

AESOP Council of Representatives Meeting

MINUTES

7th March 2014

University of Lisbon

DRAFT VERSION

PLEASE SHARE YOUR COMMENTS WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL BEFORE 2ND MAY 2014

Present: 7 AESOP Officials, including 6 Executive Committee members and 19 National Representatives which makes 26 members of the Council (List attached)

There is a quorum required by the Charter.

Welcome address by President Gert de Roo

The President welcomes the Country Representatives at the University of Lisbon and opens the meeting. He asks all participants to introduce themselves shortly. After the introduction, he presents the agenda for the meeting and discusses it briefly.

The President ask the Council to accept the minutes from the last meeting (July 2013, Dublin).

Minutes from the Council of Representatives meeting held in Dublin are accepted.

President's Statement (Gert de Roo)

The President starts with referring to the ExCo meeting from the day before and informs about two particularly important issues discussed: *InPlanning* Digital Platform and the AESOP Quality Recognition for the European Dimension in Planning Programmes.

Other important topics that need to be mentioned are: unpaid membership fees, new AESOP members, activities of the AESOP Thematic Groups, Congresses in Utrecht and Prague, and the new AESOP look.

The President expresses an opinion that the joint AESOP-ACSP Congress 2013 in Dublin addressed the topics which created good perspective for the further discussion and development. Moreover, it was also beneficial due to profound discussion with the ACSP. He stresses that for the future congresses AESOP should consider topics related to innovative topics, otherwise our congress may lose participants.

The President describes briefly the collaboration with ACSP, informs that there is a good contact both with the former president Charles Connerly and with the new one - June Manning Thomas. There are several actions that can be conducted together: webinars and the cooperation between YA Network and the Bowling Team.

AESOP collaboration with the GPEAN may probably become more intense. Furthermore, the most important actions and projects that would be conducted in the future by AESOP are: quality recognition of the courses, YA Network activities like for example booklet series and open-access journal. The main target for AESOP is to become digital, global, younger, and of high-quality.

Since there are no comments on the statement from the Representatives, the President asks the Secretary General to present her report.

Secretary's General Report (Izabela Mironowicz)

The Secretary General introduces the report, presents the main points of the report according to the agenda, and indicates that there are several issues that need approval, decision or confirmation by the Council.

The Secretary General discusses the National Representatives elections and informs that there is a document in the Files Repository precisely describing the election rules. The Secretary General presents the general regulations: procedure of appointing/electing National Representatives by AESOP Full members, mandatory period and key dates in 2014 elections. All the regulations will be also available from the AESOP website shortly after the Council meeting. Apart from information on the website, Secretary General, who according to the Charter is responsible for the general oversight of the election process, will send the special information to all National Representatives who shall organise elections in their countries. She will also address directly the members who shall appoint new representatives.

The Secretary General informs also that the first meeting of the newly elected Representatives will take place on 9th July 2014 in Utrecht. There are neither questions nor comments.

The next point of the report is the ratification of new AESOP members. SG presents shortly the institutions applying for AESOP membership, accepted already by the Executive Committee following the recommendation of the experts from the AESOP Expert Pool:

- **Erfurt University of Applied Sciences**, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Section of Urban and Spatial Planning (Germany) – upgrade from Associate to Full Member
- **Aalto University**, School of Arts Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture (Finland) – Full Member (this would be the second member from the Aalto University)
- **UBT – University for Business and Technology**, Architecture and Spatial Planning (Kosovo) – Full Member (this would be the first AESOP member from Kosovo)

- **Gran Sasso Science Institute** (Italy) – Affiliate Member
- **Academy for Spatial Research and Planning** (Germany) – Affiliate Member

Secretary General asks for voting. The results are:

- 26 votes for accepting the upgrade of the membership of the **Erfurt University of Applied Sciences**, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Section of Urban and Spatial Planning (Germany) –from Associate to Full
- 26 votes for accepting **Aalto University**, School of Arts Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture (Finland) as a Full Member
- 26 votes for accepting **UBT – University for Business and Technology**, Architecture and Spatial Planning (Kosovo) as a Full Member
- 26 votes for accepting **Gran Sasso Science Institute** (Italy) as an Affiliate Member
- 26 votes for accepting **Academy for Spatial Research and Planning** (Germany) as an Affiliate Member

All schools are accepted by the Council as AESOP members.

The SG discusses the changes in the Award Committees and presents the new members:

- Maros Finka, Konstantinos Lalenis, and Valeria Fedeli in the Excellence in Teaching Award Committee.
- Umberto Janin Rivolin, Dominic Stead, and Roelof Verhage in the Best Published Paper Award Committee

The Council approves by acclamation all the new members of the Award Committees.

Calls 2014

The SG informs that the call for Heads of Schools Meeting 2015 has been just closed and no school applied. This issue will be discussed later during the meeting.

The call for AESOP | ECTP-CEU | IFHP | ISOCARP European Urban Summer School (EUSS) 2015 will be open in the second half of the year.

