



Application AESOP Annual Congress 2014

University of Utrecht:

prof.dr.ir. Luuk Boelens

University of Delft:

prof.dr. Tejo Spit

prof. Vincent Nadin

prof.dr. Wil Zonneveld



*prof.dr.ir. Luuk Boelens, prof. Vincent Nadin
prof.dr. Tejo Spit, prof.dr. Wil Zonneveld
Utrecht/Delft June 2011*

Introduction

With this application we wish to announce our candidacy for the organisation of the AESOP Conference of July 2014. This bid for the AESOP Annual Conference 2014 concerns a joint application of

- the University of Utrecht, Faculty of Geosciences, Department Human Geography and Spatial Planning; and
- the Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Urbanism.

The two universities are separated by only 70 km (or 45 miles) in the Randstad of western Netherlands. They have complementary profiles in relation to planning research and education combining socio-geography and institutional expertise (Utrecht), and urbanism, regional design and governance (Delft). Both university departments have very strong international networks.

This combination has resulted in a proposed theme that will accommodate a wide range of interests:

SPATIAL PLANNING – FROM CONTROL TO CO-EVOLUTION.

Proposed theme

The proposed theme – *spatial planning – from control to co-evolution* - examines the transition of spatial planning from an emphasis on the technocratic control of urban development to the collaborative shaping of territorial co-evolution. In reference to similar insights in biology and evolutionary economics, with coevolution we refer to the interactive developments of various elements, themes or issues in space, which could appear indifferent or even hostile to each other initially, but provided a fruitful or suitable environment, could develop into more robust and resilient situations. These are often surprising and innovative crossovers, exceptional, complex or even chaotic at first sight, but rather than imposed from the outside-in or top-down, evolving bottom-up or inside-out from themselves. We will ask to what extent planning models and doctrines in education and practice have really addressed this challenge.

The theme is inspired by developments in both the theory and practice of spatial planning and related disciplines such as economic geography and political science. From the 1980s planning literature has increasingly switched from technocratic and control-centred ideas about planning to engage with the increasing complexity of socio-spatial systems. Fresh and novel perspectives on planning have emerged from theories of spatial complexity, self-organisation, actor-oriented and collaborative governance, relational space and other positions. They have addressed the increasing fragmentation of spatial development and society in a context of climate change risks and the need for more socio-economic resilient developments; the retreat and decentralisation of the state; and the overriding challenge of integrated governance coordinating disparate policy actors across territorial boundaries. In addition, the current Dutch national administration recently dropped its primary focus on spatial planning in its international often-renounced “*ultimate planning paradise*”. Thus while that paradise is no more at hand, it requires a final reconsideration

of the position of spatial planners in the current era of (post-) financial and economic crises.

Many questions are raised about the competence and expertise of planners, forms of planning that can mediate relations between state, market and civil society, and the means to assure accountability. The outcome of these new perspectives has been a reorientation of much of the academic discourse repositioning planning practice away from a technical science concerned with fixed plan and decision making within the government domain and its set boundaries and scales of action. Instead, planning is recognised to be dealing with a much more uncertain world requiring a combination of technical and political approaches, the creation of new institutional or governance settings, and a wider portfolio of tools beyond 'the plan'.

The headline *-spatial planning from control to co-evolution-* emphasises the transition that has or is taking place in planning theory, planning practice and planning education. In much of the world there have been major steps in the evolution of planning education and practice in response to more complex conditions. In Europe, approaches to spatial planning based solely in the traditions of urbanism or land use regulation or economic development are also now seeking to achieve more strategic and integrated approaches. These developments are sometimes matched in planning curricula. But this evolution is by no means universal. The technocratic view of planning and its rigid zoning plans divorced from wider stakeholder interests, remain the dominant conception of planning in much practice and teaching in Europe and elsewhere.

The theme combines attention to theoretical developments and knowledge of planning practice and would therefore benefit from interaction between a wider range of knowledge domains. We would propose to seek more cooperation with the practice networks such as ISOCARP, INTA, IFHP and others. Therefore we need more preparation time to organise a

robust interaction between the former separate congress-worlds of the practitioners, politicians and housing authorities, with AESOP. Therefore we would need an early decision of COREP. Nevertheless the theme will also accommodate the general list of tracks that AESOP congress participants will expect to see and the needs of AESOP's special theme groups.

