

Acknowledgements

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Constantin Spiridonidis

Maria Voyatzaki

Preface

Present Positions (in)forming Future Challenges: Synthesis of and Directions towards the European Higher Architectural Education Area

Constantin SPIRIDONIDIS
Thessaloniki, Greece, ENHSA Project Coordinator

How is my school positioned in the changing educational environment in Europe? Where will it stand in the new political environment dominated by the demand for quality, excellence, mobility, innovation and research? How can my school become better and more competitive in the new European Higher Architectural Education Area? Do the learning outcomes and competences of the graduates of my school correspond to the contemporary understanding of the profile of the architect in the European labor market? What do the other schools do? Which strategies do they adopt? Which priorities do they set for their future? Which initiatives do they undertake in order to assure a healthy survival in the growing competition, the increasing globalization, the rising centralization and the reduced funds for education?

This is the framework of the topics for the Eight Meeting of Heads of Schools of Architecture in Europe. For seven consecutive years the Heads of Schools in Hania have generated a broader milieu for the support of Schools of Architecture by offering a valuable and credible 'observatory' that surveyed the tendencies and dynamics of architectural education in Europe. At all previous Meetings we attempted to record the convergence and divergence that exist among schools in relation to the general principles, values and priorities in the education of the architect; to map the strategies adopted by schools of architecture for the organization of architectural studies with the perspective to shape the contemporary European profile of architectural education; to scrutinize the structure of architectural curricula in Europe and to circumscribe the competences and the learning outcomes of their graduates; to observe the differences in the evaluation and assessment methods adopted by the schools; to inspect the contemporary profile of the architect and to examine how the education offered by the schools will be able to create it.

This extensive amassment of information and data urges for a creative synthesis so that we will be in a position to discover where our schools are placed in relation to the new European Higher Architectural Education Area. We need this synthesis to see where we are, where we are going, what we have to do and what we need to do for our future in the competitive environment of architectural education in Europe. This time it is imperative to arrive, each one of us, at coherent conclusions, which will significantly support the decision making of the Head's of Schools of Architecture.

The Meeting attempts this synthesis by concentrating upon the following four major axes: sessions of debate and dialogue. The profile(s) of the Architect, the Content of Studies in Architecture, the System of Studies in Architecture and finally the research and innova-

tion in Architectural Education. Eminent Professors and personalities involved in architectural education were invited to present in each Session their syntheses based on their reading of the past three years published (see www.enhsa.net) proceedings.

The First Chapter of this volume includes the keynote lectures delivered by the honorary guests of the Eighth Meeting of Heads, Professors Marcos Novak, Tassos Kotsiopoulos and Juhani Pallasmaa.

In the Second Chapter we try to make a short presentation of the events organised by our Thematic Network during the academic year 2004-2005.

The Third Chapter attempts a synthesis of all past discussions on the contemporary profile(s) of the architect, their spread in the European area, the new conditions of professional practice and the labor market, the epistemological, legal and institutional background from which those profiles are emerging, the forms of collaboration schools have to redefine with the professional bodies, in local national and international level (for example the Architects' Council of Europe). This synthesis will try to reveal the tendencies and the dynamics related to the recent developments in the profession of the architect, the particularities that characterize each region in Europe, and to discuss possible initiatives for the future in order to protect and preserve principles and values that the academic and the professional world would attribute to the profile of the European architect.

The Fourth Chapter attempts to map all different aspects of the content of the contemporary architectural studies in Europe, emerging from our debates in the past three years. This mapping reveals the spectrum of views on the main characteristics that the reformed curricula should have, on the fundamental strategies for the contribution of the different subject areas shaping architectural studies, on the set of competences the graduates must have and the pedagogic paths through which those should be ensured in order for the new profiles of the architect to be formed. With a clearer picture of these records and the new information about the new European framework (for example the new qualifications Directive), we will be able to position ourselves and our schools on a European map, on a type of matrix which could help us find more compatible collaborators for more fruitful associations, more creative exchanges and more efficient protection and affirmation of our school's identity.

In the Fifth Chapter the system of studies will be the focal point. In the last year many aspects of the advantages and disadvantages of the different systems applied in architectural studies in Europe have been expressed. Political, epistemological, philosophical and scientific arguments have been presented revealing polyphony of ideas, concepts and references. With the imperative demand to go ahead, we now need a clearer picture of the different approaches and their background. We need a better understanding of the others in order to better understand ourselves, our preferences, our fundamental educational strategies which will structure the contents of architectural studies and will ensure the expected profiles of the European Architect.

Research and innovation are two of the keywords of the contemporary debate on architectural education. We tried to record the research engagement of our schools and we are presently trying to map the innovation around Europe. It is high time to anticipate a more coherent research strategy for our schools. The improvement of our research record can be achieved only after a coherent strategy, grounded upon a set of competences for the profile of the contemporary researcher in architecture. How can we assure those competences? Through which structures of the system and of content of studies? How the collaboration between us can improve our research activities. Which kind of initiatives our Network should take in order to support the architectural research production in Europe? These are the questions which the Sixth Chapter deals with.

In the Seventh Chapter is a synthesis of the discussions and suggestions made during the previous days with the ambition to be drawn useful and constructive conclusions, as well as to generate a framework of agreements on the various themes and on collective ways forward.

This volume will reach the majority of the European Schools of Architecture. We hope that it will contribute to the clarification of the minor and the major questions that Schools of Architecture are dealing with in the perspective of the creation of the European Higher Architectural Area.