The call for the Secretary General 2015-2019 will be on the AESOP website in spring 2014 and elections will take place during Council of Representatives Meeting on 9th July in Utrecht. Ongoing Secretary General, although she is eligible for the re-election, is not going to apply for the position again. The SG discusses the Secretary General position, list of duties, AESOP administration and explains the requirements. She stresses that AESOP needs responsible and devoted candidate who is going to dedicate 4 years voluntary work to the association. She asks the Council to look for the persons suitable for this position and encourage them to apply. The President stresses the importance of the Secretary General and supports the request to identify possible candidates.

Events 2014

The SG presents the information about AESOP events in 2014.

She reports that the Lecture Series is a fruitful and successful event. Two lectures which took place in 2013 (by Peter Hall and Cliff Hague) are available to be watched from the AESOP website. The lecture by Juval Portugali regrettably is not possible to be watched due to the technical problems with the sound. The preliminary schedule for the 2014 includes lecture by Michael Batty in Groningen. A lecture hosted by Warsaw University of Technology, celebrating its centenary, is planned in autumn. The SG encourages the National Representatives to invite the member schools from their countries to host the Lecture Series. This event is relatively easy to organize and gives the school outstanding opportunity to present itself to the wider AESOP community.

The EUSS 2014 is going to take place in Tours hosted by the University Francois Rebelais. The organizers have already launched the EUSS 2014 website where all information is can be found there ([www. http://euss2014.webs.com/](http://euss2014.webs.com/)) as well as on the AESOP website. The SG encourages Representatives to invite the PhD and Master students from their countries to apply. The SG presents the book documenting the EUSS 2012, which took place in London hosted by the University of Westminster and informs that the book documenting EUSS 2013 hosted by San Pablo CEU University in Madrid is likely to be ready in summer 2014. All the publications are and will be available in pdf format from the AESOP website. The SG stresses that due to good collaboration with the partners she managed to get an external financing for the EUSS books therefore AESOP gets only benefits from this activity, which does not create any expenses for the AESOP budget. Council is being encouraged to invite the schools to host EUSS.

The SG reports that AESOP Brussels European Liaison Office (BELO), following the recommendation of the Council expressed during the meeting in Dublin is currently working on a joint application for the COST programme together with ECTP-CEU, ERSa, ISOCARP, and EURA. In case of success AESOP together with the partners would get 4-years financing of our selected activities (€130.000/year). The results of the application will be reported during the next Council meeting on 9th July in Utrecht.

The SG provides update concerning AESOP Thematic Groups. There are very active and successful groups, which organize a lot of events and update their blog on AESOP website regularly. On the other hand, there are also TGs that are not very active and it seems that they might not be functioning well. For the next Council meeting the SG will present the list of the groups which should be dissolved. The other important issue regarding TGs is the annual report which should be sent to the Secretary General by the end of January each year. So far, only two groups delivered their reports. Even the groups which applied for AESOP funding in 2013 (and got it) failed to deliver the annual report. The SG expresses her concern that the situation should be improved, because AESOP community supports TGs and should be informed about their developments.

The SG informs that one of the Thematic Groups, namely 'Monitoring of the European Landscape

Convention' has been dissolved by the ExCo on the request of the coordinator of this group, which is no longer active.

The SG informs about an application for a new Thematic Group 'Sustainable Cities'. AESOP Representative GPEAN, Ela Bablik-Sutcliffe, examined the application and recommended it to be accepted. The ExCo therefore recommends to accept the new AESOP Thematic Group.

The Council approves the new TG “Sustainable Cities” (26 votes for, 0 against, 0 abstain).

AESOP Identity Project

The SG discusses enhancing AESOP identity. The goal is to make the AESOP identity coherent, visible, strong and unique. The main issue is to highlight the values AESOP represents. Practical aspect is to make it possible to include AESOP Identity guidelines in the new technologies and products like for example our publications. Secretary General, following the resolution of the ExCo was working on this project and it will be ready for the final presentation during the next Council meeting on 9th July in Utrecht. However, today the demo version of the new AESOP website is being presented to the Council. The website is the main AESOP communication tool and before launching it the Council should have an opportunity to assess it and give the feedback to the SG.

The new website apart from the new, fresh and modern look prepared by the professional studio cooperating with the SG and AESOP website webmaster has a lot of new functionalities as well as mobile phones and tablets version. The SG introduces the demo version of the new AESOP website, discusses its design, and informs that the new functionality should be tested. She asks Council for help with testing and improving this new website. The SG looks forward to receiving the comments, recommendations and advices of the Council before launching the new website in July. The Council will shortly receive an email with all technical information how to access, test and assess the new website.

The Council expresses its appreciation to the project and to the fact that the representatives have been invited to participate in the process.

DISCUSSION: InPlanning AESOP's Digital Platform (Gert de Roo)

The President presents the InPlanning Digital Platform and indicates that the Council would be asked to approve financial support for two actions linked to it.

He provides update about the project presenting two Dutch journals, a few books, YA Booklet Series issue, and two video-messages available on the platform.

The President shows the InPlanning App available for the tablets. He describes the advantages of the Platform. In his opinion the project will be a support for the AESOP member schools and their programmes. It will help to reduce the quantities of books that are needed for scholars, fitting into AESOP's greening policy. Furthermore, AESOP will have no interest in cooperation with publishers, therefore it will help AESOP members to save money. It will be also essential link with YA Network. The project can be also used as a supportive tool for additional actions (e-

learning). *InPlanning* Digital Platform is an innovative tool that will supposedly help AESOP become a pro-active front runner and pioneer. The working team is still exploring possibilities of new development, for instance to link with practitioners.

