

Report on the Sixth Meeting of Heads of School of Architecture in Europe

Koenraad VAN CLEEMPOEL
Antwerp, Belgium

Summary

The mission of this Sixth Meeting of Heads of Schools of Architecture was to continue 'Shaping the European Higher Architectural Education Area'. For the second time, the meeting was organised with the financial support of EU channeled through ENHSA ('European Network of Heads of Schools of Architecture'), which is a Thematic Network on Architectural Education, members of which are EAAE members who acted as the initiator of this idea. In 2002 ENHSA set itself as goal to create, in addition to the Hania Meeting, a website to facilitate the flow of information, the formation of thematic sub-networks and research into matters related to architectural training. This meeting focused on the last two items.

Indeed, as reported last year, working groups were composed to gather information on the subject of (1) Curricula of Architectural Education; (2) Exchange and Collaboration between Schools; (3) The relationship between Education and the Professional Context; and (4) Quality Assurance & Academic Assessment. These groups met in Antwerp in March 2003 to set out their methodology and strategies. The result was four questionnaires that were sent out shortly after the preparatory meeting. A presentation of the results and analysis of these questionnaires was at the core of this meeting.

It was made even clearer than in last year that many participants expect to receive specific information on specific issues during the Hania Meetings. The initiation of gathering systematic information via questionnaires from different schools was therefore highly appreciated.

During several meetings it was suggested that EAAE should take position in order to clarify, or centralise important information. The three most important issues are: (1) length and content of internship; (2) criteria for accreditation/validation – with special reference to design, and (3) consistency in the use of ECTS among schools of architecture.

During this meeting, the general assembly appointed the newly elected president of EAAE, James Horan. He sees the beginning of a maturity of EAAE and its Chania meetings and proposes to make the organisation more visible within EU. He will 're-affirm' in Brussels the Hania Statement 2001, and the fact that we should not dismiss the Architectural Directive. For next year's meeting, Horan suggests that the Council should try to identify one single area for 'in-depth' work.

By concluding it is necessary to mention, again, a subject that surfaced many times through the various sessions of the meeting, as well as the more informal discussions during coffee breaks and dinners: The issue of 'research' in the field of architecture, its nature and character, and related to that, problems encountered with quality assessment

by bodies who fail to recognise, and properly evaluate the core business of the architectural discipline: design.

Welcome and Opening

There are welcoming words of the following persons: Dimitris Antonakakis who breaks the good news that in 2004, Hania will have its own school of architecture as part of the Polytechnic of Crete. Conference organiser Constantin Spiridonidis welcomes the mayor and rector of the polytechnic of Hania. Spiridonidis proudly explains how the Hania meetings have matured and are now the venue to providing information and create durable networks and friendships. There are about 110 participants from some 85 different schools. This new record shows, again, that Hania plays an increasingly important role for architectural educators. Spiridonidis is pleased with the new school of architecture in this city and wishes it all possible success. He concludes by thanking the City of Hania and our host, the Center for Mediterranean Architecture, which also provides financial support. The mayor is still honored to have the Sixth Meeting of Heads in this city. He also acknowledges the support of the Center for Mediterranean Architecture in the creation of the newly founded school of architecture. The rector of the Polytechnic is also pleased to welcome us and wishes all the participants a fruitful meeting. The president of EAAE, Herman Neuckermans, nostalgically brings back to our memory the first meeting five years before and expresses his delight to see that there are already more participants than actual members of EAAE. He invites all to join membership of EAAE.

Keynote lecture by Professor John Habraken

Maria Voyatzaki introduces Emeritus Professor John Habraken, former head of the school of architecture of MIT and author of various books on the notion of urban fabrics and 'continuity' in architecture. The title of his lecture, "Questions that do not go away, some remarks on long term trends in Architecture and their impact on Architectural Education" refers to 'what makes architecture stick?'. Habraken diagnoses a certain malaise among architects, a lack of direction and unease. He believes that the reason lies in a counterproductive – because incorrect – manner that architects explain themselves to colleagues and to others.

