



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

Date: 26th October 2009

Ref: 351/09/AJ/dd

Architecture and Quality of Life

ACE Seminar Architecture & Sustainability - 24 September 2009

Report

Final

Introduction

The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) firmly believes that the future of architecture will see sustainable approaches becoming the main stream. In fact the need for greater energy efficiency, more respect for the environment and smarter use of resources is a matter of which the European society has become more and more aware in recent years. With the challenges being faced as a consequence of climate change there is a need for society at large to take significant transformational steps in order to mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

In this way the European Economic and Social Committee organised from the 22nd to 25th of September 2009 a series of energy days centred around an exhibition housed in a temporary building conceived from a sustainability point of view. The ACE was a partner to these energy days and it organised its own Seminar entitled *Architecture and Sustainability: already with us* on the afternoon of the 24th of September.

This brief Report highlights the content of the Seminar and will be posted on the Website of the ACE as an introduction to the collection of presentations that were made on that day.

Report

The Event was opened by Lavinia Andrei, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee. This opening was followed by a welcome made by the President of the ACE, Juhani Katainen and then a provocative introductory presentation was made by Edgardo Iozia. This provocative introduction challenged the architectural profession to make amends for the errors of the past and to truly take into account the need to adopt a sustainable approach in old and new buildings and in the renovation of old existing buildings.

In reply Adrian Joyce, Senior Adviser of the ACE stated that the profession had realised that the challenges facing society as a result of climate change must be addressed, at least in part, by a new architecture, an architecture based on responsibility for the resources of the planet and the future of society. He then went on to present to the Seminar the various steps that the ACE has taken over recent years including several research projects in the field of sustainable architecture and much work at various events around Europe. He highlighted two key elements the first being the publication of the booklet: "Architecture and Sustainability Declaration and Policy of the Architects' Council of Europe" which was to be launched on the day. The second initiative he highlighted was the work that the ACE is undertaking in partnership with the European Concrete Platform to set down a common language for sustainable construction consisting of definitions of the key terms used in sustainable construction so that all actors may speak the same language.

After these introductory speeches a presentation by Gilles Vaille was made of the new Build Up Initiative. This Initiative arises from the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Platform and consists of an interactive website containing a vast amount of information and a high number of case studies of highly energy efficiency buildings. He pointed out that the website is supported by many Organisations including the ACE and he gave an online demonstration showing the usefulness of the information contained.

Then followed a series of presentations that showcased existing constructed buildings from all corners of Europe, which demonstrate that sustainable architecture, and examples of good practice, can be found in all corners of Europe.

The first building presented was the Pallet House itself, which as noted above, is a temporary building conceived from the point of view of sustainable development. It resulted from a student design competition and the two students Gregor Pils and Andreas Claus Schnetzer were present to present the concept behind the building.

The second building presented was an example of passively cooled building in Portugal. This building is a large officand research building and the presenter, Helder Gonçalves, clearly demonstrated that even in the hot Portuguese climate active air conditioning is not required once the building is conceived from the outset as a passive cooled cold building. His presentation showed the technologies that had been integrated into the fabric of the building and highlighted the impressive fact that in a two-week period in 2009 when the temperature at noon was about 40 degrees the internal temperature in this building did not exceed 30 degrees at any time and was generally in the range of 27degrees.

The next presentation was made by the sponsor Glass for Europe represented by Reinout Speelman who informed the audience of two studies carried out on behalf of the Glass Industry, which showed that if the glass in all existing windows were replaced by an energy efficiency glass that the European Union would save about 13 % of its carbon emissions. This was a presentation that gave a view on how relatively straight forward measures could have a significant impact for both employment and energy efficiency across the EU.

The next presentation was made by Benoit Tielemans, a researcher from Brussels who presented a series of projects from the Brussels Region that have been encouraged by an innovative policy of financial support by the Brussels Capital Region to encourage low and very low energy buildings. He highlighted a particular project of apartments that will become the first zero energy building in Brussels.

The last presentation was made by Sean Harrington, an architect from Ireland who presented a social housing scheme consisting of 66 apartments. This scheme is located in a dense urban environment and it contains a high number of integrated systems that ensure a very energy efficient performance coupled with low water use and high social value.

Following these presentations there was a panel discussion with the audience at which it became clear that the mix of presentations was highly appreciated as it gave to the audience a wide spectrum of information about how the architectural profession is addressing the challenges of climate change across the EU.

After the Seminar the official launch of the ACE Declaration and Policy on Architectural Sustainability took place. It was the Chair of the ACE Work Group on Environment & Sustainable Architecture, Paula Cadima who informed the audience of the background and content of the Declaration and Policy. Following her speech the President of the ACE officially launched the booklet and invited all participants to a reception.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the publication of the presentations on the Website of the ACE will allow for the further dissemination of the good practice that was represented on the day.

End of Document