



# Motorsport Excellence Centre, Bucharest

author urb. arch. Cristiana Oprea

Starting from the experience gained in recent years in various areas of Romanian motorsports, young architect and rally driver Cristiana Oprea took her automotive passion to the next level. She is the author of an ambitious urban development project, designed on 150 ha in the south of Bucharest - a Motorsport Excellence Centre with tarmac and gravel race tracks, grandstands for 100.000 people, a conference and media centre, educational facilities, a driving school, an automotive museum and various recreational activities.

This project aims to define the theoretical and conceptual basis of a complex architectural program, representative for the whole European region, whilst maintaining a realistic approach at an urban level, related to Bucharest's current and future issues.

The whole ensemble is actively oriented towards the young consumers. Through training, educational activities, sports and leisure in a social environment with community-shared values, the project is likely to contribute to the dynamic of the economic sector in the region and, above all, to generate growth in the quality of the individual and social life of the inhabitants of Bucharest.

Choosing the intervention area in the South of the capital city was not a coincidence, one of the objectives of this project being the recovery and use of land resources within the ring road of the city, which were left aside for the last 20 years. This reduces the imbalance between the north and south of the capital, improving accessibility between residential areas and a potential new functional nucleus of Bucharest, reducing the cost of daily commuters and the pollution generated by regular transportation.

The Centre aims to overcome its race track function with its associated facilities, by providing a much wider range of activities with ramifications in other related domains. In addition to the sports side that could be regarded as a niche area, the Centre will perform 3 other roles: regional representation, promotion and development of the automotive industry, educational and recreational. In order to optimize a potential investment, the project's phases are assessed with capacity and volume considerations - the extension and hyper-specialization of spaces that may initially be multifunctional.

The orbit of the Motorsport Excellence Centre remains, however, the Formula 1 circuit (6.4 km, which can be divided into smaller modules), which, along with the Rallycross track (1.64 km), is drawn after a careful mapping of the Transfăgărășan, which is said to have in its configuration almost all the corners found in worldwide circuits. Transfăgărășan is not only a spectacular road - included as a symbol in the concept of the Motorsport Excellence Centre, it represents the resilience and leadership mentality that can be cultivated through this project.

The recreational role of this project - a priority in the contemporary vision that promotes a "work-life balance" - is seen as part of a strategy for converting the former Progresu-Basarab industrial railway into a green bicycle-pedestrian axis linking the central area Bucharest (North Railway Station as a starting point) from the southern outskirts (Jilava Fortress and the Argeș river recreation area), noting en-route an important resource of urban land, appropriate for the development of mixed activities. Moreover, the green belt that is needed around the race track to reduce noise pollution will also serve as a park, thus adding a new attraction to a less well-known tourist route in the southern area of the capital, towards the Comana Natural Park.

The suggested educational function has the potential to change the destinies of those who choose to cross the gates of the Centre and devote their time to automotive-related training. Through the racing school, the journey from leisure to debut and from debut to performance now has a clear destination. The challenge is received as a team, in a space where each turn, whether interior or exterior, by itself or figuratively, has a sense and a goal. Scrutineering school, paramedics, automotive technicians, defensive driving, journalism and sports photography are other examples of the versatile modules for this space, that will add value to the local community.



# Motorsport Excellence Centre, Bucharest

author urb. arch. Cristiana Oprea

The hub structure of the conference & media centre and the university campus is likely to be of national and even regional importance, attractive for a public-private partnership which could lead to the actual construction of the Motorsport Excellence Centre.

The role of representing and promoting the industry is secondary and rather seen as a facilitator for future development through the services and infrastructure provided in order to organize sports and marketing events at international performance standards. However, the same infrastructure is also available for the implementation of a R&D, production and even logistics centre, which could create new jobs, directly linking them to the educational side of the Centre.

The Motorsport Excellence Centre thus proposes a whole series of synergies which become a catalyst amongst most urban actors, generating individual and community development "in situ". The versatility of motorsport is likely to stimulate the self-financing ability of the Centre by outsourcing the services. At the same time, through its size, place and spatial organization, the opportunity of the project lies in the ability to transcend the sports side, giving Bucharest the chance to align itself with prestigious European cities, renowned for their exhibition and conference centres, R&D hubs, business centres and academic resources.

You can find more about the "Motorsport Excellence Centre Bucharest" project on [www.daciamotorsport.com](http://www.daciamotorsport.com).