



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

## GA1/15/International Agenda item 8.3

**Date:** 16 March 2015  
**Ref:** 070/15/IDP/ga

### Internal Affairs

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First ACE General Assembly (GA1/15)

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Notes of the Internationalisation of Architectural Services meeting, Brussels, 4 March

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Final

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In response to the Board's decision to develop an international programme, ACE organised a briefing for Member Organisations to sensitise them to the various sources of information and support services available from the European Commission – specifically from DG GROWTH (those units formerly part of DG ENTR – services to help the internationalisation of SMEs) and also DG TRADE (market access database and free trade agreements).

The event also gave Member Organisations the chance to provide feedback on their needs and to describe the programmes they have developed to help their members to export their services (cf. AFEX in France, NAX in Germany, and other international programmes in Portugal and the UK).

As we were too numerous to hold the briefing in the ACE Boardroom, we held the event at the architecture centre "the Architects' House".

- K-K Nikolov (DG GROWTH) gave a presentation on "Action Lines for the Liberal Professions";
- V Basuyau (DG GROWTH) gave a presentation on the work of thematic group 5 (global competitiveness), which is part of the Construction 2020 strategy;
- I Nemeth (DG GROWTH) presented the Commission's publication "Supporting the Internationalisation of SMEs", copies of which were given (in English) to all who attended and a couple of other language versions were also made available to us (German, Italian, Spanish). In all this document is available from the Commission in 13 languages);
- I Nemeth (DG GROWTH) gave a presentation on Access to Finance;
- F Deraedt (DG TRADE) described the Market Access Database and helpdesks, as well as the current state of play regarding the negotiation of Free Trade Agreements aimed at improving market access in third countries for EU professionals.

#### Actions Lines for the Liberal Professions –

This work is divided into five areas

- education & training for entrepreneurship;
- access to markets;
- reduction of the regulatory burden;
- access to finance;
- strengthening the participation of the liberal professions at EU level (creation of Liberal Professions Forum and work groups).

ACE has been invited to join the Liberal Professions Forum, has contributed to the Action Lines report and will respond to an invitation to consider how entrepreneurial skills could best be delivered (e.g. through integration in the curriculum, CPD or even PPE).

[Read the presentation](#)Construction 2020 –

At the time of these event, the final recommendations arising from the development of this strategy had not yet been published and would be presented at the High Level Forum on 25/3. Thematic Area 5 work (global competitiveness) has focused on

- support for entrepreneurship (e.g. COSME programme);
- better access to finance for SMEs, internationalisation and access to markets;
- EU expertise re: energy efficiency of buildings, green growth and resource efficiency;
- collaboration with international partners, funding, guarantees for international construction projects and international cooperation on regulations/standards.

[Read the presentation](#)[Read the C2020-TG5 recommendations](#)Supporting the internationalisation of SMEs –

90% of global growth is already outside the EU and 60% of world GDP will be in developing/emerging markets by 2030. The Commission underlines that those SMEs engage in international work, report growth in turnover, higher employment and greater innovation. However, the Commission is aware that the barriers are numerous (finance, access to opportunities, information, contacts, regulation etc.) and has developed a number of support services to help address these including:

- “Your Europe” – business portal;
- “Enterprise Europe Network” (matchmaking, market access information, contacts, sector groups);
- Overseas contact points (Japan, China, SE Asia etc.);
- Export Helpdesk;
- SME Internationalisation Portal;
- European Small Business Portal;
- Missions for Growth (initiated with Commissioner Tajiani last year);
- Access to finance (indirect EU funding through a database of banks that are willing to lend funds for certain purposes);
- Horizon 2020;
- COSME (equity / debt facility);
- Export Credit Guarantees (ECGs) – over and above national provisions;
- EUREKA (international research fund);
- ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE);

[Read the presentation](#)

I Nemeth gave a short presentation on Access to Finance

[Read the presentation](#)Market Access –

F Deraedt described

- the Market Access Database (MADB) provides information on trade, tariffs and other documentation necessary for the export of goods and services);
- DG TRADE’s responsibility for Trade Policy – market access strategy (regulations, competitiveness);
- the EU’s negotiating agenda (Canada, USA, Japan etc). DG TRADE is helping ACE with its bi-lateral talks with Canada (as part of the CETA) and the USA (as part of the TTIP).

[Read the presentation](#)

Feedback from Member Organisations –

AFEX (France), NAX (Germany), OA (Portugal) and RIBA (UK) gave presentations about the structures they have put in place to help their architects export services. While they typically avail of support provided at national level, they were glad to learn of the additional support available at EU level. They showed interest in developing closer links and sharing information amongst themselves and wondered whether ACE may be able to facilitate this in any way.

Tentative conclusions and next steps –

ACE could consider developing any/all of the following:

- develop international section of the ACE website, with links to AFEX, NAX etc as well as to DG GROWTH networks, databases and portals;
- participate in DG GROWTH Liberal Professions Forum (encourage establishment of dedicated export work group?);
- consider how to facilitate a network for architectural export;
- consider how ACE might develop a module for exporters;
- develop an ACE brochure on working internationally.