

# ACE POLICY POSITION 2016

URBAN REGENERATION:  
RENOVATING  
THE EXISTING  
BUILDING STOCK



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE



## ■ Highlights

- Beyond the energy-efficient renovation of buildings, ACE promotes the comprehensive urban regeneration of cities. This requires taking into consideration, in an holistic manner and at all scales, the economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects affecting the built environment.
- When developing renovation, renewal and regeneration strategies, ACE calls on Member States and cities to: create cohesive and inclusive cities; promote the compact city model; make accessibility and mobility major priorities; favour social and functional mix; favour nature-based solutions and green/blue infrastructure; propose innovative approaches to territorial planning; facilitate bottom-up participation and pay particular attention to historic buildings and cultural heritage.
- At EU and national levels, ACE calls for a smart implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy, a strong implementation of articles 4 and 5 of the Energy Efficiency Directive<sup>1</sup>, as well as the development of an EU Urban Agenda allowing for a better coordination of the EU policies with an urban dimension.

## ■ ACE position

The energy-efficient renovation of buildings should not be addressed in isolation from the other urban challenges that EU cities currently face. ACE calls on EU Member States, regions and cities to take the following principles into account in their renovation and urban regeneration strategies:

- 1 | **To place human beings at the centre of urban development projects in order to build cohesive and inclusive cities** – the primary purpose of a sustainable city is to create *sustainable communities*, as defined in the Bristol Accord<sup>2</sup> through active, inclusive, safe, healthy, environmentally sensitive, well designed and built places, with well developed infrastructure.
- 2 | **To promote the compact city model** – a regenerated city should combine balanced density and intensity ratios, and a fine interweaving of residential, commercial buildings and public facilities. ACE calls on Member States to encourage competent authorities to identify brownfield land and parts of cities, which can be built on more densely and to review urban development policies with minimal consumption of new land.
- 3 | **To make accessibility and mobility major priorities** – at all scales, accessibility is a key asset – both in terms of ensuring that developments are designed in a fully accessible manner, and in terms of providing good connectivity to the surrounding urban context.
- 4 | **To favour social and functional mix** – the balanced planning of housing, offices, shops and community facilities must be a priority. The separation of urban functions through zoning should be evolved in favour of an integrated and mixed-use approach, based on public priorities and interests.
- 5 | **To favour resourceful solutions and green and blue infrastructure**, to build resilience to heat-waves, drought and flooding, pollution peaks, etc.
- 6 | **To propose innovative community-based approaches to territorial planning** – inflow and outflow analysis beyond the city scale is crucial in order to ensure that cities benefit from the energy and resources that surround them.
- 7 | **To instigate suitable governance mechanisms to facilitate bottom-up participation** – sustainable urban development requires collaborative planning involving all stakeholders in the city. The architectural profession may provide an expert role to guide individuals, empowering them through the dissemination of knowledge that may then enable them to participate actively in the planning and design processes.
- 8 | **To pay particular attention to historic buildings and structures and their settings/ contexts** – architectural heritage is a capital of irreplaceable spiritual, cultural, social and economic value. Historic buildings and districts, including industrial heritage, could be capable of offering flexibility through adaptive re-use and energy efficiency. ACE advocates for the key role of the architectural profession in the preservation of this heritage through conservation and appropriate intervention so that it may survive and serve future generations.

<sup>1</sup> Directive 2012/27/EU on Energy Efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC

<sup>2</sup> Conclusions of Bristol Ministerial Informal Meeting on Sustainable Communities in Europe, 6–7 December 2005



At EU and Member States' level, ACE calls for:

- 9 | **A smart implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy** – ACE promotes the role of Architects in the implementation of the tools foreseen by the EU Cohesion Policy, namely Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) in order to ensure the smart use of EU funds in cities. Architects can contribute to defining the subject, areas, scope and the method of intervention of these tools, avoiding mono-directional approaches.
- 10 | **A robust implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings and Energy Efficiency Directives** – ACE calls on Member States to significantly step up their efforts to implement the requirements of EED articles 4 and 5. In particular, ACE calls on Member States to adopt robust national renovation strategies, designed to put all stakeholders on the right track towards reaching an 80% reduction of the energy demand of the EU's buildings by 2050 and calls for new long-term financing mechanisms to stimulate deep and staged deep renovations.
- 11 | **A better coordination of EU policies with an urban dimension** – ACE calls for an EU Urban Agenda, which provides an overarching framework of priorities to be addressed by all EU cities, identifying social, economic and environmental targets. A number of key targets in the short and medium term, fitting within this broad overarching framework, should be also identified. Incentives and support should be provided to cities requiring assistance. Particular attention should be given to small and medium sized cities, as due to urban fragmentation throughout Europe, they host large numbers of population and consume energy and land resources, as well as being more difficult to manage than larger European cities.

## ■ Background

- 40% of residential buildings in the EU date from before 1960<sup>3</sup> and 75% of our housing stock is deemed to be energy inefficient<sup>4</sup>. While the benefits of an energy-efficient renovation of buildings are numerous and well known<sup>5</sup>, the pace of renovation of the EU building stock remains very slow (1.4% annually on average).
- Urbanisation, combined with the growth of the world's population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban populations by 2050. Two thirds of the inhabitants of our planet will be concentrated in cities by 2050.
- A single-minded view of urban development has failed cities. Cities face many challenges with an urban dimension: social exclusion, gentrification, spatial segregation, deprived neighbourhoods, poor access to basic services, lack of affordable housing, urban sprawl, soil sealing, air quality, etc. All these realities have become exacerbated by the economic downturn. Cities are less resilient to the effects of climate change. Urban, infrastructure and landscape planning need to inter-relate and derive from social and economical challenges.

## ■ Annexes

- *ACE response to the consultation of the EU Commission on the urban dimensions of EU policies* – October 2013
- *ACE Brochure The role of the architectural profession in producing and delivering Responsible Design* – October 2014

<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission of 23 July 2014 on *Energy Efficiency and its contribution to energy security and the 2030 Framework for climate and energy policy*

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission of 25 February 2015 on *A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy*

<sup>5</sup> *Multiple benefits of investing in energy efficient renovation of buildings*, study by Copenhagen Economics 2012.

# OTHER ACE POLICY POSITIONS 2016

- THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN ENERGY EFFICIENT CONSTRUCTION
- QUALITY-BASED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
- THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSION IN DELIVERING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- DISSEMINATION OF ARCHITECTURAL CULTURE
- OPTIMISING PROFESSIONAL MOBILITY
- REGULATION OF ARCHITECTS
- SUPPORT FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF BINDING MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

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