In addition the Utrecht-Delft proposal would like to give special emphasis in tracks to international comparative planning and policy transfer; linking policy and urban design approaches to spatial planning; urbanisation and planning in delta regions; spatial planning and metropolitan governance in complex networked regions like the Randstad; water management and the risks associated with climate change; regional development and the role of universities; and the role of the heritage and the historic core in planning.

Information about the organizing schools

Utrecht

The University of Utrecht is a globally leading university ranked 11th in Europe, 1st in the Netherlands and 50th in the world according to the Shanghai Ranking of World Universities. It has around 30,000 students, 5,500 scientific employees and an annual turnover of around €750 million. The Faculty of Geosciences is the largest academic institute for Geosciences in the Netherlands, with some 2,200 students on five bachelors and nineteen masters degree courses. It has a leading international position in academic research into the earth sciences, sustainability, migration and urbanisation. In cooperation with the city and province of Utrecht the Faculty is seeking to present the Utrecht region as a centre of excellence on sustainable environmental and spatial planning in the broadest 'people, planet, profit terms'. The mutual cross-fertilisation between, for instance, the evolutionary theories developed within the socio-economic disciplines, and the actor-relational approaches developed within the spatial planning disciplines, makes a significant research and educational contribution to providing integrated solutions for the complex challenges currently facing society.



Academy Building Utrecht University

Delft

Delft University of Technology has around 16,500 students, 2,700 scientific employees and an annual turnover of around €500 million. The Faculty of Architecture is the largest academic institute for Spatial Design, Engineering and Building in the Netherlands, with some 3,000 students on three bachelors and five masters degree courses. With a core of leading international architects, planners and building technologies and prominent scholars it strives to deliver students and PhDs to become high achievers in the international context, based on unrivalled and innovative research. Combining technological aptitude, context and creativity, the department of urbanism integrates urban design and landscape architecture with technical engineering and spatial planning. In order to address the great challenges of sustainable development in delta areas and metropolitan regions, it is committed to an open perspective, sharing expertise, research and education, both abroad and in the Netherlands.

Through these two organising schools, the AESOP Annual Congress 2014 will have a broad profile, which will be stressed furthermore by involving the regular organisations of ISOCARP, INTA, IFHP and others.



TUD-Architecture Campus

The reason to host the event

Spatial planning (in the Netherlands) is currently facing a final and fundamental transition. The profession faces the challenge to translate the more or less theoretical considerations and arguments with respect to actor oriented, collaborative, relational, governance and (co)evolutionary approaches towards effective, democratic and resilient planning practices. Given the path dependency of spatial planning, it is not a simple thing to do. Nevertheless, at these times some scattered, cautious initiatives have emerged with regard to for instance, 'integrated care communities, the energy transition, water management, main/brainport planning 2.0 and resilient regional development practices. These practices will have gained more maturity by 2014.

Next to that, the last time that AESOP attended a Dutch Planning School is approximately 15 years ago (Nijmegen 1997). Nevertheless, at this moment the prominent and international well-praised Dutch planning system has undergone radical changes. Discussing the outcomes of those changes will be a major item within the overall congress theme.

Therefore, the new Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (of which the national spatial planning bureau is at this moment one specific Department) also supports this proposal. Additional support will be given by the Randstad provinces (South-Holland, North Holland, Utrecht and Flevoland), which have gained major spatial planning responsibilities from the national planning authority.

Information about the location

Although the annual AESOP Congress will be organised by both the Utrecht and Delft departments the main conference will be concentrated at one venue – the Utrecht campus. Related activities will be divided between venues on the separate locations.

The University of Utrecht will therefore house the actual AESOP Congress itself.

The Delft University of Technology would house one track that is particularly relevant to its interests, which would be combined with a visit to the Architecture Faculty. TU Delft would also be pleased to host the PhD workshop preceding the annual conference, and it offers to organise the AESOP Young Academics Network conference in 2014.

