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AESOP News Section

Celebration of AESOP Birthday: Launch of AESOP-IFHP Lecture Series

Izabela Mironowicz, AESOP Secretary General

Schloss Cappenberg is a place of extraordinary meaning for AESOP. Here, on 24th January 1987, Klaus R. Kunzmann managed to gather a group of enthusiastic academics who decided to found a new association that would bring together European planning schools (see box 1; photo 1).

25 years later, AESOP is a vibrant community that is able not only to celebrate its birthday in Schloss Cappenberg in presence of all AESOP Presidents and almost all Secretaries General (see boxes 2 and 3; photo 2), but also to invite partner planning organizations for a debate about opportunities for future cooperation and joint projects. The birthday meeting on 27th–28th January 2012 gave us a good pretext to learn from the past, as well as to look towards the future. This is why this meeting was an excellent moment to launch our new project: the AESOP-IFHP Lecture Series, established within the Decade of Planning Framework (more about both the Lecture Series and the initiative of the Decade of Planning in disP 179–4/2011).

The meeting would not have happened without the significant help of Technische Universität Dortmund, which offered its resources and hard work both on the organization and on the content of the event.

Dean of the Fakultät Raumplanung, professor Christa Reicher, invited all our guests for a welcome reception on Friday 27th January (see photo 3). The essential part of this afternoon was a lecture by professor Benjamin Davy “Do Planners Have Heroes?” (see photo 4), which was exploring not only the issue of the persons that might become plan-

ning idols, but also ideas that shape our planning imagination and the profound meaning of the icons and symbols. It tackled the subject of rankings in the planning context and associated it brilliantly with the problem of language and paradox of local/global impacts on planners’ work. The vibrant discussion which followed the lecture reflected the variety of points of view; from the basic question whether planners really need heroes and what is the “outline” for being a planning hero, to the very precise list of idols we should adopt into the planning Pantheon.

The AESOP Birthday celebration on the 28th January in Schloss Cappenberg started with the meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries General of the partner organizations. Our invitation accepted: Anna Geppert (APERAU), Dominique Lancrenon (ECTP), Marina Cervera Alonso de Medina (EFLA), Charlie Karlsson and Richard Kelly (ERSA), Flemming Borreskov and Derek Martin (IFHP), Ismael Fernández Mejía, Piotr Lorens and Alex Macgregor (ISOCARP), Gordon Dabinett (RSA). AESOP was represented by Kristina L. Nilsson, Gert de Roo, Izabela Mironowicz and Klaus R. Kunzmann, who was chairing the discussion (see photo 5). All organizations presented their activities and described the opportunities of cooperation between planning organizations seen from their perspective. Three joint initiatives were briefly presented: the Decade of Planning (AESOP-ECTP-IFHP-ISOCARP) and within this framework, two ongoing projects: the European Urban Summer School (AESOP-ECTP-

Box 1

Giving Birth to AESOP

Klaus R. Kunzmann

When attending the Annual Congress of the American Association of Planning Schools (ACSP) in Atlanta in 1985, Patsy Healey and I regretted that Europe did not have such a forum of exchange. We both were impressed by the flourishing annual jamboree of members of planning schools in North America, presenting the results of their research and exchanging their experience in preparing planners for practice and research. Upon return from Atlanta we immediately explored possibilities of establishing a similar association in Europe, in a continent divided by languages, religion, culture and political traditions. It took a while, until in February 1987, with the help of Patsy Healey, I invited a small group of academic planners to Dortmund, to discuss, whether it would make sense to establish a European association of planning schools. Searching for a location with genius loci. I selected Schloss Cappenberg, a castle North of Dortmund, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappenberg_Castle). During World War II Cappenberg Castle served as a place of safety to protect works of art from Allied bombing. Later, in the 1980s the castle had been turned into the cultural centre of the County of Unna, a suburban county to Dortmund. The main hall in the first floor, which had a huge terrace overlooking the suburban landscape below the hill, was offered to us for the inaugural meeting. ↓

IFHP-ISOCARP), and the Lecture Series “From Cities of To-morrow to a Tomorrow for Cities” (AESOP-IFHP). The framework of the Decade of Planning was generally appreciated as a flexible and open structure of cooperation, embracing both activities/products that these organizations are running separately, but in close and friendly cooperation with other partners (i.e. annual congresses, ongoing projects and activities), and joint projects that partners decide to launch and run together. Anna Geppert, on behalf of APERAU, invited all the participants for the next meeting on 2nd June to Paris, where the Institut d’Aménagement et d’Urbanisme de la Sorbonne (<http://www.facebook.com/IAUS.P4>) will be hosting the lecture by Andreas Faludi within the AESOP-IFHP Lecture Series.