The President presents the *InPlanning* Digital Platform website and discusses its design and content, including the coffee-tables with books, tools for making notes or comments, and direct use of the Google browser. He stresses that the platform is a stepping stone for AESOP to share information through tools, books, journals, via open-access, towards e-labs and simulations. The President discusses the cooperation with the Apple Inc. and explains the costs of downloading the documents via the App. He admits that the project had a relatively slow start, but now it is accelerating and he hopes that the progress will be shortly not only visible but also satisfying for the AESOP community.

The President addresses the results of the questionnaire sent to the Council regarding the *InPlanning* Digital Platform issue. He discusses in detail answers to the questions no. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The number of the respondents varies from 21 to 23 depend on the question. Majority of them considers the initiative of value to the country they represent (for various reasons). Nearly half of the respondents would be willing to start initiatives such as in the Netherlands to make use of AESOP *InPlanning* Platform. The questionnaire shows also that AESOP would have a support to facilitate its own journal, but under various conditions. Majority of the respondents is willing to motivate their colleges to participate in the project. The MOOCs also gained respondents' general support for further investigation. The President asks for the feedback, but there are no responses.

The President presents a team that is working on the *InPlanning* Digital Platform project. He explains the financial structure (starting budget, subsidies, how to be self-supportive) and costs (price per product, price per year, free download via website). Next, he discusses the possible threatens: drifting away from AESOP core tasks, financial difficulties, unbalance of products and participators, not being widespread, split in academic and popular products, and problems with quality control. However, the President believes that the difficulties could be overcome. He also informs that YA Network is very much in favour of the project and hopes to develop it in the future.

The President presents the idea of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), which are packages of books, journals, videos, documents, cases, projects, exams, Skype interactions, and much more. He stresses that it would be beneficial to set up a scientific/editorial board dependant on each country/language zone. He hopes that GPEAN and ACSP would join the project.

The President informs that the *InPlanning* Digital Platform is also supposed to be used for the purpose of the Sense of History project. He introduces Derek Martin who presents the current status of the project. Derek Martin discusses the idea for the project, namely 100 years of modern planning. The project is supposed to explore what planning has achieved during this centenary, how different actors contributed to it, what laws and policies were developed, what urban design, big projects, invents, institutions, planning theories, concepts, and movements there were, etc. Hans Mastop was supposed to take a lead in this project, but due to the

personal circumstances he had to withdraw. The project will be continued, however, couple of things may change. Main medium will be the *InPlanning* Digital Platform. Thus, a separate, open-source module will be made in order to present ideas and issues connected with the history of planning and its links with today practice. However, the first step is to create a clear framework to balance the contribution: laws, conceptions, people involved in planning, etc. Therefore, a steering group of 8-10 people is needed to make the first contribution to start the process. The President encourages the Council to look for people who could be interested in joining the project and contributing to it.

The President opens the discussion on the *InPlanning* Digital Platform.

Jan Schreuers admits he feels astonished with the idea and believes that the platform might be useful for AESOP and planners, however, he is still not convinced. He wonders whether the project could be more innovative and suggests more interactive approach like a platform for discussion for many actors. He asks also what decisions have already been made in terms of AESOP involvement.

President describes the latest decisions: last year €7.000 was dedicated to the project from AESOP budget, all money has been already spent, and platform has been prepared and purchased. He stresses that it is hard to estimate cost of the project, since it is pioneering and no similar data are available. Currently, the project does not generate any income, but it should be rather considered as means like an infrastructure, for example a framework for setting other actions. At the moment he is going to ask the Council to allow spend a little bit more funds on this platform to provide all the functionalities.

Vincent Nadin admits that he appreciates AESOP being digital. However, he stresses that the *InPlanning* Digital Platform means at least 4 components: digital platform, open-access journal, publishing books, and MOOCs. He suggests that all these activities should be considered separately, as the attitude towards each of them may vary.

Camilla Perrone appreciates the opportunities that the *InPlanning* Digital Platform provides. She stresses the potential of the *InPlanning* Digital Platform for linking with practice and practitioners. According to Camilla Perrone, AESOP should use the platform to open academia and research to communities and planners. She suggests re-inventing AESOP meeting to make them open to hosting cities, planners practitioners, planning communities and activists. The President agrees that AESOP can interact both ways. Being a learning community obliges AESOP to think of ways of obtaining the feedback from the “practice” and the *InPlanning* Digital Platform may be such a solution.

Joachim Schoeffel expresses his scepticism about the project and asks about the feasibility and financing. The President encourages the Council to examine the *InPlanning* Digital Platform, test it, and see how it can be used for purpose of each school and each programme.

