

For Immediate Release

Healthy Cities Public Debates



Susana Saiz, María Neira, Beatriz Colomina, Norman Foster, Joseph Allen and Yolanda Erburu at the Healthy Cities Public Debates.

Madrid, 20 April 2023

The main challenge of the twenty-first century lies in making cities truly healthy environments in which people can develop themselves and be happy. This is one of the ideas discussed at the Healthy Cities Public Debates, organised by the Norman Foster Foundation with the support of Sanitas at the Fundación Giner de los Ríos.

The event was attended by architect Beatriz Colomina; María Neira, director of Public Health and Environment at the World Health Organization (WHO); Susana Saiz Alcaraz, director of sustainability and energy at Arup; and Joseph G. Allen, director of the Healthy Buildings programme at the T. H. Chan School of Public Health at Harvard University. In addition, Yolanda Erburu, Chief Sustainability and Corporate Affairs at Sanitas and Bupa Europe & Latin America, and Norman Foster, President of the Norman Foster Foundation, also attended.

This conference aims to create a research framework in which innovative methods and formats are proposed to solve the problems cities and their inhabitants are currently facing: the need for urban regeneration and the creation of green spaces and more sustainable processes. According to the One Health concept, promulgated by the WHO, people's health is directly linked to the health of the planet, and it is essential to take care of one to ensure the other. Therefore, the construction of urban environments and buildings that generate a real positive impact must be the way forward.

'A sustainable city in terms of lifestyle is also a more sustainable city in terms of energy. It is essential that the different actors work together, if we achieve the infrastructure, we will achieve a healthier city for society. We are social beings, and we will always need to live in cities,' said Norman Foster during the event.

Architecture and health

The Norman Foster Foundation and Sanitas have discussed urban spaces and the impact that architectural development has on cities and the health of people and the planet. Within the public debates, solutions have been proposed for the promotion of education and knowledge in the construction of healthier and more sustainable cities.

'Modern architecture has its foundations, precisely, in the break with the model of architecture of the nineteenth century. All the infrastructures that were incorporated correspond to needs that had arisen as a result of the pandemics and diseases of the previous century. Elements such as terraces in houses or the greater influx of light arose as a response to cases of tuberculosis, where the environmental factor is fundamental for both prevention and recovery', explained Beatriz Colomina.

As Maria Neira explained, seven million premature deaths a year are due to pollution, so 'it is essential that institutions offer solutions. The challenge is enormous, we have to achieve cities in which people are happier, healthier, less sedentary', she said. Susana Sainz focused on the need for interpersonal relationships within the city. The promotion of human and intergenerational relationships is also essential to ensure better health for society as a whole. 'Spaces where you can make community really help not only physically but emotionally and mentally', she explained.

Steps towards a more sustainable city

Last December, the Norman Foster Foundation and Sanitas signed a framework collaboration agreement with the aim of promoting the creation of more sustainable and healthy cities. This agreement aims to promote the dissemination of knowledge in this area, while actively participating in the Healthy Cities project promoted by Sanitas in partnership with the Norman Foster Foundation. The entities that are part of the project are committed to the Healthy Cities-One Health Manifesto, which encourages them to work in several areas to promote the circular economy, the creation of sustainable and accessible infrastructures, the care of biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable mobility.

'Companies have a responsibility to take care of the environment where they operate. It is not enough just to implement measures to reduce emissions or save energy; we must go further and protect our customers and employees. If we take care of their health and give them tools for a better quality of life, we will contribute to a healthier society. And that is the spirit of Healthy Cities and of all the activity, training and research we are developing in this field', continued Yolanda Erburu.



Joseph Allen and Norman Foster at the Healthy Cities Public Debates.

Norman Foster Foundation

The Norman Foster Foundation promotes interdisciplinary thinking and research to help new generations anticipate the future. The first mission of the Norman Foster Foundation is to make visible the centrality of architecture, infrastructure and urbanism for the betterment of society. To this end, the second mission is to encourage new thinking and research across traditional boundaries in order to help younger generations anticipate the challenges of future change. In particular, the foundation speaks to those professionals who are concerned with the environment— architects, engineers, designers, urbanists, civic leaders, planners and artists. This is at the heart of the foundation's holistic approach to design and is ever more relevant as populations shift to cities. With the implications of climate change, robotics and artificial intelligence, sustainable design is not about fashion but about survival.

The Foundation holds the Norman Foster Archive and Library, which provide a window into the larger narrative and history of our built environment through the work of Norman Foster. This is complemented and supported by drawings and models from other significant architects such as Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Charles and Ray Eames, Buckminster Fuller, Richard Rogers, Zaha Hadid and Tadao Ando. Through its research initiatives and programmes, the Norman Foster Foundation encourages the transfer of advanced knowledge in a wide range of design fields. The Foundation's educational initiatives are structured around research, workshops, fellowships and forums, built around the Foundation's core objectives. The Norman Foster Foundation is based in Madrid and operates globally.

Visit www.normanfosterfoundation.org for more information or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Vimeo.

Sanitas

Sanitas specialises in healthcare and wellness services in Spain. It offers its customers products and services for every stage of life through an integrated healthcare model. This comprises healthcare insurance policies, hospitals and multispeciality centres, wellness centres, dental clinics, other health services and care services for the elderly.

It has more than 11,250 employees. Its medical network consists of over 50,000 specialists and 4,100 appointed medical centres in addition to its own facilities. These comprise 4 hospitals, 20 multi-speciality medical centres, 16 wellness centres, 200 dental clinics, more than 43 care homes for the elderly, 17 of which provide day-centre services, and 5 independent day centres.

Sanitas is part of Bupa, a leading international healthcare company serving over thirty-eight million customers worldwide. It employs more than 84,000 people, principally in the UK, Australia, Spain, Chile, Poland, New Zealand, Hong Kong SAR, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico, the US, the Middle East and Ireland. It also has associate businesses in Saudi Arabia and India.

SOLICITUDES DE PRENSA

Santiago Riveiro

Norman Foster Foundation

srp@normanfosterfoundation.org

+34 914 542 129