There is a tension between our perception of cities that we all love, such as Damascus and Venice (referred to as Urban Fabrics, or environment), and the way that we consider architecture. The latter is a Renaissance model that came into being in the writings of Alberti who introduced the notion that the 'architect' becomes more important than the 'architecture', and that the 'personality' of the architect is somebody who had to focus on what was innovative. Habraken recognises Palladio as the first architect in the Albertian view. That new kind of architecture was independent from its local environment and works with a 'globalised' typology. Self expression of the architect becomes the norm. This disconnection of the environment causes the feeling of discomfort.

For the first time in human history everyday environment could no longer be taken for granted. So called specialists designed everyday environment with great devotion, like Gerrit Rietveld, Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Tony Garnier. With the best of intentions for the lay people, and also with great ambition, a new international brotherhood came about that held its own standards of excellence independent from

any local conditions. This resulted in the famous Modernist icons and the infamous housing blocks which were done by architects who shared the belief that making good architecture as they understood it, was not in conflict with everyday environment. Habraken sees an important contradiction in the properties of everyday environment with those the architects believe in.

Habraken distinguishes three elements that constitute 'good' architecture, which he explains under these headings (1) sharing values; (2) change and permanence, and (3) distribution of design responsibility. With the first he sees as instruments of sharing: type (concepts of a whole), pattern (relational conventions) and systems (ways of working). With change and permanence he refers to the delicate balance between them as projects become increasingly larger. When designing, architects must honor what was done before us and create space for what will be done after us, in other words to design 'open architecture'. This, then results in the third notion: distribution of design responsibility between different specialisations.

Consequently, the role of the architect is more and more diluted by this demand to share values and follow rules, by the demand for adaptability and by the distribution of responsibilities. How to educate the architect for this new role? A re-examination of educational purpose is in order. One thing is certain: For this new role we need all the creativity, talent, and ability to innovate that we are so proud of.

But that is not enough: creativity alone does not make a profession. There are creative and innovative people in all professions. A profession, according to Habraken, is identified by the body of knowledge that it is in control of; the skills that allow it to use that knowledge in design; the artistry by which it applies those particular skills and knowledge.

Perhaps we have to invent new ways of teaching design. The studio format of teaching is the sacred cow of architectural education. But it stems from the time when everyday environment was not yet the architect's business and is not sufficient to teach design for everyday environment. Design studio, according to Habraken, teaches the student how to make a successful whole, consistent and rich. But it is not the place to acquire skills. As the medical doctor must know the human body, so the architect must know everyday environment. This knowledge of the everyday environment must be acquired by research and theory. Architectural research until now was always depended on external knowledge and external research agendas, such as: acoustics, building technology, use and occupation, aesthetics, management. This, however, does not touch design itself. Therefore, Habraken concludes, architecture has to find a research agenda of its own.

Introduction

Opening of the Conference

The Conference Organiser, Constantin Spiridonidis, welcomes a record number of approximately 120 participants. He explains the method of this year's meeting which is the result of the conclusion of last year where it was decided to accumulate and analyse knowledge and information. The reason for this was that we continuously referred to personal experiences, without lifting the discussions to a more universal level. Precise and systematic information was missing.

At the final meeting of Hania 2002 four working groups were composed around the same subjects that also framed that meeting:

1. A European Curriculum for Architectural Education
2. Exchange, Mobility and Collaboration between Schools in Europe
3. Relationship between Education and Profession
4. Quality Assurance and Academic Assessment

These working groups met in a preparatory meeting in Antwerp in March. A significant result of that meeting was the questionnaires that 54 schools managed to complete despite the short timing. As it is within the mission of EAAE to provide data and information about its members, the aim of this meeting is just to do that: give presentations of the results of the questionnaires in order to generate constructive discussions.

As a warmer-up, Spiridonidis shows the rich potential of the information gathered so far via graphic presentations. The subject he analysed are: ranking of schools according to student / staff ration; relation between permanent and part-time staff; types of diploma delivered by the schools, (who has already implemented Bologna?); who offers 'intermediate' awards; the years of study before access to the profession; modularisation of the programme; duration of doctoral studies; percentage of outgoing students; whether supplementary work is asked from Erasmus students; control of studies abroad.

