

Call for Submissions

2nd UNIC Thematic Conference

Institutions in Transition: Justice, Security, and Well-Being in Post-Industrial Cities

 Koç University, Istanbul |  17–19 June 2026

About the Conference

The 2nd UNIC Thematic Conference titled ***Institutions in Transition: Justice, Security, and Well-Being in Post-Industrial Cities***, will be hosted by ***Koç University from 17 to 19 June 2026***.

Within the context of post-industrial urban transformations, the conference examines how institutions strive to respond to the challenges of growing socio-spatial inequalities, uneven access to health and social care, and the pressures of governing increasingly diverse and superdiverse urban populations, including how everyday encounters with institutions in clinics, schools, welfare offices, neighborhood councils, streets, platforms, and housing systems shape well-being and belonging. From local administrations and public health providers to universities, schools, and civil society organizations, institutions play a critical role in shaping how cities address disparities between neighborhoods, ensure democratic participation in local decision-making, and foster collective well-being.

By focusing on the interplay between institutions and urban change, the conference seeks to explore how institutions can adapt to shifting urban realities and manage tensions between inclusion and exclusion. It aims to foster dialogue on how different actors and governance levels respond to these challenges, and how collaborative and innovative approaches can support urban futures that promote equity and well-being. The event will bring together scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to advance transdisciplinary approaches, co-creative methodologies, and policy-relevant research. We invite multidisciplinary contributions from across, but not limited to, the social sciences, law, health, education, and urban studies.

Thematic Streams

Building on UNIC's **Thematic Lines 4 (Justice, Security, and Institutions)** and **6 (Health and Well-being)**, the conference is organized around two key thematic streams—focusing on justice, security, and institutional dynamics, and on health and well-being in post-industrial urban settings—with **Superdiversity** serving as a transversal theme that highlights questions of inclusion and belonging in post-industrial cities.

Stream 1

Justice, Security, and Institutional Dynamics: Resilience and Legitimacy

This stream explores how institutions respond to crises, uphold justice, and adapt in times of democratic volatility, digital transformation, and growing societal complexity. It is concerned with institutional and digital resilience, inclusivity, and legitimacy in the face of multiple crises including conflicts, economic inequality, and threats to democracy.

1. Institutional Shifts and Governance After COVID-19

- Evolving Roles and Legitimacy of Global Institutions (WHO, WTO, IMF, UN, EU)
- Inclusive Prosperity Governance: Regions, Cities, and NGOs
- Emerging Actors in the Institutional Global Landscape
- Institutional Accountability and Rule of Law

2. Security Architectures in a Digital Age

- Cybersecurity, Resilience, Digital Sovereignty, and Data Governance
- AI and Big Data in Global and Urban Governance
- Digital Divide: Access to Technology and Digital Literacy
- Urban and Human Security in the Digital Era
- Democracy, Autocracy, and Erosion of Trust

3. Global Justice and Equity in Access to Rights

- Transnational Human Rights and Legal Frameworks
- International Law, Peace, and New Accountability Mechanisms
- Access to Justice, Discrimination, and Migration Inclusion
- Rights, Law, and Critical Institutional Perspectives
- Regulating Transnational Actors and Platform Governance

4. Institutions and Social Transformation

- Local Integration and Inclusion Policies

- Inclusive and Decolonial Institutional Practices
- Civic Education and Democratic Participation
- Participatory Governance and Local Engagement
- Experiential Learning and Justice Innovation

Stream 2

Health and Wellbeing in Post-Industrial Cities: Institutions, Inequalities and Transformations

This stream explores how health and well-being are shaped by institutional transformation, social inequalities, and urban change. It focuses on inclusive and adaptive health policies, infrastructure, and governance in diverse and superdiverse urban contexts.

1. Urban Health, Access, and Inclusive Care Systems

- Equitable and Inclusive Health Service Design and Management
- Participatory and Interdisciplinary Care Models
- Intersectional Vulnerabilities and Social Determinants of Health
- Age-Friendly, Accessible, and Inclusive Infrastructures

2. Systems Thinking and Resilience in Health and Wellbeing

- One Health Approaches and Interlinked Crises
- Health in Conflict, Displacement, and Economic Instability
- Urban Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Crisis Recovery
- Health Labour Systems, Care Work and New Forms of Work
- Sustainable & Healthy Urban Food Systems