Jose Miguel Fernández Güell discusses the *InPlanning* Digital Platform in two aspects, namely publishing and MOOCs. Firstly, he wonders how the Platform would relate to his own school – would it compete with it or, in contrary, support their publishing. He admits that he would be

interested in using the Platform for publishing, especially when his school is running out of money. Thy President responds that AESOP surely should not become a competitor to the schools, but rather a support for them. The school's journal or publications could be therefore available on the *InPlanning* Digital Platform. Jose Miguel Fernández Güell appreciates this solution. The second issue are the MOOCs, which are rather interesting; however the financial aspect seems not to be completely clear. The President informs that the MOOCs can be developed into a series of documentaries. One of the Thematic Groups is also invited to participate in this activity. The President suggests that experts who support the project in setting up a documentary might get certain amount of money if the course is used by schools. The financial mechanisms would ensure that professionals who participate and share their knowledge will get an income. However, there is no business model established so far.

Maros Finka appreciates the fact that AESOP is looking for new goals. However, the *InPlanning* Digital Platform seems to be a rather serious business and he wonders whether it is still AESOP's task to maintain such an activity. He suggests that the ExCo may be overloaded and AESOP should figure out how to outsource the *InPlanning* Digital Platform while ensuring it is protected and will not slow down. The President agrees that the Platform project needs to go its own way, but in close interaction with the Council, the ExCo, and the community. Also linking with other associations would make the project stronger, however, it must be stressed that the project's is rooted in AESOP.

Francesco Lo Piccolo stresses that there are two crucial aspects of the AESOP Digital Platform. Firstly, not all departments and schools are in the same condition – the financial context may vary according to different countries or schools. Secondly, the other disciplines which have their own well-working open-access journals, gain usually strong(er) status among the universities. Given these two factors, open-access journal may improve planners' status and could be an efficient tool to establish a solid position in the education system. Another issue that is worth consideration is the possibility of writing in own languages. Publishing in English is rather common, however, the writing for our own communities in order not to lose the contact with the local context is equally crucial. Therefore, the *InPlanning* Digital Platform might be an opportunity to achieve balance of goals, to publish in own languages, and to improve planners' status.

Fernando Nunes da Silva appreciates the progress and the idea. He stresses that the *InPlanning* Digital Platform might be a good solution for a resource capture, as nowadays it is relatively hard to select valuable information. The *InPlanning* Digital Platform might improve knowledge on the ongoing processes, activities, and events. Furthermore, the Platform might be used for popularizing the conferences and making them more open. In other words, the conferences might be “published” on the *InPlanning* Digital Platform and commented. Also, the project can be a platform for national or language cooperation, as was indicated by Francesco Lo Piccolo.

Paulo Pinho admits that the project looks ambitious. He agrees with Vincent Nadin that the activities should be split and considered separately. Moreover, he stresses that the idea might be good, but it is also very important and crucial to find a solution how the platform should be

maintained and conducted. The President agrees that the further conduction of the project is a very important issue, however, it must be well-embedded in AESOP structure. He stresses that if AESOP does not take on the challenge, it may fall behind.

Jan Schreuers expresses a belief that 'business model' might not be a good term, because it is not just about the finances and costs of the project. He suggests that AESOP should balance between investments and benefits from the project. It should be also remembered that one of the means that would be invested is the time. Therefore, his proposal is to re-think the priorities in terms of the Platform and choose on what action the money and time should be spent on. He stresses that the *InPlanning* Digital Platform is innovative only when it is highly interactive, more than just the sticky notes. He agrees that the aspect of too much information is also very important and, in this regard, the Platform could be useful tool for filtering valuable data. Moreover, Jan Schreuers highlights that AESOP should legitimize itself on a global arena and extend its influence.

The President agrees that AESOP should prioritize the actions and think of the goals it wants to achieve. Surely, sharing the knowledge with others and making progress are crucial aspects. He addresses the ACSP which is more and more inner-oriented and stresses that AESOP would not follow such a way. On the contrary, the aim is to be more open, linked with others, and to move ahead.

The President asks CoRep for support for two actions. The Treasurer informs that the money would be taken from the assets, as the financial auditors advised. The SG offers the possibility of discussing the *InPlanning* Digital Platform and its detailed development online. She can establish a discussion blog on the AESOP website, if the Council wishes so.

The President asks the Council for €5.000 euro for YA Network to set up a platform within the *InPlanning* Digital Platform for an open-access journal. He stresses that this might be a stepping stone for AESOP journal.

The results of voting are: 17 votes for, 3 votes against, 6 abstained. The request is accepted by the CoRep.

The President asks the Council for €5.000 euro for the development of MOOCs, namely for identifying the possibility to work together with the Thematic Group "Planning and Complexity" to produce a coherent lecturing programme on a PhD level touching new and important issues. Probably, it would also use the lecture by Michael Batty in Groningen to start working on documentary series and digital programme.

Stefanie Dühr asks when AESOP can learn about it and how it can be used. Vincent Nadin expresses his concern with the decision making process, as no proposal was available to read and discuss.

The President apologizes for lack of a detailed proposal, but promises to create such a document and make it available online for the Council.

The results of voting are: 15 votes for, 4 votes against, 7 abstained. The request is

accepted by the CoRep, however the President is obliged to prepare a detailed proposal and share it online with the Council. After sharing the proposal, the Council will produce a feedback and if the tone is negative, the President will get back to the issue during the meeting in Utrecht.