In addition, both Universities will organise the excursions, and some of the supporting presentations. In this respect both Universities are in reach of less than 45 miles (1 hour drive) of each other and part of the bigger Randstad metropolis. In and around this area both Universities will organise several practical tracks/excursions with regard to:

- the specific characteristics of urbanisation and planning in global delta-regions;
- spatial planning and metropolitan governance in fragmented and polycentric regions;
- main- and brainport planning beyond the quantity driven plans and measures;
- co-evolutionary planning in inner-city areas and with regard to the growing number of elderly people;
- self-organisation with regard to spatial management and energy transition;
- the role of the heritage and historic core in planning;
- etc.



Randstad + travelling distance Schiphol Airport-UU/TUD Campus



Location Utrecht-Uithof Campus



Department of Architecture TUDelft

Final arrangements will be made approximately one year beforehand (depending on the maturity of the respective projects), but we are already deliberating if some of those supporting tracks could be given en route in (reserved) trains, boats or other public transport means, in order to be time-effective and get the idea of 'what you discuss is what you see'.

Utrecht can be reached from Schiphol Airport by train (without interchange) within 35-45 minutes.

Delft can be reached from Schiphol Airport by train (and one interchange) within 50-60 minutes.

The schools' organisational capacity

Recently, the University of Utrecht has created the Facilities Service Centre (FSC), which is responsible for the rental and/or organisation of representative areas and facilities for events and conferences. This FSC Congress and Exhibition Office of the Utrecht University organizes yearly some 20 national and international conferences, symposia, meetings and events for groups of from 50 up to 1200 people, of which for instance (in 2011) the Annual congress of the Dutch Justice Departments, the International Congress of Social Neuroscience, the ESCP Spring Conference, the 18th BENELUX Zoology Congress, the Annual congress of the Dutch Society for immunology.

For that purpose the University of Utrecht houses within its central area (Educatorium, including attached Marinus Rupert Building and new Library Building) three big meeting rooms (ranging from 350-800 people), eight mid-sized meeting rooms (ranging from 100-300 people) and more than 40 small workshop rooms (ranging from 16-80 persons). All have standard AV equipment (computer, projector, screen, sound system etc.) built in. If necessary (for instance with regard to the opening or closing ceremonies) bigger venue rooms can also be reserved in the historic Academic Building of the University (up to 1000 people), or outside the University within or in walking distance of the inner-city area of Utrecht (up to even 10,000 people).



Educatorium Utrecht Campus



Library Utrecht Campus



Rupert Building Utrecht Campus



Architecture Building TU Delft Campus

The FSC Conference and Event Bureau has also made pricing agreements with several hotels in the vicinity of the Utrecht University:

- Grand Hotel Karel V (five stars, 121 rooms, € 150,-/night)
- Hotel Midland (four stars, 135 rooms, € 120,-/€ 140,-/night)
- Apollo Hotel Utrecht City Centre (four stars, 90 rooms, € 120,-/135,-/night)
- Hilton Royal Parc Soestduinen (four stars, 113 rooms, € 106/night)
- NH Hoteles Utrecht (three stars, 313 rooms, € 85/night).

Furthermore, we can organise for the organisation-reserved accommodation in

- Sandton Malie Hotel (four stars, 45 rooms)
- Court Hotel City Centre (four stars, 26 rooms).

Both are located in the historic inner-city area of Utrecht

If necessary, an additional 500 rooms could be reserved nearby the University of Utrecht in the three or four star range.

Financial deliberations

The annual budget of the Faculty of Geosciences of the University of Utrecht is approximately €40 million. The annual budget of the Department of Urbanism in the University of Delft is approximately €4.5 million.

But in addition, the organisers can guarantee themselves by the financial and organisational support from Elsevier (Chris Pringle, MILT), who is willing to take financial responsibility for the event, carrying the risks in case it makes a loss, but also earning part of the profit if there is any. In turn, the respective University boards - that are both the Rectores Magnifici and Deans of the two Universities - support this proposal logistically.