3. Subjective Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Everyday Urban Life

- Mental Health Promotion and Psychological Resilience
- Loneliness, Alienation, and Post-Pandemic Recovery
- Wellbeing in Education and Community Engagement
- Gendered and Youth Mental Health Experiences
- Everyday Encounters, Diversity, and Wellbeing

4. Technology, Innovation, and the Future of Urban Health

- Digital Technologies and Their Ethical and Governance Implications
- Trust, Access, and Digital Inclusion in Health Systems

Transversal Theme: Superdiversity as a Lens for Navigating Inclusion and Belonging in Post-Industrial Cities

Superdiversity serves as a transversal lens across all thematic streams, emphasizing the multiplicity of differences—ethnic, linguistic, legal, socio-economic, gendered, and cognitive—that shape contemporary urban life. This theme invites critical engagement with how institutions, policies, and communities respond to complexity and foster inclusive environments in education, health, justice, and urban governance. We encourage contributions that trace how everyday administrative and digital practices (registration, triage, eligibility, platform access) produce or mitigate exclusion for differently positioned residents.

1. Urban Belonging and the Right to the City

- Right to the City and Spatial Justice
- Migration, Integration, and Informal Urbanism
- Housing, Public Services, and Multilingualism
- Climate Justice and Equal Urban Access

2. Intersectionality and Institutional Inclusion

- Access, Exclusion, and Discrimination in Health, Justice, and Education
- Equity in Curriculum, Language, and Cultural Recognition
- Inclusive Design and Policy for Diverse Abilities

Optional Strands for Teaching and Engaged Research

UNIC Thematic Conference will have two **optional** strands to encourage contributions in education and engaged research related to the conference topics:

1. Innovative Methods of Teaching and Learning

Submissions in this strand focus on novel teaching approaches, curriculum design, experiential learning, and strategies that promote inclusion, engagement, and critical thinking in higher education and urban studies contexts relevant to the themes of the conference.

2. Transdisciplinary Engaged Research

This strand highlights research that crosses disciplinary boundaries and actively involves governments, city organisations, other societal stakeholders, including communities, and civil society. Submissions may feature participatory methods, co-created knowledge, and policy-relevant research with tangible social impact,

If relevant, please indicate the relevant strand in the submission form to ensure your work is considered in the appropriate context.

Submission Guidelines

We invite proposals, from scholars, independent researchers, students, civil society actors, practitioners and policymakers. Submissions may include:

- **Individual Papers**

Individual paper proposals should include a 250-word abstract, and the name(s), affiliation(s), and contact details of the author(s). Individual papers will be clustered thematically into panels in accordance with thematic streams mentioned above. We encourage authors to emphasize both the conceptual and methodological novelty of their contributions.

- **Thematic Panels**

Thematic panel proposals should include a 250-word abstract outlining the overall theme of the panel, along with three to four thematically consistent and related paper abstracts of 250 words each. In addition, submissions must provide the names, affiliations, and contact details of the chair(s), discussant(s), and the author(s) of each paper. Innovative proposals, both conceptually and methodologically, are welcome.

- **Workshops & Roundtables**

Proposals may also be submitted for workshops and roundtables. These can take the form of policy workshops or roundtables focusing on specific themes, with the aim of discussing existing research or outlining future research agendas. Submissions should include a 400-word abstract together with the names, affiliations, and contact details of the organizer(s) and the workshop participants (up to ten participants, excluding the workshop chairs).

- **Book Talks / Special Issue Presentations**

Proposals can also be submitted for Book Talks or Special Issue Presentations. These sessions provide an opportunity for authors and editors to present and discuss recently

published or forthcoming books, or to introduce special issues in academic journals. Submissions should include an abstract of no more than 250 words outlining the publication and its contribution, along with the names, affiliations, and contact details of the presenter(s) and discussant(s).

Both theoretical and empirical work are welcome from applicants at all stages of their career.

 **Submission Portal Opens:** 29.09.2025

 **Submission Deadline:** 01.12.2025

 **Notification of Acceptance:** March 2026

All submissions will undergo a peer-review process.

Registration & Attendance

- **UNIC participants:** Free
 - **Non-UNIC academics:** €100
 - **Non-UNIC graduate and undergraduate students and independent researchers:** €50
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Contact & Scientific Committee

For inquiries or further information, please contact the Organizing Committee at unic@ku.edu.tr

Scientific coordination by TL4, TL6 and TL1 members across the UNIC Alliance of 10 universities.