

**Press release**

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**The Schindler Award for Architecture Goes to Student Team from Vienna**

**For the second time since 2003/04 Swiss elevator manufacturer Schindler has staged its “Access for All” Award, a European architecture competition for students and schools of architecture. Again a key aspect of the competition was “Access for All”, i.e. ensuring unobstructed access to buildings for everyone, regardless of physical abilities. In this particular instance the aim was to design an obstacle-free museum walk in Paris. More than 500 students from 22 European countries took part in the competition. The international jury, chaired by Professor Thomas Sieverts, nominated the Green Sights Project by Marta Neic, Marco Di Nallo and Manfred Sponseiler of the Vienna University of Technology, Austria, as the competition winner. The University Award went to the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany.**

Schindler’s “Access for All” Award for Architecture 2005/06 was officially presented on November 10, 2006 at the Kultur- und Kongresszentrum (KKL) in Lucerne, Switzerland. The competition was won by architecture students Marta Neic, Marco Di Nallo and Manfred Sponseiler of the Vienna University of Technology, Austria. Second place went to Adam Beard and Marie Henrike Haase of the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. The third prize was awarded to a team of students from the Lund University of Technology in Sweden. Seven other projects from Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain were also commended. The Jury’s Special Award went to three projects by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH), Switzerland. The University Award contested by the participating universities was won by the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany. A total of 504 students from 58 European schools of architecture took on the challenge. They submitted 88 projects, which were evaluated by an international jury chaired by Professor Thomas Sieverts.

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### **The key challenge: “Access for All”**

Despite all the progress made with regulations and standards, people with physical disabilities still have to contend with unnecessary obstacles in and around buildings. As a contribution to the “European Year of People with Disabilities” the Schindler Group decided in 2003 to launch its first-ever “Access for All” Schindler Award. The response was so favourable that Schindler decided to stage the competition every two years. The competition’s key challenge is to provide “Access for All”, i.e. to ensure that everyone has obstacle-free access to buildings and facilities, regardless of individual abilities.

### **An obstacle-free museum walk in Paris**

The challenge set by the competition places high demands on the students. The site of the competition was located in the centre of Paris. It comprised the Palais de Tokyo, a striking building on the banks of the Seine opened in 1937 for the Paris World’s Fair, and its immediate vicinity. The participants were set the task of linking the Palais de Tokyo with the museums nearby and the banks of the Seine to create an obstacle-free museum walk. One such obstacle was the 30 m height difference between the highest and the lowest point at the site. Other tasks included creating a visitor centre and an exhibition concept for people with disabilities.

### **Developing a more human architecture**

At the award ceremony Professor Thomas Sieverts, who chaired the jury, made it clear that Schindler’s “Access for All” Award was not just about finding technically feasible solutions for the disabled which were also attractive for the non-disabled. “It was also about developing a richer, more human type of architecture which appeals not only to the eye but to the other senses, as well” He added that, although there had been a number of interesting and stimulating approaches, in the view of the entire jury the objective had not yet been wholly fulfilled. Nonetheless Professor Sieverts was pleased that “some of the students attempted to balance the predominance of form

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and construction, which seems to be prevalent in many schools, with a more human approach, more strongly directed towards everyday use". The jury chairman also felt it was an approach which needed to be supported more openly in future.

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