In terms of organisation and structure of the conference, each working group introduces their subject and present, among others, the results from their questionnaire. After the presentation, smaller workshops can discuss the issues in greater detail. Each session also concluded with a plenary discussion.

Session 1

Shaping the Curricula in the European Higher Architectural Education Space

Presentation

The members of this working group are: Loughlin Kealy (Dublin, Ireland), Kees Doevendans (Eindhoven, The Netherlands), Johan Verbeecke (Brussels, Belgium), Stéphane Hanrot (Marseille, France), François Tran (Lyon, France), Roger Liberloo (Diepenbeek, Belgium) and Pierre Culand (Bordeaux, France)

Kealy reports on what happened in the Antwerp meeting and the fact that the group on doctoral research and mobility merged. The composition of the questionnaire was steered by uncertainty about curricula from one another, and how it could affect, for example, mobility. He also refers to the – rather provocative – view of Habraken that in future, the studio may not be at the center of architectural education anymore.

Kees Doevendans presents the results of the inquiry on the current situation in relation to Bologna and the knowledge-based society. 51 out of 130 questionnaires were completed. The subject of ECTS was also included as it is the opinion of the working group that ECTS is also an essential means when dealing with curricula. The presentation is centered around 14 subjects: the size of the school; quality of education; duration of the study

program, final degree, intermediate degrees, admission to Architectural Higher Learning, Characterizing the Curriculum, Structure of the program, specialisation, Ph.D. and other advanced level studies, the value of research, research supervision and organisation, research issues and research perspectives.

As a conclusion, the working group observes a large variation in degrees and organisation of programs. The implementation of Bologna is an ongoing and slow process, but there is consensus on the fact that academic education in architecture will always consist of a Bachelors and a Masters cycle. The final conclusion are some recommendations on the role of EAAE/ENHSA: (1) to guarantee that professional masters in architecture have completed both the architectural Bachelors and the architectural Masters program, (2) to get architectural research on the EU agenda, (3) to draw up the quality criteria for research and scientific output in architecture, (4) to state the relationship between professional and scientific routes.

Stéphane Hanrot examines the meaning and position of doctorates in architecture by addressing and answering three questions: (1) What is the nature and legitimacy of architectural research? Epistemological progress, (2) How to do doctorates - The European networks? (3) In what context? The Sorbonne and Bologna agreements. Again, great diversity in the different 'routes' to obtain a doctorate is registered. Hanrot still believes that Bologna creates new and positive opportunities, but that common assessment methods need to be defined.

As a concrete example to facilitate international collaboration Johan Verbeeke presents the project of Meta-University, an international network of universities and design schools of architecture and urban planning. It presents design workshops and theoretical modules which are open to students, all participating schools of the network. It focuses primarily on the masters and its ambition is even to realise international 'joint Masters'.

Verbeeke also observes the difficulties and challenges in the exchange of students and study modules. An important tool to overcome many of these is ECTS: European Credit Transfer System. He therefore explains how this system works, its definitions and properties and what it could offer to higher education institutions. This subject will also be dealt with in the working group of mobility.

To conclude this session, Roger Liberloo elegantly defines the meaning of 'competence' of 'the art of appreciating what is educationally significant'. His introduction is on the frustration of hiring a fresh-out-of-the-school architect who does not seem to master the competence to remember, deduce or even undertake research to reconstruct knowledge acquired during studies. Liberloo therefore suggests defining the skills that we wish our students to display both in the Bachelors and Masters. He then defines 'competition' and the 'methods' to achieve this.

Discussion

James Horan opens the discussion by observing how many times the word 'knowledge' and 'data-base' was used. He repeats the task of EAAE to collect knowledge, store it and present analysis. He therefore hopes that more schools will complete the questionnaire.

Dimitris Kotsakis makes some corrections: there is no such thing as a Bologna 'Declaration', we should speak about Europe and not the European Union, and we are universities and not European universities.

Juhanni Katainen notes that because national legislation is gradually changing to encompass Bologna, our curricula will also have to move in that direction.

