



The Architect's Council of Europe (ACE) is the representative organisation for the architectural profession at European level. Its membership consists of regulatory and professional representative bodies throughout Europe. In 2014, ACE published a manifesto for the European Parliament elections based on the priorities called for by its members. The manifesto is targeted at the Directorates-General for Energy, Environment and Climate Action, and calls on MEPs to commit to promoting responsible architecture. Here we take a look at some of the broad conclusions made within the ACE manifesto

A manifesto for responsible architecture

Country: SLOVENIA
Building: ALPINE HOTEL, CELJSKA KOČA
Architect: ARHITEKTURA KRUŠEC
Photographer: ©Miran Kambič

With half a million practising architects in Europe, the architectural sector can play a key role in stimulating growth and creating jobs in the EU. Good architecture is essential to the well-being of European citizens and is vital in guaranteeing their safety as well as a sustainable future.

The architecture of a building has a major impact on building performance outcomes. The spatial and material configuration of a building is one of the most important determinants of occupants' experience of comfort, security and productivity. Architects create bespoke designs integrating structural, technical, spatial and material solutions for each project that balance the passive and active measures required to control indoor environments that meet the long term needs of occupants.

The way in which buildings can support and adapt to occupants' needs requires a holistic and long-term approach to building performance. Socio-technical methods of analysis and design, employed by architects, ensure that buildings enhance occupants' lives and can adapt to variations

in occupancy patterns, use, demographics and climate. Empowered by progressive legislation and investment, architecture's reach can go well beyond individual building boundaries. Indeed, it can play an integral role in achieving the cultural transformation required to create a sustainable built environment in Europe.

Recognising the importance of the architect's skillset

The energy performance potential of a building is governed by solutions developed by the architect during the design stage. Its connection to its site and users as well as its form, materials and long term flexibility have as much impact on the energy consumed by a building as the performance levels of its materials.

The design of 'smart buildings' cannot be seen as a universal solution to decrease the carbon footprint of buildings. Generally more fragile, smart buildings require high technical skill for their operation and routine maintenance. A greater emphasis is needed on the evaluation of buildings over their lifecycle so that architectural solutions such

as building form and mass, usability, spatial adaptability and other parameters are recognised as preferential over solutions that may appear more effective and lower cost in the short term such as mechanised/automated heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting solutions.

The reduction of energy consumption should not be the only objective. Designing sustainable buildings and cities should also take into consideration economic, social, environmental, political and cultural aspects affecting the built environment. Architects have the ability to address all these aspects in a holistic manner. They can enable populations to settle in secure, healthy and humane conditions and contribute to the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation of our societies to its effects.

ACE emphasises the importance of design studies, which offer long-term cost-effective energy-saving solutions. Priority should be given to simple, passive, low-tech, locally oriented solutions that do not consume energy and are less prone to human error. EU



Q AT A GLANCE

Organisation Description:

The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) is the representative organisation for the architectural profession at European level. Its headquarters and Secretariat are located in Brussels. Its membership currently consists of 46 Member Organisations, which are the regulatory and professional representative bodies in all European Union (EU) Member States, and accession Countries, Switzerland and Norway. Through them, the ACE represents the interests of over 545,000 architects from 33 countries in Europe.

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institutions should recognise and promote the contribution of architects to energy and resource efficient construction in all relevant legislation, standards and funding programmes.

Closing the gap between expected and achieved energy performance

Current legislation does not mandate the reporting of achieved operational performance or the validation of the indoor spatial and environmental quality achieved. This has caused major unintended consequences, including a significant gap between the expected and achieved energy

retrofitting of existing stock, has been decoupled from investment in the spatial and architectural design of buildings. With legislation focusing on technical solutions to energy efficiency, the business case to undertake spatial and architectural renovation as part of an energy efficient retrofit has been reduced. As EU member states embark on one of the largest retrofit efforts ever undertaken, there is a major opportunity to improve the uptake of efficiency measures by interlinking financial instruments with architectural design and renovation. By connecting energy efficiency with market drivers for

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performance of buildings that must be tackled by revised EU legislation. A transparent and harmonised reporting and benchmarking of building energy use and building performance indicators by member states should be introduced. There should be EU-wide disclosure of building operating performance across all sectors, as well as implementation of measurement and verification of energy performance in use.

Interlinking financial instruments for energy efficiency measures and architectural design

In recent years the financing of energy efficiency measures, in particular the

architectural renovation, the public investment in energy efficiency will offer far greater returns and achieve greater traction and robustness for technical solutions. Priority should be placed on the development of innovative financial schemes for energy and resource efficiency in buildings that appreciate architecture as part of the solution rather than an on-cost.

Research and Innovation in energy efficient buildings

Supporting research in the overlap of architecture and energy/resource efficiency is a priority if the legacy of EU investment

in energy efficiency is to stand the test of time. The architecture profession in Europe has much research potential but is in need of leadership to enable it to develop new evaluation tools, products and services. This is hampered by a lack of collaboration and a lack of research and development investment right across the construction industry. To resolve this, EU research funding programmes should be put in place that better target architecture SMEs and interdisciplinary collaboration across the construction industry.★