


Dear AESOP Community,
Dear colleagues and friends,

I am sure you would like to know more about the motivations of a Professor, age 58, with a stable academic position as Chair of Spatial and Environmental Planning at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Oporto (FEUP) and Director of a fairly large planning research centre, the CITTA, to become an AESOP Secretary General candidate?

I will try to briefly explain my reasons and motivations:

- 1) First, and foremost, I like AESOP and, in particular, the AESOP community. Maybe it is a naïve statement to start with, but it is true. More than an association of planning schools, AESOP is a community of academics and students, of different ages and backgrounds, sharing common values and principles, where I found in the past, and I can find in the present, brilliant thinkers and researchers, and also some good friends. Affection in this respect matters, at least to me.
- 2) Secondly, I had already decided, well in advance of the first announcement of these SG elections, that this year would be the right time for the younger and most talented colleagues to take over my current roles of Director of the Spatial Planning Division at FEUP, Director of our Doctoral Programme and Director, as well, of our Master in Spatial Planning and Urban Design. Throughout the last two decades, and with great pleasure I have to say, while I was steadily accumulating a number of management duties I could see younger colleagues developing and strengthening their competencies and skills. It seems now the appropriate time to redistribute among them the tasks I had been institutionally engaged for a quite long time. As such, in the next years, I will have time enough from my working hours, to dedicate myself to the time consuming tasks associated with the exercise of the SG responsibilities.
- 3) Thirdly, I believe my long and diversified experience as academic, researcher, consultant and manager, both in the public and in the private sector, in Portugal and abroad in Europe and elsewhere, will be particularly useful to carry out the SG duties with competence, enthusiasm, understanding, creativity, and determination whenever necessary, supported on a professional secretariat and with the full backing and commitment of my own school.
- 4) Indeed, I would like to say that I am confident of my capacities to motivate, facilitate and negotiate, to establish bridges, to reflect and come back, to work together, in particular with AESOP's President and all the other governing bodies and working groups, and to learn from those with more experience and, above all, to be prepared to spend an intensive year of training under the leadership of our current and rather experienced and competent SG.
- 5) Fifth and finally, to keep this motivation letter short, in times of an alarming discredit on the European project and on the European institutions, I would like to modestly contribute to the strengthening of the European dimension of our association, very much in line with a number of initiatives already taken by past and present AESOP's Presidents, SGs and ExCo members, to encourage new memberships, in particular from European countries still under represented in our association, and to foster a more visible and active presence and effective influence on the European planning policy agenda. I firmly believe on the role of spatial planning and on the potentials of our large and rich academic and research community to make Europe a better place to live and to work.

Oporto, 2014-05-29


Paulo Pinho