

## Press release

Wednesday April 8 2014

### **TUNNELS FOR A BETTER LIFE**

**Underground urban environment is the key theme of the 2014 World Congress Tunneling**

**The World Congress Tunneling, (WTC) will be held from May 9<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Iguassu in Brazil. The 2014 WTC will gather the tunnel community with the purpose of exchanging experiences and promoting the diffusion of underground space culture in the whole world. On the program will include exhibitions, round tables, technical sessions and excursions into the discovery of Brazilian sites.**

The subsoil presents numerous opportunities for urban planning. One of AITES (International Association of Tunnels and Underground Space)'s leitmotiv aims at promoting the use of urban underground space as a response to sustainable development challenges and overpopulation. This societal asset, which is often forgotten or neglected and only waits to be used, is hiding below numerous cities.

Underground space can be exploited for transportation or storage but it is also possible to use them as real living environment.

The Tunnel culture is already very common in European countries, in North America and in some Asian countries, but not in Latin America yet. The 2014 WTC takes place during a period of remarkable growth in South America, where the number of these structure installations should increase.

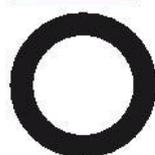
#### **Brazil, a booming host country**

After Bangkok in 2012 and Geneva in 2013, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Congress Tunneling will be held from May 9<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Iguassu in Brazil.

Football World Cup will be held in 2014 and the country will also host the Olympics in 2016. These sporting events force Brazil to develop its infrastructures and provide evidence of its international outreach.

Brazil has known an exponential growth for 10 years, a development which should continue in the next ten years. The country has notably invested in infrastructures and numerous projects implicating the construction of tunnels will come to light.

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São Paulo, the biggest town in Brazil, plans on utilizing 200km of subway rails before 2018 – which corresponds to about a tripling of the existing lines.

Other construction projects, such as the transposition of the waters of the São Francisco River, the largest waterway in the north of the country, are ongoing. Another major project is the underwater tunnel linking the two coastal cities Santos, Brazil's main harbor, and Guarujá, a seaside resort close to São Paulo.

In this very favorable context, Brazil will host the World Congress Tunneling organized by the Brazilian Committee on Tunnels (CBT), by ABMS (Brazilian Association of Soil Mechanics and of Geotechnical Engineering) and by the International Association of Tunnels and Underground Space (AITES).

### **The 2014 WTC, a place for exchange around the challenges of underground construction**

The 2014 WTC will bring together public officials, designers, builders, subcontractors, engineering services firms, professors and students. Participants will have the opportunity to exchange technical information, and to present new products and services. They will also have the chance to debate on the challenges of underground construction. The World Congress Tunneling will host the biggest gathering of the Brazilian and international technical community. AITES's 40<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will also be held during this event.

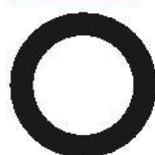
The congress's theme will be "Tunnels for a better quality of life". It will illustrate the importance of tunneling, and especially in big cities, in counteracting problems due to traffic congestion, flooding, transportation, and the conservation of the environment and also in keeping surface areas for practical reasons such as recreational activities.

The 2014 WTC aims at attracting more than 1500 active professionals in the field of tunneling and underground spaces.

### **Prestigious speakers**

A number of leading figures will speak amongst the participants. Brazilian transport authorities will be present at the Congress. And so, Paolo Sérgio Oliviera Passos, President of EPL (Logistical and Planning Company), former Brazilian Minister of Transport, will participate at the opening ceremony. He will talk in short and medium term about logistical planning in Brazil– with for example the high speed train (TAV) which shall connect Campinas, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. TAV will be an innovative project, which will include 100 km of tunnels.

Jurandir Fernandes, the State Secretary in charge of transportation system, will also be present at the WTC as well as the press conference, which will be held on May 12<sup>th</sup>. He will present the urban transport system in São Paulo – such as the expansion of the São Paulo subway – and the growing demand in terms of public transport within the urban area.



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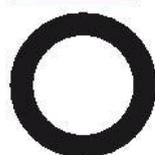
Moreover, the State Secretary will talk about the influence of underground work within São Paulo transport infrastructures.

Exhibitions and technical excursions will come and complete this eventful program. Different exhibiting companies will thus be able to present their products and services but also their technical innovations.

Tarcisio B. Celestino, CBT President, explains that “It is a great opportunity for the world community of tunneling to exhibit its cutting-edge equipment, its suppliers and its services.”

*The International Association of Tunnels and Underground Space (AITES) is a non -profit and non-government international association which aims at promoting the use of underground space as a solution to sustainable development. Founded in 1974 and operating out of Lausanne, Switzerland, AITES currently associates 68 member nations, 200 affiliated members, 15 main sponsors and 40 supporters.*

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