After the lunch break a few representatives left the meeting. Still 21 were present and this number was sufficient for the quorum.

DISCUSSION: AESOP Guidelines for hosting Congress and Heads of Schools Meeting (Gerhard Schimak)

The Event Officer refers to the election that took place in Gdańsk. The issue that emerged there was how to deal with two good bids for hosting AESOP Congress. As a result, the Council discussed whether to make an *ad-hoc* decision or set up a rule first. The discussion created the framework for a proposal of new procedure to select hosts for AESOP congresses. He presents the document (available from the Files Repository) and discusses in detail the seven consecutive steps of the selection process. After the presentation of the paper, the Event Officer asks for questions and feedback.

Jan Schreuers admits he is most in favour of the old procedure. He understands that rejection is not a particularly pleasant; however AESOP should look for the best candidate to host an event. Therefore, choosing hosts for two consecutive years may decrease the event quality. Furthermore, other candidates may be left out of the stock. Another reason for keeping the old rules is a change of circumstances and conditions, for example a crisis may occur or hosting team may change significantly. Jan Schreuers argues that new procedure may be an opportunity to miss a better candidate and choose the worse one. The Event Officer stresses that choosing second best candidate is not obligatory, but just an option for voting. Additional advantage would be the feedback for the third candidate (if there is such) that its bid was not as good as the two others. The Event Officer argues that a risk of people replacements in the hosting team should be considered by the applicants – it is their inner strategy whether to apply.

Pantelis Skayannis discusses reasons for choosing one candidate and not choosing the second one. He argues that in case of having simply bad second candidate, those who voted for the first one, may vote not to select the second one. This procedure would ensure high quality of the hosts. Thomas Matta adds that there is always a risk of having not good candidate according to current rules, as there might be just one bid and there is no option. Ela Bablik-Sutcliffe stresses that it is not a strict/compulsory rule that AESOP must choose two consecutive hosts, it is rather a flexible option for the Council. The Event Officer informs that at the moment there is no general rule for choosing a host, therefore, it is not forbidden to choose candidates for few consecutive years. Accepting the procedure would be a step towards organizing and clarifying the selection process.

The Event Officer asks the Council to accept the new guidelines for hosting Congress and Heads of Schools Meetings.

Result of the voting: 14 for, 5 against, 2 abstain. The procedure is accepted by the Council.

The Event Officer appreciates the results of the voting. He stresses that the decision falls in line with the outcome of the questionnaire, namely question no. 1. He discusses shortly the answers given by the respondents¹.

The President encourages University of Lisbon to answer the call for hosting AESOP Congress in 2017.

Selection of the host of the Heads of Schools Meeting 2015

The SG informs that the call for HoS 2015 failed, as there are no applications. She wonders that the reason for such a situation might be the fact that no one expected the call, as there were many consecutive Heads of Schools meetings chosen long ago during one Council meeting and there was no call for a long period of time. Even addressing a few member schools which were initially interested in applying failed. The Event Officer addresses the new guidelines that have been just accepted and reminds that University of Lisbon took the meeting over from the HafenCity University in Hamburg which had to withdraw due to administrative problems. He informs that the call will be re-opened shortly.

Alex Deffner suggests that Hamburg might be interested in hosting the event in 2015. The President responds that AESOP prefers not to rely on Hamburg in this regard, due to past difficulties.

The SG kindly requests the Council to think of schools which may be interested in hosting the Heads of Schools meeting 2015. She asks for a feedback within 2 weeks whether they know a school which may be willing to host the event, otherwise AESOP might be behind the schedule to organize the meeting.

Pantelis Skayannis asks about the criteria on which a host would be chosen.

The Event Officer explains that the decision can be taken during the next Council meeting on 9th July in Utrecht. The President reminds that the applications should be delivered before the congress, but the decision can be postponed to the next Council meeting.

AESOP Finances (Thomas Matta)

The financial auditors, Louis Albrecht and Andreas Voigt, appointed by the Council have checked AESOP finances and financial statements 2013. They decided that AESOP has a good-looking

¹ A mistake was made in the analysis of question 1 of the questionnaire about Lisbon to be invited to reapply for or to be invited to do the Annual Congress 2017. The definite outcome is: 63,6% favours reapplying, 36,4% favours an invitation. This mistake has been discovered after the ExCo and CoRep meetings. The revised version has been uploaded to the CoRep Files repository, Directory: *Council of Representatives Meeting LISBON 07-03-2014*.

financial situation. Their report includes a few recommendations.

The Treasurer starts with the Treasurer's Report (all documents are available from the Files Repository). He reads the whole document aloud. Next, he presents and explains the Financial Statement 2013. He informs that the ExCo needed to modify the budget, which was approved by the Council a year ago, however, the balance is the same. The Treasurer discusses the budget in detail, stressing the loss which is generated by unpaid membership fees. He informs about: the emergency meeting between webmaster, Treasurer and Secretary General (in Wrocław, December 2013), the unexpected site visit in Prague, YAN request for supporting their meeting in Vienna, double-paid invoice (by mistake), and the sale of the assets. Then, the Treasurer presents the Assets 2013. He discusses it briefly highlighting the bank fees and the sale of assets (€20.000). The next document that is presented by the Treasurer is the Financial Audit 2013 by Louis Albrecht and Andreas Voigt. The auditors concluded their report with the statement that 'all account transactions are accurate according to documents provided'.

