

# THE EUROPEAN URBAN SUMMER SCHOOL (EUSS) AND YOUNG PLANNING PROFESSIONALS AWARDS (YPPA)

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In 2010, the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) launched a new annual event: the European Urban Summer School (EUSS) for young planning professionals. AESOP wanted to bring together young professionals and experienced academics and practitioners across Europe to discuss spatial issues.

AESOP's aim was to facilitate a better trans-European understanding of planning issues, promote an exchange of ideas and foster a debate on the most important planning topics. These aims corresponded with AESOP objectives set out in the AESOP Charter.

AESOP offers its teaching resources at EUSSs. Members of AESOP – European universities teaching planning – host the event. The EUSS is not a commercial venture. It is meant as a platform of debate and should be run on as low as possible fee for participants. Tutors do not get any fee for their work.

## How it all began...

UN-Habitat, represented by its Central European Office in cooperation AESOP in September 2010 organized the 1st European Urban Summer School (EUSS) for young planning professionals. The host was the Wrocław University of Technology, Poland. The topic of the EUSS was *Heritage and Sustainability*. Izabela Mironowicz was the head of the school while Krzysztof Mularczyk acted as UN Habitat Coordinator.

The 2010 EUSS took as its starting point the fact that urbanisation is a global process, yet it has left a particular legacy in European cities. Students and tutors with diverse backgrounds congregated from all over Europe and beyond in a central European city to gain a better understanding of urban change. Reconciling heritage with development was the challenge to achieve a more sustainable urban future. 'Sustainability' was conceived here as a balance between historic legacy, regeneration and citywide urban transformation. Wrocław, the host city generously provided the empirical setting to test these assumptions, to verify their validity through international comparisons, and to offer young professionals the opportunity to elaborate interventions towards a more sustainable urban future.

The outcome of EUSS 2010 has been published in *Urban Change. The Prospect of Transformation*, edited by Izabela Mironowicz and Judith Ryser (ISBN 978-83-7493-570-8). The book is also **available for download** from the AESOP website. Soon it will be ready for comments on the AESOP Digital Platform InPlanning.

AESOP asked other European partners from planning organisations, the European Council of Spatial Planners-Conseil Européen des Urbanistes (ECTP-CEU), European Urban Research Association (EURA), International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) and International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) to be involved in the 2nd European Urban Summer School (EUSS) in Lisbon, hosted by Lusófona University. Diogo Mateus was the head of the school and the topic was: *Quality of Space – Quality of Life*.

During the EUSS 2011, participants and tutors explored the definition and meaning of quality of urban space and its relation to the quality of life. Analysing carefully selected cases, they asked numerous questions: did these places lack quality? what was quality itself? how it did relate to urban space? what was essential about quality of urban space? were there components increasing quality of space? what kind of mechanism affected quality of space? But description and analysis were not the goals. They helped with understanding but they did not deliver the answer.

Therefore, the EUSS 2011 also looked for the methods for evaluation, monitoring and improving quality of urban space. Participants tried to compose the guidelines for assessment quality of urban space and comprising the set of tools for refining it. Young planners wanted to offer a solution not only ask the questions.

In 2012, within the framework of the so-called 'Decade of Planning', AESOP decided to invite ECTP-CEU, IFHP and ISOCARP to officially join EUSS. They were therefore active partners in this 3rd EUSS organised by the University of Westminster.

At this last EUSS, an initiative from the Netherlands was integrated into the summer school and challenged young planners with contemporary spatial problems: the *Young Planning Professionals Award (YPPA)*. This is an annual, 3-year international competition (2012-2014) funded by the Directorate responsible for planning at the *Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (mI&M)*. Its aim is to stimulate thinking and promote innovative ideas on how spatial planning in Europe can adapt its form and methodologies to take on the present-day challenges and transformations facing our human settlements. The underlying thinking is that it is largely the younger generation (< 35) of planning professionals who will have to come up with the answers, as it is they who will have the responsibility to plan and develop those settlements in the near future.

The ministry asked IFHP and ISOCARP– both then with secretariats in The Hague - to organise the Awards. They decided to bring in AESOP and organise the Award within the framework of the jointly run EUSS. The theme of the Award is related to the theme of the EUSS. The winners get free participation at the EUSS and present their papers at a special session. The papers form part of the EUSS publication which is also generously supported by the mI&M grant.

The theme in 2012 was *Adapting cities to scarcity: new ideas for action. Trends, perspectives and challenges of spatial development in a phase of de-growth an decline in Europe*, in close relation to the theme of EUSS 2012 *Times of Scarcity – Reclaiming the Possibility of Making*.

This year's award went to Clenn Kustermans for the paper *Shrinkage is Sexy: a New Strategy to Make a Shrinking Urban Area the Most Vital Part of Town* and Sebastian Seyfarth for the paper *Costa de la Ruina: Neglected Places at the Costa des Sol All the Way from Malaga to Manilve*. You will find their papers in this publication along with papers from the runners up and those deserving of an honourable mention.

All partners aim to continue with the EUSS and YPPA and establish it as the platform for young planning professionals for presenting their ideas on major planning issues to equip the profession with new ideas to meet contemporary and future challenges. We are particularly delighted to see

the development and improvement of the European Urban Summer School becoming more and more a robust environment of planning ideas and concepts.

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