



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

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The latest Architects' Council of Europe (ACE)¹ quarterly survey shows that the impact of the economic crisis on the architectural profession is deepening.

The construction sector is often recognised as a good barometer for indicating the vitality of the general economy. Within that sector it is often the architectural profession that first feels the cold wind of a recession and the warm breeze of a recovery.

For this reason, the ACE initiated in 2009, a series of quarterly surveys of the opinion of practising architects on the impact of the economic crisis on their offices and workload. These surveys are based on a questionnaire that is available in 14 European languages. Each survey is opened for a period of two weeks and all Member Organisations of the ACE are invited to inform their members that the questionnaire is open and available for answers beyond the sample of volunteer architects already available to the ACE.

The second and latest survey was run between the 15th and 29th June and the results indicate that the mood in the profession is significantly more pessimistic than it was just three months ago, in April 2009. The number of responses was nearly double that of the first survey – an indication of the interest that it has generated in the profession across Europe.

In fact 62% of respondents said that the current situation is “Bad” or Very bad” as compared to 46% in April 2009. Confirming this relative pessimism just 8% of respondents in June said that they thought the situation was “Good” or “Very good” as compared with 15% in April.

When it comes to the employment situation, the ACE can report that nearly one in three architects offices has seen a decrease in staff numbers since the nominal start of the crisis in September 2008. The expectation of those who responded in June is that staff numbers will decrease in 23% of offices in the coming three months. On the positive side, 7% of architects offices have seen an increase in staff numbers since September 2008 although the survey does not permit the ACE to say how many new jobs for architects this represents.

These results are bad news for the European Union as a whole and should be a call to action for politicians at all levels in European governance. The ACE and its Member Organisations, who stand ready to contribute to well-framed actions, believe that immediate increased public investment in sustainable construction and, in particular, energy efficiency upgrading of existing buildings would be an appropriate starting point.

A presentation of the results of the survey can be downloaded at:

www.ace-cae.org/MemberN/Content/EN/documents/sdoc/structure.asp?id=aceinfo_overview

¹ The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) is the European organisation representing the architectural profession at European level. Its headquarters and Secretariat are located in Brussels. Its growing membership consists of Member Organisations, which are the nationally representative regulatory and professional bodies of all European Union (EU) Member States, Accession States, Switzerland and Norway. Through them, it represents the interests of about 480,000 architects. The principal function of the ACE is to monitor developments at EU level, seeking to influence those areas of EU Policy and legislation that have an impact on architectural practice and on the overall quality and sustainability of the built environment.