The Treasurer asks for feedback and questions.

Camilla Perrone asks about the budget of the Excellence in Teaching Prize Award Committee. The Treasurer responds and indicates the position in the budget.

Jean-Michel Roux asks why so many fees are unpaid and how it can be changed. The Treasurer responds that sometimes schools may lose invoices or forget to pay them. Also problems with bank system or school system might be a reason. He informs that he sends e-mails with request to pay the fee. There is a link to generate an invoice in this email Jean-Michel Roux admits that the APERAU might be also a reason for not paying fees by French schools, as the money has been always transferred through them.

The President asks the Council to discuss the issue of unpaid fees within their countries. The Treasurer informs that a new invoice system, which has just been established, allows him to check who has downloaded the invoice and who has not. Therefore, he will have more control and knowledge of what is happening.

Karel Maier asks about a possibility to suspend the members. The Treasurer responds that suspension is possible. The list of members to be suspended is already prepared by the Treasurer and the SG. If members do not pay for three years they receive warning letters that they will be expelled. This is now the case for at least for 4 or 5 universities which will be suspended in July, during the next Council meeting.

Maros Finka adds that it is rather unfair that some universities fall behind on the payments. He suggests AESOP to be firm and strict regarding the fees. Furthermore, he stresses that the French schools are autonomous members and they should not blame their problems on the APERAU.

The Treasurer asks the Council to approve the first part of the report.

Result of the voting: 20 for, 0 against, 1 abstain. The Council approves the Treasurer's Report, the Financial Statement 2013, the Assets 2013, and the Financial Audit 2013.

The Treasurer discusses the AESOP Budget for 2014 in detail. He informs once more about problems with the membership fees and about a great number of projects that are being conducted. The Treasurer explains the idea of a separate account(s) for these projects. The money for the project would be deducted from the assets as auditors advised. He informs that YA Network will obtain less money than they used to get, as a result of the already finished YAN new website (AESOP paid for this). The overall balance is heading to zero; however, there might be even a profit, if all fees are paid. There are neither comments nor financial requests.

Result of the voting: 21 for, 0 against, 0 abstain. The Council accepts the AESOP Budget 2014 by voting.

The Treasurer leaves the meeting.

DISCUSSION Accreditation of Schools, Qualification of Courses (Francesco Lo Piccolo)

The Vice-President discusses the background and the history of the project and the whole idea. He presents the working group: Maros Finka, Anna Geppert, Kristina L. Nilsson which have been invited to help him to develop the project. He reminds that there is rather significant variety in planning schools, due to cultural context, regulations, national system, etc. Given the plurality of the schools, the idea was to establish a fair process helping and supporting the schools in the issue of quality recognition. AESOP already delivers recognition of programmes to planning schools by accepting their membership.

The additional assessment of courses would be conducted on a voluntarily base, as a link with the mission of AESOP "Promoting excellence in planning education and research".

The Vice-President refers to the CoRep questionnaire. Question no. 2 explored the issue of the formal procedures of accreditation and quality assurance for planning degree programmes already established at the university or/and in the country. Majority of answers (65,2%) were positive, with a focus on an academic excellence.

Question no. 3 was checking whether the respondents are satisfied with the already existing procedures: "To your experience the accreditation and quality assurance system of your school would require improvements and/or changes in order to...". Majority of the respondents (60,7%) answered that it would be due to "improve international quality assurance and accreditation, considering the growing demand for cross-national mutual recognition of educational achievements". The answers suggest that it would be beneficial to establish a procedure which would give more importance of significance to the multinational dimension of the planning curricula. A few respondents (39,1%) were also in favour of "matching curricula contents with professionally relevant learning outcomes".

The Vice-President considers the results of the questionnaire as satisfying and encouraging for

the further work on the quality recognition project. He stresses that the project is not about competition between members, but rather about the cooperation between the schools and learning from each other. Therefore it should not be confused or mistaken with the accreditation. The Vice-President highlights that the idea concerns the programmes (not the schools) and would definitely not provide marks to participating schools.

The Vice-President discusses the timeframe of the project. The Heads of Schools meeting, in particularly workshops to be held on the following day, would be an opportunity to develop a concept and methodological proposal and to test the procedure. He stresses that it should be a fast, transparent, and efficient process. Then, the Vice-President asks the Council to volunteer for a pilot study with a group of programmes. The pilot study would be conducted in 2014 and 2015. Analyses of the outcomes of this preliminary phase would be discussed and commented during Heads of Schools meeting 2015. If it is successful, it will be established as a firm procedure for the future.

The Vice-President explains the procedure. The pilot study would be voluntarily, performed with no or very limited costs and would deal with just one programme. An evaluation would be prepared by a panel of three people: two AESOP academics from different countries and one person from the external body, probably a practitioner, but it is still not defined. The panel may also benefit from the support of one AESOP so-called 'cultural mediator' from the country where the university being part of pilot study is located, who would explain the national system, regulations, etc. The Vice-President discusses the proposed structure of the report and the guidelines for the assessment. Two factors would be probably taken into consideration, namely the background (coherence with AESOP core) and the European dimension. He indicates that the issue will be discussed more coherently during the workshop.

