Preface

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Biographical notes: Stanislav E. Shmelev, PhD in Ecological Economics and Mathematical Methods (2003), is a Senior Researcher at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford. He lectured on Ecological Economics at the University of Geneva and Economics of the European Union at the University of Essex and is currently a Visiting Professor at the Université Paris Dauphine, France. He co-organised with Prof. Irina Shmeleva an international RSEE conference in St Petersburg in 2005, and interdisciplinary workshops on Sustainable Cities at St Petersburg State University and at the University of Oxford. He is a lead author of two papers in *Ecological Economics* journal.

Irina A. Shmeleva, PhD in Psychology (1983), is an Associate Professor at World Politics Department, School of International Relations, St Petersburg State University, Russia. She is a Vice-Chair of a MA programme 'International Collaboration for Environment and Development'. She held Visiting Professorships at the University of Stockholm (Sweden) and other European universities. She participated in international EU TEMPUS TACIS project with the University of Amsterdam and University of Helsinki. Presently she is a Russian team leader in COMPON project, affiliated with IHDP, UN Programme. She is the author of *Psychology of Ecological Consciousness* (2006) and other books and numerous papers.

Addressing urban sustainability is a key to solving global sustainability problems, since the cities are places where a dominant share of production and consumption activities is concentrated. The shift to renewable energy sources, reducing energy use, development of the efficient public transport systems, good management of green spaces, creation of a comfortable environment for life, and improving public health are all important priorities that need to be taken into account simultaneously. These matters are interlinked and the synergy that emerges when the experts in each of the named fields are interacting to solve the problem of urban sustainability enhances the quality of the solution.

This special issue is composed of five selected papers that are based on the presentations given at the international workshop *Sustainable Cities: Ecological-Economic and Environmental Psychology Aspects of Urban Design and Management*, held at

St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford, 1–3 February, 2007. The issue is opened by the introductory paper 'Sustainable cities: methodological problems of interdisciplinary research', by Shmelev and Shmeleva, which introduces the problematique of sustainable urban development to the reader. The paper presents the historical development of the ideas of sustainable cities and offers a framework for the analysis of the links among various sustainability dimensions, relevant for sustainable urban development: sustainable energy, sustainable transport, material flows, waste management, landscape architecture, eco-design, preservation of natural and cultural heritage, green space and biodiversity, quality of life and health, psychology of interaction with the environment. The links among the dimensions identified seem to be most interesting for the analysis, and a first attempt to address this issue has been undertaken in the authors' earlier book *Sustainable Cities* (St Petersburg University Press, 2007). It seems very useful to study the nature and the extent of these cross-disciplinary links, especially in the light of the possibility to find intervention points that could stimulate the transition to sustainability in the urban context. Sustainability policies of two large European cities, London and St Petersburg, are reviewed in detail.

The contribution by Banister and Hickman, 'Techno-optimism: progress towards CO_2 reduction targets in transport: a UK and London perspective', is devoted to a critical review of the UK government's policy on climate change and strategic options for London that can be drawn on the basis of this policy. The desirable changes in the transport sector are emphasised and a range of measures are discussed, including technological standards for car exhaust emissions, development of walking and cycling opportunities, road pricing schemes, virtual mobility, intermodal transport systems and GPS route guidance system.

Carmona, in his paper 'Sustainable urban design: principles to practice', outlines the current perspective on the introduction of the principles of sustainable development in design and urban planning. After reviewing the state of the art in the field he proposes a set of ten major principles of sustainable design: stewardship, resource efficiency, diversity and choice, human needs, resilience, pollution reduction, concentration, distinctiveness, biotic support, and self sufficiency. He describes in detail the social, political and institutional barriers that exist for implementation of sustainable design principles in practice.

Zabala offers an excellent case study of the travel patterns of industrial workers in the region North-West of Barcelona, Spain, in her paper 'Walking the green carpet to work'. Concerned by the excessive single-occupancy car use in the region, the author proposes a range of institutional and infrastructure measures aimed at improvement of the public transport system and reduction of private car use. The analysis of measures, among which are flexibility of working hours, information on bus stops, subsidised public transport tickets, car sharing, new bus lanes, etc., is undertaken with a help of a multicriteiria decision aid tool, NAIADE.

Nijkamp and his colleagues, in 'Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder: a logistic regression analysis of sustainability and locality as competitive vehicles for human settlements', explore the factors that influence the attractiveness of historic villages in France and Italy from the point of view of urban inhabitants and international visitors. The first assessment is carried out using logistic regression analysis and takes into account the following factors: openness to villagers, the existence of the market place,

increase in housing prices and an increase in in-migration. The second assessment looks at the historical, natural or artistic characteristics of the villages, the most frequently-used mode of transportation, and the absence of economic diversity. The data of the Association of the Most Beautiful Villages in France and its Italian counterpart were used in the analysis.

We have tried to make this special issue as consistent as possible and hope that it will be of interest for readers concerned with the whole spectrum of urban sustainability issues: energy, transport, design, environmental quality and its perception.