Richard Foqué and James Horan believe that, by discussing curricula, it is more important to talk about people involved than about the structures.

As a conclusion, Marvin Malecha refers to Hanrot's viewgraphs of the different routes to obtain a doctorate. He speaks from his experience in the USA where initiatives to create a unique route to obtain the one single degree of architecture failed tremendously. His advice is to keep diversity as much as possible and create networks to improve student mobility.

Session 2

Shaping the Relations between the European Higher Education Area and the Professional Bodies

Presentation

The members of this working group are: Lawrence Johnston (Belfast, UK), Denis Radford (Leicester, UK), Heiner Krumlinde (Bochum, Germany), Michèle Tilmont (Lyon, France)

Lawrence Johnston presents the results and analysis of the questionnaire on the relationship between the profession and academia. To start with the questionnaire addressed the UIA definitions on the subject, but then moved on to 'fundamental requirement', 'Codes of Ethics and Conduct', 'Registration, Licensing, Certification', 'Forms of Practice', 'Practice of Architecture', 'Scope of Practice', 'Internship' and 'Accreditation/Validation'. The nature of the questionnaire was such that one could agree or disagree with certain statements, or present comments. In general, there was overall agreement on the statements of the working group, and comments only showed the rich diversity in the different countries.

A second section covered the topic of profession, the requirements needed to pass a threshold to permit practice of architectural services and to establish what processes are undertaken by each state in terms of control, licenses and limitations. As already presented last year, the variety in the different EU member states of professional versus voluntary bodies is known, as well as the various interpretations of internship. The differences in entry examination to permit practices were also charted as well as the permission to practice.

The more sensitive issue relates to autonomy and/or the relationship between education and the professional practice. This part produced the richest variety; from close interrelationships beneficial to both parties where universities are regarded as pioneering laboratories, to no dialogue at all. The vast majority, however, said that they had – and wished to maintain – autonomy of control of the provision of architectural education.

Discussion

Internship and autonomy of curriculum

The discussion centers around the position of internship and its relationship to the

curriculum: in how far one can introduce professional practice in the curriculum. This confusion is reinforced by the ECTS guidelines of the EU itself as they recommended to include 'all' workload in the ECTS formula.

Pierre von Meiss and Leen Van Duin strongly oppose to the idea that internship should be honored with credits. They believe that EAAE should issue recommendations (like a Hania Statement 2003) in that direction.

As a reaction Aart Oxenaar from Amsterdam opposes the exclusion of internship from the curriculum as his school integrates the practice (by giving credits for practical training) with a theoretical approach.

Herman Neuckermans shares the views of the first two by stressing the autonomy of the curriculum and the fear to become too much involved with the profession too early. He believes that such a separation is necessary because academics must keep the capacity to have a vision of the future.

Denis Radford observes a trend in the UK, where Cambridge and other research institutions move away from offering 'full professional education'.

Leen Van Duin sees another problem: Bologna can become a system to minimise the cost for the government as Masters courses may not be funded anymore. In the Netherlands, for example, Masters students do already have to pay higher fees for their education.

Profile of alumnae

It is suggested several times to survey the activities of alumnae: architecture can be a 'house' with many 'rooms' and the discussion so far may be incomplete without having at least some ideas on the whereabouts of our students. The concept of 'integrated design' may become a more appropriate way to understand our educational goals.

Pierre Von Meiss believes that it is good to educate 'generalists', but one could introduce 'manors' and 'minors' in order to compensate the apparent lack of specialisations.

Juhani Katainen thinks that it would be wise to send signals from academia to the profession, as it happens often the other way around.

Concerning the importance and power of the professional bodies it is noted that we should not be blinded by their present influence as it might be weakened considerably in the future where the free market will increasingly occupy a central role.

Session 3

Shaping the Exchanges and Mobility in the European Higher Architectural Education Area

Presentation

The members of this working group are: Andrzen Baranowski (Gdansk, Poland), Koenraad Van Cleempoel, (Antwerp, Belgium), Nur Caglar (Ankara, Turkey), Guy Pilate (Brussels, Belgium), Jeanne France Ruan (Paris, France), Michèle Michel (Bordeaux, France).