Before the long-awaited lecture by Klaus R. Kunzmann, all our guests gathered on the famous terrace. The day of 28th January 2012, opposite to this 25 years ago, was quite sunny, with clear view over the valley, but for the retake of the picture the sun was hidden behind the clouds, as if it wanted to follow the tradition... We managed to retake a picture of all AESOP founding fathers (see photo 6), and include many new persons: all AESOP Presidents and Secretaries General present on the birthday party (see photo 2), and all our guests. Indeed, AESOP has grown up...

The core element of the birthday meeting was the lecture launching the joint AESOP and IFHP Lecture Series, highlighting both the AESOP Silver Jubilee and the Centenary of IFHP. Presidents of



Photo 1: Schloss Cappenberg, 24th January 1987, AESOP Founding Fathers. (Photo: Klaus R. Kunzmann’s Archives)



Photo 2: AESOP Presidents and Secretaries General, Schloss Cappenberg 28th January 2012. (Photo: AESOP SG Archives)



Photo 3: Welcome Reception at Technische Universität Dortmund, 27th January 2012. (Photo: TU Dortmund Archives)

Box 2

AESOP Presidents:

Klaus R. Kunzmann (1987–1990)
 Louis Albrecht (1990–1992)
 Giorgio Piccinato (1992–1994)
 Patsy Healey (1994–1996)
 Marcel Bazin (1996–1998)
 Tadeusz Markowski (1998–2000)
 Hans Mastop (2000–2002)
 Alessandro Balducci (2002–2004)
 Simin Davoudi (2004–2006)
 Peter Ache (2006–2008)
 Wilem Salet (2008–2010)
 Kristina L. Nilsson (2010–2012)
 Gert de Roo* (2012–2014)

*Prof. Gert de Roo will start his mandatory period in July 2012, after Silver Jubilee AESOP Congress in Ankara.

Box 3

AESOP Secretaries General:

Richard Williams (1987–1990)
 Myriam Jansen-Verbeke (1990–1994)
 Goran Cars (1994–1998)
 Angela Hull (1998–2002)
 Gert de Roo (2002–2007)
 Anna Geppert (2007–2011)
 Izabela Mironowicz (2011–2015)

Three reasons caused me to select this location. First, I wanted to plug-in the cultural history of the place, which goes back to the 12th century, when the country house of a regional noble family was turned into a Premonstratensian monastery. Second, The castle was owned from 1824 to 1831 by Freiherr vom Stein “*A Prussian statesman who introduced the Prussian reforms that paved the way for the unification of Germany. He promoted the abolition of serfdom, with indemnification to territorial lords; subjection of the nobles to manorial imposts; and the establishment of a modern municipal system.*” He lived there until his death in 1831. I felt that the innovative and forward-looking spirit of this Prussian landlord and statesman had much to do with planning and cities. Third, I had been involved in the activities of a local action group, defending the place against the appetite of the coal mining corporation, who wanted to exploit coal under the Castle, a project, which threatened to demolish the baroque building. We lost, though ironically, coal mining in the region was stopped soon thereafter, not because of the opposition of the local civil society, but for overriding economic and political reasons.

The representatives from planning schools across Europe, Patsy Healey and myself had encouraged to attend the meeting in Cappenberg were, David Massey, (Liverpool), Dieter Frick (Berlin), Giorgio Piccinato (Venice), Dieter Bökemann (Wien), Willy Schmid (Zürich), Andreas Faludi (Amsterdam), Jean-Claude Hauvuy (Paris) and Luigi Mazza (Turin) In addition Michael Wegener and Gerd Hennings of the Dortmund School of Planning joined the meeting, as well as Kwasi Ardakwa, who happened to be in Dortmund in the context of SPRING, the Dortmund-UST-Kumasi cooperation programme to train planners for developing countries, which had I had initiated and established in 1984. They are all shown on the famous AESOP picture on the terrace of Schloss Cappenberg (see photo 1). It has been a day, when the sun had hidden behind low clouds.

Not many arguments were needed to convince the participants, who were present at this meeting that it makes sense to follow the North American example. A draft charter of the association and essential next steps to bring the idea into life were discussed. Faludi, an enthusiastic supporter of the idea, suggested that the first congress of the association could take place in Amsterdam. Obviously, his spontaneous invitation was unanimously cheered. One more name should be mentioned in this context. Richard Williams from Newcastle, who passed away much too early, has not been present in Cappenberg. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of AESOP from the very beginning, backing the idea of a European network of planners, Later he followed David Massey as AESOP Secretary, who, based in Liverpool, helped with all his institutional experience to get the AESOP project working.

