and easier planning decisions and in doing so are also encroaching on redefining the rights of stakeholders. At the same time, artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly permeating workplaces and society, local authorities are facing massive financial deficits, and democratic majorities are shifting in many countries.

Considering recent experiences of dealing with multiple crises, as well as ongoing and accelerating structural and planetary developments and risks, the forthcoming issue of **pnd – rethinking planning** invites authors to reflect – once again – on the very nature of planning and to propose well-founded and bold visions for its future. The forthcoming issue of pnd asks how planners, their institutions, and the arenas in which they operate at local, regional, and national levels are currently addressing – and should address in the future – the threefold challenge outlined here:

- How can planners tackle the aforementioned external and accelerating upheavals? How can institutions, procedures, communication methods and instruments be adapted, strengthened and safeguarded? What professional attitudes are being articulated or called for? What can planners achieve, and what limitations do they perceive? How can the planning sector's claim to steering spatial development be maintained and further developed within federal multi-level models?
- Which doubts exist about the effectiveness of planning? What obstacles and restrictions prevail and should be overcome? How can professional and public capacity for action be be restored and safeguarded for the future? What further stakeholders and forms of collaboration are necessary for this? How should the framework conditions for planning, as well as planning formats, methods, and instruments, be further developed?
- How do planners deal with a situation where the current normative compass, particularly the focus on the common good and socio-ecological transformation, is actively being called into question and is finding diminishing support? In what ways do consensus-building and open democratic negotiation interrelate with processes of digitalisation, acceleration, institutional delegitimisation and considering a multiplicity of scarcities? How should we respond to changes in (political) priorities, majorities and populism?

Contributions to pnd 1/2028 edition

This call invites researchers and practitioners to submit articles

- to reflect, through well-founded retrospective analyses, on the self-conception and framework of planning in times of upheaval, within the context of the interconnectedness between planning and politics, as well as their legal, economic, cultural and social conditions and foundations, and to explore 'lessons learnt' and new requirements at local, regional and state levels ranging from German-speaking and European to global contexts;
- to take stock of and develop various disciplinary, thematic and stakeholder-related perspectives about planning methods and instruments, the temporal and process-oriented nature of planning, the significance of different spatial scales, as well as the roles of stakeholders and their modes of cooperation;
- and, going beyond the examination of current uncertainties and upheavals, to devise bold visions for new, forward-looking strategies, conceptual proposals and concrete suggestions for changing the legal, political, and economic framework conditions for planning.

We are seeking contributions that are grounded in planning theory and/or are historically reflective, comparative, practice-oriented, experimental or strategic in nature. This call aims at a broad scientific and practical field within the spatial and planning disciplines, covering urban, regional and spatial planning, as well as sectoral planning in areas such as transport, social affairs and the environment, and experts from the fields of public administration, political science and public law.

Interested authors are invited to submit an **abstract of 1,500–2,000 characters (including spaces) by 31 January 2027 to neu-denken@pt.rwth-aachen.de**. The abstract should state the title, authors, research question and methodology, the relevance to the above-mentioned focus areas, and the intended format of the contribution. Contributions in English and/or reflections drawing on other planning systems than German-speaking ones are welcome. Pnd offers the option to have the paper reviewed via a double-blind peer-review process. If you are interested, please indicate this when submitting your abstract, including suggestions for two reviewers. Please address any questions directly to the editorial team.

Time frame

- Abstracts must be submitted by 31 January 2027 at the latest.
- Authors will be notified of the acceptance of their contributions in early March 2027.
- Finalised articles must be submitted by 15 June 2027.
- Authors will receive initial feedback in autumn 2027.
- Editorial revision, layout and proofreading will take place in winter 2027/28.
- Publication is scheduled for spring 2028.

Article formats

- Scholarly articles, with or without peer review, of up to 45,000 characters (including references and spaces)
- Reflective practice articles and short academic texts without peer review, ranging from 18,000 to 25,000 characters (including references and spaces)
- Practice reports and discussions of between 12,000 and 15,000 characters (including references and spaces)

We would like to provide some guidance in advance regarding the **requirements for the manuscript**. Contributions for the pnd issue 1/2028 should:

- be written in German or English;
- include references such as academic sources or supplementary information and critical reflections in the case of experience reports;
- use visual material such as images or diagrams of good quality and readability;
- include an abstract of approximately 1,000 characters (including spaces, for both German and English);
- include short biographies of the authors of no more than 300 characters (including spaces).

Please note that our issues are published under the CC BY-NC 4.0 licence. Detailed author guidelines will be sent with the notification of accepted submissions. Further information, including on the use of AI tools, can be found on our website (www.planung-neu-denken.de).

Publishing and Editorial Team

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