

## A winter escape

“And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul . . .” This popular saying, which one can find printed on posters, T-shirts, and decorative signs, is one of my favourites. It perfectly captures the anticipation I feel while standing on the edge of the forest before stepping past the first shrubs and trees and entering a somewhat more shaded place that is closest to primeval nature, where various species of animals and plants coexist, and where the human impact is least noticeable. The edge of the forest is where I leave all the needless concerns and noise behind, all my work and other obligations . . . “And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.”

In our hectic daily lives – where, in addition to external stressors, we all too often create worries for ourselves and forget that the most important things in life are those that money can’t buy – it’s very important for all of us have a special place where we can find our souls. If you don’t have one yet, make sure to find it soon.

For me, it’s the nearby forest, for someone else it may be an old tree in a park, a trail along a river that brings a piece of nature into the city, a sports area, or a playground. Diverse green spaces in urban areas provide opportunities for outdoor activities, contributing to a healthy lifestyle and good quality of life. Even though they offer many ecological, environmental, and social benefits, green spaces remain neglected in spatial planning, subjected to various interests and a lack of political support. Research findings on these issues, including those presented in this latest issue of *Urbani izziv*, are an encouragement that the accessibility and quality of green spaces will gradually improve.

This is my last editorial after eight years as editor-in-chief of *Urbani izziv*. I’m confident that the journal will remain in good hands in the future and maintain its high quality, international profile, and status as the leading Slovenian journal on spatial planning. I’d like to sincerely acknowledge everyone that has contributed to the journal’s content and success over these years. Thank you and best wishes!

Damjana Gantar, Editor-in-Chief