Michèle Michel and Koenraad Van Cleempoel present the results of the questionnaire. Student mobility is widely accepted among the schools that responded to the questionnaire. The overall advantages are recognised as most schools provide good facilities for incoming and outgoing students. The most important conclusion, however, is the difficulty to operate a consistent ECTS system. ECTS was devised as a tool for quantitative measuring of work load in order to guarantee academic recognition of studies abroad and to improve flexibility for further studies abroad. ECTS should provide curriculum transparency and assistance in the academic recognition of courses followed by students abroad. These aims are not achieved at all.

The questionnaire clearly illustrated that very few schools actually operate a consistent ECTS as devised by the EU. Different schools operate, for example, different formulae to calculate the credits. The ECTS user's guide mentions that 'practical works' and 'seminars' ought to be included in the calculations, whereas 50% of the schools say they will not include studio work. The aimed 'readability' of curricula of other schools will not be achieved in this way.

The working group believe that EAAE could play an important role by taking a firm position and stipulate what should or should not be taken into account when calculating ECTS credits in schools of architecture. If three out of the four articles of the Hania Statement 2001 refer to ECTS, it is vital that all schools understand precisely what it meant by this, and also its implications.

On the issue of mobility and the curriculum there are two important conclusions: (1) that few schools are well informed about the educational programme and pedagogical visions of their exchange partners; (2) that a large proportion (36%) of schools demand extra work of their outgoing students on return. The latter was recognised by the working group as an unfortunate situation because it is not in line with the philosophy of Erasmus. The main reason is the lack of information (and sometimes also trust) on the programme of the guest institution. In order to improve this confidence and information over curricula of partner institutions, the working group believes that EAAE can play an important role to gather specific information and provide this on their website. In this respect it could also be recommended to make a critical comparison between the curriculum and mobility questionnaire.

The questionnaire shows that staff mobility is a problem: all schools agree that it is a good thing, but difficult to operate because of obstacles of availability (both personal and institutional). This shortcoming can perhaps be solved by sharing programs at Master level, offering integrated curricula, common diploma and shared research programmes.

The working group also speculated about 'mobility after Bologna'. The notion of 'vertical mobility' is introduced, where curricula will become the steering body of mobility. The Bologna process makes student more active in composing their curriculum (personalisation) under supervision of the institution.

Session 4

Quality Assurance and Academic Assessment of Educational Programmes in Architecture in the European Higher Education Space

Presentation

The members of this working group are: Richard Foqué (Antwerp, Belgium), Nuran Kara Pilehvarian (Istanbul, Turkey), Hansjoerg Hilti (Liechtenstein, Switzerland), Alan Bridges (Glasgow, UK), Joaquim Jose Braizinha (Lisbon, Portugal), Wim Schaefer, (Eindhoven, The Netherlands), Matteo Robiglio (Torino, Italy), Herman Neuckermans (Leuven, Belgium), Selahattin Onür, (Ankara, Turkey)

Richard Foqué and Matteo Robiglio introduce the subject by explaining the existing variations in Europe, both of the 'academic and 'professional' accreditation. As last year, Foqué strongly argues that EAAE should take position in this international debate. He therefore refers to the Hania Statement 2001 where it is said that "EAAE is willing to play a role in the development of a quality assurance and assessment system tailored to the needs of architectural education and respecting its diversity." Through the questionnaires this diversity is now becoming more visible. The specific needs of architectural education, however, are still problematic as it refers to the 'elusive' core business of architectural education: design.

Herman Neuckermans specifies the terminology and definitions. He puts emphasis on the actual aims of assessment, visitation and accreditation. Speaking from personal experience as a member of several assessment boards, he also refers to the particular nature of the architectural discipline. Examples of the assessment of staff are also discussed.

