PRESS RELEASE
BRUCE KATZ OPENS URBAN TRANSFORMATION CONFERENCE

ROTTERDAM, 20 August 2018 – The well-known American city sociologist Bruce Katz opens the annual Urban Transformation Conference on 5 October 2018. The theme this year is ‘The how of innovation districts’. For that reason, the day will be held in the iconic Groot Handelsgebouw, located in the beating heart of the Rotterdam Central District innovation area.

Bruce Katz, established his name internationally while working at the world-famous think tank The Brookings Institution and as advisor to the Obama administration. He is an expert on urban leadership and political and economic innovation. He believes that a (large) urban revolution must and will take place, and as a result he sees cities become more powerful than (country) governments. In the the coming decades in the western world, 60 percent of the population will live in cities. “The pyramid of power will therefore turn around. Governments will come to the bottom and serve cities. That’s the way it should be, ” he once said in a fascinating broadcast of VPRO’s Tegenlicht - The power to the city - about the bustling power of the city. “It is no longer the national leaders who provide for change and innovation, but the business community, local authorities and institutions and citizens. The top-down model gives way to localism. “

In his keynote speech he addresses the necessity of having innovation districts. He argues for innovative urban changes and the introduction of the ‘next’ economy. According to Katz, the next economy is driven by exports that are low-carbon, revolves around innovation and creates new opportunities. Sustainability, technological innovation and efficiency are the spearheads in an innovation district.

About Urban Transformation Conference
Since 2014, Urban Transformation Conference (UTC) has been organized in the Netherlands as an annual recurring international refuge for open debate on urban transformation. This year UTC connects stakeholders in the city with the ideas, information and expertise needed to cultivate innovation and build lively innovation districts.
More and more innovative companies and talented employees choose to come together in compact, experiential districts in the center of the city. These places, known as Innovation Districts, are not only compact but also easily accessible, with many technical facilities and they offer mixed-use homes, offices and shops. Instead of ‘building in the green’, knowledge-intensive companies are looking for important facilities close to other companies, research laboratories and universities, so that they can share ideas and come to ‘open innovation’. A good example of this is the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) in the Groot Handelsgebouw, where a mix of national and international startups and scale-ups is housed.

Note for editors
You can find the program on urbantransformation.eu and visual material on urbantransformation.eu/press

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