Jan Schreuers asks what the 'academic excellence' is and how the three dimensions: education, research, and practice could be brought into evaluation. The Vice-President responds that the assessment would focus on the quality concerning the educational dimension, however, the two other aspects would be kept in mind as they influence the education. He stresses that it is rather important to realize how education influence research and practice. Jan Schreuers asks whether the considered dimension would be European or international. The Vice-President responds that the initial idea was concerning just the European context, but now it is rather international.

Jean-Michel Roux asks whether the assessors would just read a programme information or would they visit the schools. The Vice-President informs that it is an issue that should be discussed, however, the idea was to reduce the costs. He hopes that for example Skype meetings would be efficient. He also stresses that it is now a first, preliminary phase, thus, it should not be too complicated and too costly. The discussions and interactions with students would be also rather beneficial. Jean-Michel Roux asks what the Europe can bring to planning. The Vice-President answers that the project would not be expanding outside Europe, however, it can be used to generate income for AESOP, for example by giving an accreditation mark to the overseas schools asking for a European accreditation.

Pantelis Skayannis suggests that the project should deal with recognition, not with the

accreditation, as the attitude may be negative. He also asks whether the project is connected with the previous activities in order to keep continuity of the Expert Pool. The Vice-President responds that it might be challenge to encourage schools to participate. He stresses that the project cannot be scaring. Therefore, the process should be more simple and friendly. Thomas Dillinger reminds that TU Vienna was the only university asking for the Expert Pool service because they were launching a new programme and that was a reason for asking EP for the opinion and advice. He admits that it was useful and helped Vienna rather a lot. He also suggests that Vienna might be interested in re-evaluation, but wonders what benefits would there be. The Vice-President stresses that the quality recognition project is supposed to be useful for other members. The more schools participate, the more information to share there will be. Thus, the mutual learning process between schools would be more important and efficient.

Camilla Perrone asks how to deal with the fact that some activities are not regular and it would be hard to define a list of activities. The Vice-President answers that the working group agreed that the project would focus on the idea of European curricula. It would not be a typical accreditation. Camilla Perrone asks about the criteria for defining the quality. She wonders how the evaluation process would be run in the 'pilot' schools – would it be self-evaluation or would it be discussed with the Council. The Vice-President responds that this issue has not been discussed yet.

Karel Maier asks what would be evaluated precisely and what would be the result of this evaluation. The Vice-President responds that no general quality will be addressed, as it is up to the national system. AESOP would focus rather on European quality. The evaluation would result in report or a document that can be shared. Surely, no certification would be given.

Paulo Silva appreciates the idea and admits that it would be rather a good umbrella when schools are being asked whether there is anyone evaluating their activities apart from the national system. He also asks about parameters to evaluate programmes given a rather significant diversity of courses. The Vice-President answers that the criteria would be adjusted according to various countries, but it needs further consideration.

Jose Miguel Fernández Güell asks what would be an added value of the recognition. He believes that for example better chances in the labour market would be a significant incentive. He wonders how to encourage schools to participate in the quality recognition. Maros Finka responds to this statement that an added value might be just a recognition on its own. He stresses that it would be probably better to formulate our own rules or criteria of assessment instead of letting others evaluate AESOP schools. He believes that we can conduct such a procedure ourselves and not rely on external bodies. Supposedly, AESOP should not be a competitor for other organizations, on the contrary, we could rather address for example ECTP to be a part of the process. He believes that broadening the procedure, having in mind low costs, could be a next step towards the future developments. Maros Finka addresses also the issue of a labour market. He suggests that paying attention to the European quality would help AESOP students to gain the universal skills that would help them to find a job at the European market.

The Vice-President thanks warmly for the feedback.

Presentation of the AESOP Congress 2014 in Utrecht and Delft (Vincent Nadin)

Vincent Nadin discusses the ongoing preparations for the AESOP Congress to be held in July. He informs that a comprehensive report was sent to the SG, therefore he would like to highlight just the main points. Everything is settled now and the LOC is working with a professional conference agency. Two comprehensive meetings with track-chairs took place and there were lots of interaction and discussion. Vincent Nadin presents facilities and venues of the congress. He informs that there were 896 submitted abstracts, from which 812 are accepted, including 504 extended papers and 308 pitches. Thus, only 10% were rejected. He explains that there will be full-day workshops during which people can be taken to more distant places. Moreover, there will be 18 roundtables. He presents the abstract distribution according to tracks and admits that the distribution looks rather reasonable. Vincent Nadin presents and discusses the chart showing distribution of countries from which abstracts came. Unexpectedly, China is on the second place. He suggests this may be probably caused by Chinese students studying in Europe. He also informs that there will be a film festival. The congress will be opened by the Minister of Infrastructure of the Netherlands. To fall in line with greening policy and the InPlanning Digital Platform, the conference programme will be available on mobile phones.