As an invited speaker to this session, Marvin Malecha (Raleigh, USA) speaks from his broad experience as a member on 27 assessment groups in the USA. His presentations show how far the USA had advanced with national accreditation and what importance it has for the schools and their reputation. Accreditation is organised by the national accreditation board. They ought to be considered as guests rather than policemen when they visit a school. They look at the outcomes and see how they can help. Accreditation started in the 1930s when there was a sudden boom of schools of architecture. 37 criteria were set out so as to impose a certain standard to schools. For each criterion there are three choices: pass, OK or fail. Assessment is something different: it is organised by the faculty as a continuous process of quality control.

The actual analysis of the questionnaire on the implementation of self-assessment procedures was executed, as last year, by Katia Baltzaki. She recalls that the working group decided during the preparatory meeting in Antwerp to include two key questions in the questionnaire: (1) what the main learning objectives of the school are, and (2) what each school believes to be best at. From the responses Baltzaki concludes that schools are still reluctant to get into deeper analysis of their own 'identity', even when it comes to recognising their own strong points. There were three parts in the questionnaire: for schools that have already implemented or that will implement self-assessment procedures; for schools negotiating with the perspective of implementing self-assessment procedures; and for schools that do not apply self assessment and have no intentions in that direction. The latter only represented 3 out of 46 schools.

In general schools recognise the potentials of self-assessment as a tool to enhance

internal quality. The most common reasons for implementation are the assessment of academic staff, recording student's opinion on courses and lectures, contributing to the strategic planning efforts of the university, quality development programs, governmental policies or external accreditation demands. Concerning the latter, in most cases self-assessment is connected to the operation of a national body and the legal regime of a country. The majority of the answers show that self-assessment results are used as feedback for the development of the educational work and as information for external peers.

Discussion

Richard Foqué opens the discussion by inviting comments on the possible role of EAAE; should it, for example, set out guidelines, criteria and standards? Or should EAAE, as Aart Oxenaar suggests, become an accreditation board in its own right? Matteo Robiglio opposes this view as EAAE is not yet ready for this. He is of the opinion that EAAE can play an important role in trying to define the criteria with which to measure schools of architecture.

Several participants stress the importance of diversity and autonomy; the suggested criteria must respect this diversity and not 'generalise' architectural education.

Herman Neuckermans senses a defensive reaction, which he believes to be wrong as we must understand the advantages of opening one's institute to a visitation board. 'Their views help you to position your school and to understand one's strength and weakness.'

Pierre von Meiss suggests bringing together the national criteria which already exist in EU (Germany and the UK). He recognises that the real difficulty is off course design. Yet he believes that it is impossible to assess this because there is ideology behind, and because there are many different interpretations in the various member states.

James Horan picks up the suggestions for EAAE to play a more constructive role. He believes that we have to be careful on how to find a way forward. It is only by taking careful steps, like challenging EAAE members to ask how they evaluate design that we come to something like guidelines.

Conclusion

This theme centers around two issues:

- the methodology on how to proceed with future meetings
- the role of EAAE within EU

On the first item there are several suggestions: The newly elected president James Horan proposes to select one single area for an 'in-depth' work. The Council can identify such a session. Another vision is that Stéphane Hanrot who recognises the nature of this meeting on presenting information. He believes that it might be appropriate for the next meeting to take unanimous positions on several issues and prepare a joint 'opinion paper'.

The conference organiser, Constantin Spiridonidis, believes that we have to improve the way in which we present our information and make it more consistent. He has the feeling that one is still discussing in the same manner as last year, despite the effort of questionnaires and different analyses. This opens the discussion on 'disclosure' of

information provided in this questionnaires, where most participants seem to agree that putting all this unfiltered information on the web is not advisable.

We must find a balance in the combination of Horan's proposal (in-depth) and the presentation of more coherent information. In order to advance the discussion Horan proposes to enlarge the working groups and come together again during a preparatory meeting where a single theme will be selected.

The president concludes the meeting by repeating his positive outlook of this conference. He is grateful to all participants for making this meeting possible and successful. He feels that EAAE matures with each Hania meeting.

The president is particularly grateful to Constantin Spiridonidis and Maria Voyatzaki for organising this conference, but equally for their key-role in the ENHSA Network that makes the Hania conference possible. These strong feeling of gratitude and appreciation for both organisers are echoed in a loud applaud of all participants.

