Concept (Rediscover the City Treasures)
Water. Wood. Stone. Glass. Plants. Metal. Brick. What do they mean? Are these appreciated as treasures? We travel to Paris and gaze at the Eiffel Tower. We take a walk in Bucharest and we enjoy the view of the Romanian Athenaeum. We explore Seoul in search of the Gyeongbokgung Palace. We admire all these constructions and we take them for granted, often without thinking about the materials they are made of. The water, the wood, the stone and the metal – all these considered separately are nothing but isolated elements, apparently without anything in common. However, aided by the craftsmanship of a constructor and by an architect’s vision, these elements have the potential of becoming true architectural gems. These gems are influencing spaces, generations and trends, ultimately defining the Soul of City.

We aim to make the visitors stop for a second and think about the Soul of City, about what determines this Soul, and about what it is made of. By deconstructing the buildings at the core of cities’ souls, we end up having stone, wood, glass and so on. We consider these elements real treasures and intend to showcase them accordingly.

Rediscover the City Treasures actually means thinking about the diverse components making up the Soul of City and about the way these intertwine to determine certain particularities. These components encompass not only architectural elements, but also natural elements given that nature plays a paramount role in determining the Soul of City.

The design of the booth’s space
The wooden furniture
Centrally within the booth, we are going to place a wooden piece of furniture featuring three seats facing the projection screen – which we will introduce in the next paragraph – and a display counter similar to those found in jewelry stores. The display will showcase various constructing materials and natural elements from Romania; these will be showcased as pieces of jewelry. These elements and materials will be sealed in glass cubes with sides of 95 mm. There will be 18 such cubes in a display of 292 mm x 892 mm. Each cube will symbolize the deconstruction of Soul of City.

The display counter will basically be matrix of 3 x 9 such cubes, allowing therefore for 27 cubes. We wish, however, to have only 18 cubes to allow visitors to move the cubes and reconstruct the Soul of City, each basing its own reconstruction on its vision, experience and cultural knowledge.
As explained in the presentation plan, the 18 cubes will be placed on a wooden stand incorporating two LED strip lights. In between the wooden stand and the glass cubes, we will place an opaque plexiglass sheet allowing for light diffusion (more details in presentation plan no. 6). Therefore, the cubes will be lit in a similar way as in a jewelry display counter. Towards the end of the exhibition period, these “jewels” will be offered to visitors as gifts.

The furniture will be made of laser cut MDF and wooden boards. The design considered for easiness of assembly, which will be made either by simply stacking the boards or by tightening them with a few nails and screws (similar to IKEA furniture). The price offer for the furniture includes assembling it for tests purposes prior to its shipment to Seoul. Estimated time of assembly: up to two hours.

The inner part of the furniture was intentionally left blank to allow for a small storage space for promotional flyers, post-its, pens, business cards and so on.

*Projection screen*

Within the exhibition booth, we are going to place a projection screen (size 106” – 1320,8 mm x 2338,8 mm) on the front side of the exhibition booth. The screen is going to be used for playing continuously a video showing the deconstruction of different buildings, highlighting their components - which we consider real jewels, each of particular importance.

*The Video*

During the exhibition, a short movie will run continuously depicting the deconstruction of three iconic Romanian spots: the exterior of Constanța’s Casino, the interior of Cătăurești Carousel Bookstore in Bucharest’s Old Town, and the George Enescu square fronting the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest.

Through our proposed concept, we wish to achieve two things: a) to allow the booth to become an exhibition spot for Romanian landmarks (Constanța’s Casino, the interior of Cătăurești Carousel and George Enescu square); and b) to create a place where visitors could debate the Soul of City.

The three short clips corresponding to each of the three landmarks will have the same structure and will begin by showing the complete picture of the said landmark (with construction materials, setting, vegetation, people). Subsequently this picture will fade into a sketch and finally into a white screen. This fading process will occur gradually, eliminating at each step the architectural elements, the constructing materials, the sky, the paving, the vegetation, the people, and so on. This way, the viewer will be able to think about the importance of each constitutive element.

After watching the video, the guests will be asked to write on a post-it their thoughts on what determines the Soul of City. At the end of the exhibition, these thoughts will be showcased on our website.
Printed materials
On each of the side walls, we will place to boards – one of the boards will feature the concept’s idea using graphics and text, while the other will be used for displaying the post-it notes containing visitors’ ideas of what the Soul of City represents. These latter boards will become towards the end of the exhibition a true collection of visitors’ wisdom. The main conclusions arising from these notes could be used, at a later stage, in articles documenting Romania’s participation at the World Architects Congress in Seoul (articles in architecture magazines, interviews or exhibitions within OAR). Therefore, this concept for arranging Romania’s exhibition booth will transcend the congress’ limits, becoming a process that provides useful insights which can be further used as an inspiration both by architects and by the other city dwellers. OAR could further organize and exhibition inviting all city dwellers to express their opinion as to what is the Soul of City.

The easiness of assembly
Once completed, we will assembly the furniture for test purposes, easing therefore the assembling in Seoul. The furniture’s elements are not at all bulky, allowing for an easy transportation. The price offers attached in the budget document are provided by Romanian firms. However, we can also consider sourcing the elements from providers in Seoul as they are made by simple laser cuts.

The glass cubes will be produced in Romania to be able to place inside the cubes Romanian materials. Their transportation requires boxes filled with polystyrene beads. Once in Seoul, the cubes will simply be placed on the display counter, requiring no further assembling.

The projection screen and the projector can be either bought from Romania or leased from the organizer for the duration of the exhibition. We will employ specialized installation in this sense.

The boards on which visitors will attach post-it notes can be either made in Romania and easily shipped by rolling them, or they can be printed out in Seoul.

Conclusions
Our concept features a simple idea which is easy to implement while having potential for significant impact both during the congress and afterwards. During the congress, the impact will be achieved by inviting visitors to think about the importance of the elements surrounding us on a daily basis, elements that ultimately compose the Soul of City. Subsequent to the congress itself, the conclusions arising from this brainstorming process could be displayed either at one of OAR’s events or simply on our website, serving as an inspirational source for years to come and further enhancing the impact of this proposal.