



The President
La Présidente

17 December 2007

TO: All delegates of member associations of ECTP

Dear ECTP colleagues

After the recent successful and constructive GA in Nicosia I would like to address a first letter to you all in order to continue in the line started by my predecessor and to maintain interest in ECTP activities.

Once again the Autumn assembly proved to be a very important occasion to meet and to work together on fundamental issues for our profession. The range of activities we are engaged in is wide:

- the platform towards the recognition of the planning profession represents a big task for the future which calls on you all to participate and contribute actively;
- the definition of the minimum core for the education of planners will also contribute to achieving more clarity on the distinctiveness of the planning profession in Europe;
- the organisation of both the Planning Awards and the Biennial needs the active involvement of your member organisations over the next few months;
- the discussion on “strategic planning towards territorial cohesion” will result first in a clearer understanding of the importance for spatial development of the work of spatial planners and second in an applicable translation of the EU territorial cohesion policy concept.

Beside these medium-, and long-term tasks, ECTP is called on to increase its role as meeting point for all those planners needing support in their daily professional life. ECTP now represents the biggest European network of planners and this huge source of expertise needs to be exploited and made available to all. Therefore we will open soon the list for individual experts that are available for supporting colleagues in other European countries.

As announced during the GA, ECTP has also to increase activities directed to spreading our discipline and knowledge among the many thousands of planners constituting our base, those planners active daily at the local or regional level, working for or within administrations, preparing or taking decisions on the development of cities and territories.

In order to reach out to our membership “base” and involve them more in the ECTP, the active role of all delegates is required. The need to create interest in ECTP activities through better information and targeted activities had already been addressed by the Past President in his letter to all associations dated Dec. 2006 (ref. <http://www.ceu-ectp.org/inc/cgi/pl/pl20061206.pdf>) and must be fostered in future.

I would therefore like to launch a small initiative to involve all delegates and their associations between now and the next Spring GA. It is mainly an initiative intended to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience between the various planning practices in Europe. We should bear in mind that planning approaches do not differ so dramatically across Europe; solutions or good practices can very often be widely adopted in differing circumstances. Moreover, issues and challenges affecting our cities and territories are very often similar to each

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other, so widening knowledge and exchanging experiences can help us develop greater insight and become more effective practitioners / professionals.

This initiative to be developed in the form of a small inquiry within your own associations will result in a working session to be organised during the next GA to allow all delegates to present the results briefly. The inquiry relates to a very dramatic issue needing raised awareness and target actions at all levels.

The issue is that of **climate change**. This was already addressed by the past President in a letter to all associations (ref. <http://www.ceu-ectp.org/inc/cgi/pl/pl20060824.pdf>) and was widely discussed in recent days by the United Nations at the Conference in Bali.

As already stated by our Past President: "We cannot yet foresee the consequences of climate change on our activities as planners; [...] but we can already see that there are consequences for sound spatial planning [...] and a stronger demand for the planners' ability to integrate contributions of other disciplines into spatial plans."

Support of the Kyoto Protocol, the reduction of CO₂ emissions, the struggle against the global warming will help in preventing climate changes thus in avoiding extreme weather conditions and disastrous events. This will help Europe and the rest of the world by securing healthy and safe living conditions to all.

What planners can do in facing this big challenge can be divided into two different actions; those aimed at reducing impacts such as creating secure living environments especially in zones prone to flooding or protecting existing settlements from these risks, and those aimed at more active prevention such as reducing polluting emissions, controlling water systems, reducing or compensating land-take for urbanisation, applying sustainable measures in all planning schemes.

What we sometimes do not notice is that some of these good practices already exist in form of rules, legislations, norms, planning acts, regulations, etc. and are applied especially in local plans, schemes, or even in projects.

The request to all of you is to collect this existing set of standards or requirements which are in force or simply practiced in your countries (locally or regionally) and which directly or indirectly contribute to preventing climate changes even if at a very small scale.

We will invite all delegates to present the results of this inquiry during the next GA, and then we will collect all those planning rules which might inspire other colleagues in different contexts, trying to present that in a more or less systematic way to become available for all European planners.

I hope you will start this analysis / survey asking your members for contributions, stimulating at the same time the discussion about the important role planners have to play in the future of Europe.

Hoping to have provoked your interest and looking forward to hearing from all of you!

Yours sincerely

Virna Bussadori
President