He presents the venue of the PhD Workshop near Delft. He informs that there were 86 applications and only 40 applicants will be selected for the PhD workshop. It will be conducted by 6 mentors, with a support from 2 PhD students, 2 YA, and 1 administrative person.

Vincent Nadin informs about key dates of the congress, registration, and paper submission. A longer and more detailed report will be available in the Files Repository.

The President thanks for the presentation and asks for the questions.

Maros Finka addresses the new system of the contributions, namely the extended papers and the pitches. He hopes that the quality of papers will get better and better and the spectrum of participants will be broader. He asks why 10% of papers were refused. Vincent Nadin responds that the percentage was carefully laid down with the track-chairs. The idea was to set up a quality to start with. The rejected papers were mostly inadequate, badly written, or they did not fit to the topic. He informs that one of the criteria for moving papers to the pitches was the possibility of making presentations. In some cases it was rather obvious the topic would not take more than 5 minutes or there is not enough content for a full presentation. Track-chairs usually wanted to make sure that the abstracts can be transferred into good papers.

Derek Martin asks about the roundtables: whether there was a quality control or whether all were approved, whether they will be in the same moment in programme and overlapping, whether they are from external parties or from internal AESOP structures. Vincent Nadin admits there was a quality assurance, the attention was paid mostly to the relevance of the topic and proper organization, therefore, the abstracts and leading team were checked. Only one proposal for roundtable was rejected in the end. The roundtables are different than tracks and majority of them fit into the conference theme. Unfortunately, all roundtables will happen at the same time.

Alex Deffner points out the structure of the tracks as they are clearly imbalanced, which should

be a topic for the discussion for AESOP. He stresses that the presentation time should be also strictly controlled by the chairs, as the difference between extended papers and shorter papers may be fuzzy – the extended papers may be presented in a shorter time than scheduled, thus, the pitches can be extended a few minutes if there is still time. Vincent Nadin admits that track-chairs should be aware of the time schedules and limitations. He stresses that the LOC tried to avoid overlapping sessions, however, in some cases it was rather difficult to do. In some sessions just 4 papers were allocated, while in others there are even 6 papers.

Thomas Dillinger asks about procedure to present these 5 minutes presentation and whether they are grouped or not. Vincent Nadin responds that there is a possibility of using the 5 minutes presentation in a positive way. The group of those presentations could be a good start for a longer discussion. However, the issue will be further discussed with the track-chairs.

The Event Officer believes that it would be hopefully a very interesting congress with many innovative ideas, new experiences, and lessons to be learnt.

Information about World Planning Schools Congress 2016 in Rio de Janeiro (Gerhard Schimak)

The Event Officer reports that the site visit in Rio de Janeiro organising WPSC 2016 was postponed two times, but it should happen within two weeks. There is nothing new concerning the congress, the situation is still not clear, and still there is an option to go to Washington in case of demonstrations in Rio de Janeiro. However, congress in Rio de Janeiro would be probably cheaper than the one in the US. The GPEAN will need to decide whether they remain with the Brazil or change the venue.

Presentation of the concept of the 2015 AESOP Congress in Prague and PhD Workshop in Bratislava (Karel Maier)

Karel Maier discusses the Congress 2015 in Prague. He refers to a fact that Czech Republic and Slovakia used to be one country – Czechoslovakia. Therefore, to remind that such a country existed, the PhD workshop will take place in Slovakia. Karel Maier discusses the theme of the congress which was evolving from responsible planning to “definite space and fuzzy responsibility”. He explains the ideas and reasons for such a theme. The venue, facilities, and congress date are also discussed. Karel Maier informs that the congress date may be still changed. If the pitches in Utrecht prove to be a well-working solution, they may be implemented also in Prague and this may influence the time frame of the congress. Karel Maier presents proposal of the the congress fees which will not be higher than 400 euro.

Pantelis Skayannis asks about the tracks. Karel Maier responds that it is not fixed yet, as the traditional proposal of tracks was rejected by the ExCo and the issue is still under discussion with the Event Officer. Pantelis Skayannis expresses a remark that making new track names needs a lot of care in order not to alienate participants. If the topic is very specific, it could address certain projects instead of papers. He suggests that there might be the general tracks with more specified sub-tracks. Also, there is no track for example for simple land-use planning,

but there are many tracks addressing more unusual dimensions of planning. The President refers to a fact that there are more and more participants, so people manage to fit into themes and tracks. He adds that the issue will be further discussed and developed.

The Event Officer admits that the tracks cannot be too specific, otherwise people would be alienated. On the other hand, too general and broad tracks might be either not a good solution, as everyone would fit in. Karel Maier informs that they will look for a balance between track titles and congress theme.

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No issued are raised.

Conclusions

The President rounds off the meeting. He appreciates that AESOP is growing and has the new members, however, he expresses his concern about the members who are not paying the fees. He reminds the main outcomes of the meeting: the budget was approved, the InPlanning Digital Platform can be further developed with two routes, namely YA open-access and MOOCs. The new AESOP website and identity guidelines are being developed with the cooperation of the Council. Also new guidelines for hosting events, recognitions of programmes, and call for SG 2015-2019 are worth mentioning. The President warmly thanks the Council for the cooperation and interaction.

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Notes:

Magdalena Wagner
SG assistant