



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

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Architecture and Society

WG Urban Issues

Position Paper on the Urban Dimension of EU Policies

Draft 0.2.

Introduction

The urban dimension of EU Policies has significantly increased its profile and ambition in the last few years. This is evident in various political documents that have culminated with the adoption of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Cities as well as in the Regulations for the current period of the Structural Funds, in which the Urban Program has been mainstreamed.

In Communication 2006/385 of the European Commission, entitled "*Cities and Cohesion Policies: the contribution of urban areas for Growth and Jobs*" it has been recognised that cities are the motors for the economic and cultural development of regions and therefore shall play a major role in the implementation of both the Lisbon and the Gothenburg Agendas.

In order to achieve this target the exchange of experience(s) and knowledge between cities and cooperation between stakeholders are among the most important tools the EU is going to support, therefore the URBACT Programme has been re-financed and reinforced as URBACT II in the framework of the initiative 'Regions for economic change'.

At political level Urban Issues have been recognised as being the result of the interaction of many factors in the social, economic and physical fields and therefore shall be tackled by integrated and long term strategies and plans, with the involvement of all levels of government and a large spectrum of stakeholders, both in the private and in the public sector.

The ACE welcomes this process in which it is actively involved through the promotion of Architecture as a tool for achieving a better quality of life for EU citizens and a sustainable built environment.

Proposal

The ACE, through its Member Organisations, calls on professionals to take an active role in the adoption of holistic approaches in the design of buildings in order to minimise their environmental footprint, taking into account the needs of end-users and producing cultural and functional added value within their context.

Furthermore the ACE reminds all policy and decision makers of the need to take responsibility and immediate action in order to achieve the targets agreed in the Leipzig Charter.

Recommendations

In particular the ACE requests that:

- the EU shall elaborate and adopt a coherent policy approach to enhance the quality of the built environment in the EU.
- the European Commission should build on the experience of the Inter-Service Group on Urban Development - also providing more administrative support - in order to coordinate all related policies, actions and programmes within the Commission and to boost the role of cities in the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas.

- the Member States (e.g. the Ministers responsible for territorial and urban development) shall adopt policies and effective tools for the enhancement of the quality and sustainability of the built environment, as stated in the Leipzig Charter.
- Cities and their networks should take concrete steps to implement the principle of the Leipzig Charter into their development policies

This shall be done primarily on the basis of good practices already in place in several Member States of the EU and therefore a review of such good practices has been compiled by the Member Organisations of the ACE including:

- Finnish Architectural Policies, drafted by SAFA and adopted by the Finnish Parliament;
- Dutch Architectural Policies (Nedererlandse and Vlaamse Bouwmeesters)
- German and Austrian Architectural Policies (Baukultur)
- CABE (UK) a governmental advisory body to represent the interests of the community and the public sector, to assess and advise developers, professionals and communities in projects that have a significant impact on the Built Environment;
- Concentration of administrative competences in administrative bodies at metropolitan level in order to upgrade their infrastructure and face the challenges of the global competition at an appropriate scale (London City Council, Grand Lyon, Stadt Region Stuttgart etc)
- Guidelines for a transparent architectural competition policy in order to increase quality and reduce costs in the building sector (Stadt Wien, Austria etc)
- Innovative strategies and Pilot projects for sustainable town planning and construction methods in order to reduce CO2 emissions (Almere, Aalborg Malmö, BedZed, Vauban in Freiburg etc.)
- Regeneration of brownfields and deprived areas to avoid social segregation in city neighbourhoods (Ballymun, Hafenstadt Hamburg, Torino Progetto Periferie, Novy Liskovec in Brno Marxloh in Duisburg etc)
- Regeneration of the historical centre of European cities with development of new economic and cultural activities (Temple Bar in Dublin, Genoa, Santiago di Compostela, Saragossa etc)
- *To be completed*

In order to contribute to this agenda and long term strategy, the ACE is willing to engage the expertise of its delegates to contribute to the elaboration of a set of specific indicators of the quality of the built environment and to devise a European methodology for housing and public spaces, in cooperation with other stakeholders (Cecodhas, Eurocities, OECD etc.) with the aim of providing administrators, civil servants policy makers and communities with a practical tool to measure the impact of their policies on the built environment.

Draft by Antonio Borghi WGUI Chairman integrating some comments by the secretariat and the participant of the WGUI Meeting of 31st August 2007

6th September 2007