Dear Mayor Marianne Borgen,

I write from the Azores, a volcanic archipelago in the North Atlantic. While here, I have reflected on how Oslo’s architectural policies can either bring the world closer or push us further apart. How can the architectural policy of a Norwegian city be meaningful to a place like these magic islands?

Architecture seems to be a simple action of building in relation to a specific place, affecting its local community and the urban, economic and social dynamics of its surroundings. I know there is a strong architectural community in Oslo with whom you can consult and discuss the city’s architectural priorities. A construction often calls for the reconciliation of interests and needs. As mayor, you have a tremendous responsibility to avoid favouring private interests that jeopardize the collective welfare of the city and its citizens. Listen to what Oslo architects have to tell you, they are trained to think and act to resolve such contradictions.

My small contribution to this discussion, especially today when I seem lost in the Atlantic, is to remind you that architectural decisions have a global impact. It might seem odd, but a simple architectural decision in Oslo can resonate in many places throughout the world. Beyond its local impact, architecture relates each place to the world around it. The city of Oslo has a significant maritime culture, and at a time when natural resources are endangered it is worth recognizing the power of architecture to reinforce an Atlantic cultural space.

Sincerely yours,

André Tavares