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Over the last twenty years Trieste has experienced a concentrated design effort aimed at identifying a development trend able to bring the city back to the prestigious and prominent role it had in the past; a remote past which has never been forgotten. As time went by, Trieste not only lost its central position in the economy and trade of a great Empire, but also witnessed the loss of its economic and cultural hinterland and the progressive crisis of the State industry. However, this recently created continental situation has clearly paved the way to a new phase enabling Trieste to reconquer its central role within European integration processes and progressive globalization processes involving international exchange. A shared opinion is that in the future of the city the tertiary sector should acquire greater importance, not only the traditional commercial type but also those linked to finance and scientific research. Other important and noteworthy transformation proposals are not going to be dealt with here; this paper focuses on two experiences which, for various reasons and at various levels, are still at the centre of the city's debate: Trieste Futura and TriestExpo. Trieste Futura was born in 1997 at industrial level. The guiding idea of its project is the redevelopment of the Old Port of Trieste which should host new urban activities still to be defined, but able to provide spaces to the new functions envisaged and desired for the city. Despite the widespread success and the action carried out by Trieste Futura Association,

with the involvement of outstanding professionals (among which, Manuel de Solà Morales), the idea has not yet been able to pass from the planning phase to the implementation phase. This is mainly due to the incapability of achieving the political synthesis necessary to bring about a reversal of trend in the declining condition of the city. TriestExpo project was launched in summer 1998, within university and research centres and immediately obtained political consent. However, this consent was never made concrete with explicit provisions and thus the working group decided to form an association of which the author of this paper is the first president. The basic idea spurring TriestExpo Association is that of proposing Trieste as the host city of one of the international exhibitions scheduled for the first years of the 21st century. At the basis of such a plan there lies the conviction, widely confirmed, that the organisation of a great event is an important opportunity to direct efforts and resources towards initiatives aimed at making the city suitable for hosting it. Predictable outcomes do not only involve short term effects and the activity induced by the event, but also long term ones, especially if we think of the infrastructure and structural consolidation of the area for this purpose. Many examples could be brought up to confirm this statement which is also widely demonstrated by the determination with which many countries and many cities try to gain the organization of great exhibitions, sporting and cultural events. The year in which TriestExpo project was launched, the Expo in Lisbon took place and some members of the Triestine association went to see it.

They also went to Seville to get some information on the permanent effects of the event held six years before. Contacts were also established with the Bie (Bureau international des expositions), a body which coordinates and plans the organization of international exhibitions. In 2002 the project was positively acknowledged at both city and national levels and it finally reached a phase which not only entails proposals but also implementation plans. Today the Triestine project proposal for hosting an Expo in 2008, dedicated to the problem of mobility, in a very broad sense, i.e. it includes the effects linked to knowledge and innovation, has been submitted to the Bie as an alternative to the projects of Saragossa and Salonika. Independently from the outcomes that TriestExpo proposal will achieve, during 2003 the activity of TriesteFutura started again. Currently the idea of converting the Old Port area into different uses, which are no longer strictly linked to transport, can be considered as accepted: it should host the main centre of the 2008 Expo. After a period of internal debate, Trieste Futura Association decided to open the way to the young by giving them the task of redesigning a project for their city. A working group has been recently formed, consisting of young researchers and entrepreneurs together with experienced professionals, which has been entrusted with the task of critically reconsidering the much discussed ideas. This is how the new project *Triesteidea* was born, a direct branch of Trieste Futura. This project aims to identify new development and progress trends for the city by designing a future suitable to its relevant potentials and in the light of

the integration scenarios which are shaping a new Europe. In this context Trieste will gradually regain its central position and natural hinterland.