In Cappenberg we soon agreed on the name AESOP, which I had suggested for the Association of European Schools of Planning to be established. AESOP is the name of a Greek philosopher, a slave and story-teller, who as have lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 560 BCE. He wrote popular fables (AESOPICA), which we would call narratives today), where he made use of humble incidents to teach great truths, and after serving up a story he adds to it the advice to do a thing or not to do it. (Appolonius of Tyana). Aesop's remain a popular choice for moral education of children today. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesop's_Fables). Again, I thought this name is linked to ambitions of planners, to plan for people, to communicate with people, and to use narratives and story telling in planning and decision-making processes, not just plans and maps.

Unfortunately, the paper, which formulated the expectations of launching a European association of planning is not any longer in my hands. The files have disappeared, when the Dortmund School had to move within the university, a move, which caused the dumping of tons of files and papers. Being abroad during that time period, alas, I could not intervene. Though the first drafts may still to be found in someone's archive.

My own aims and expectations 25 years ago were ambitious; in my memory they were:

- Given the fact that planning, maybe with the exception of Great Britain, have a kind of Cinderella status in their home countries, I expected that an association of planning schools in Europe could provide a transnational, respectively a Paneuropean academic community of scholarly exchange.
- Experiencing that the planning community in Germany was very much inward looking, I hoped that an international networks could open the window to a European wide perspectives of the discipline, and prepare the grounds for a next generation of f much more international planning educators.
- Being strong a advocate of planning education as an academic discipline, independent from architecture, civil engineering, geography, and other more established academic disciplines, I had expected ↓

AESOP, Kristina L. Nilsson, and of IFHP, Flemming Borreskov, introduced the idea and the concept of the Lecture Series and highlighted the importance of the project to both organizations. They expressed the hope that very soon the lectures – transmitted live in the Internet and available for replay from the webpages of AESOP and IFHP – will become the most important motor of the Decade of Planning and contribute to the renaissance of planning as a substantial tool of the quality of life, at least in European context. Michael Makiolla, the Landrat of Kreis Unna, warmly welcomed participants of the meeting and expressed the expectations from the perspective of local authorities about the role and importance of planning, especially in the transforming European regions.

The lecture “Planning Education in Europe: Challenges and Pathways into the Future” (see photos 7, 8 and 9) started with history and the idea of establishing an association of planning schools that could create the platform of debate and of exchange of the ideas about planning and planning education. Having quickly discussed the fundamental problem what planning is and what planning does, Prof. Kunzmann moved to the questions which processes and phenomena have the greatest impact on planning in Europe and what kind of challenges they create for planning as a discipline and a profession. The challenges Kunzmann focused on were:

1. the challenge of demographic change;
2. the challenge of spatial concentration and polarisation;
3. the challenge of resource conservation;
4. the challenge of new urban economy;
5. the challenge of cosmopolitan civil society;
6. the challenge of multi-level governance;
7. the challenge of information overload.

Then the speaker explored the future of the European territory in six, sometimes unbelievably surprising, scenarios. He described the possibilities and consequences of Europe as:

- the creative economy slump,
- the academic knowledge city promise,
- the China’s special economic zone,
- the theme park of the world,
- a pastoral continent, and finally as
- the backwater of the North African industrial belt.

The global challenges, development of the European territory, and an academic European framework form the main structure of the future of planning education and practice. This issue has wider than European influence, considering the fact that



Photo 4: Professor Benjamin Davy asking whether planners have heroes ..., 27th January 2012. (Photo: TU Dortmund Archives)



Photo 5: Meeting of Planning Organizations (AESOP, APERAU, ECTP-CEU, EFLA, ERSA, IFHP, ISOCARP, RSA), 28th January 2012. (Photo: AESOP SG Archives)



Photo 6: AESOP Founding Fathers 25 years later ..., Schloss Cappenberg 28th January 2012. (Photo: AESOP SG Archives)



Photo 7: Lecture by Klaus R. Kunzmann, 28th January 2012. (Photo: AESOP SG Archives)

that a recognized international association would offer a Paneuropean support for planning education as a discipline in its own right.

- I was quite convinced that being a member of a European association of planning schools would strengthen the reputation and the status of a planning school within the home university.
- At a time when the ERASMUS exchange programme was just about to start I anticipated that the existence of a European network of planning schools could facilitate and promote the exchange of planning students
- Last but not least, I hoped that the international community of planning researchers could benefit from the network by providing an exchange platform for for joint and comparative research planning research.

Such an similar expectations were expressed during the Cappenberg meeting and unanimously shared by the participants. Most of these ambitions have been achieved. In fact, more than that. The vitality of AESOP is represented by the many activities, which the association has successfully carried out since. The continuous commitment and passion of many planning educators across Europe makes the association an indispensable stakeholder of the paneuropean planning community.

One of my ambitious aims has not been reached. Planning as an independent discipline is still not fully recognized. Very few planning schools in Europe are independent from other disciplines, and very few new independent planning schools have been established since. In 2012, for multiple reasons, most planning schools are still under the umbrella of schools of architecture, geography or civil engineering, and it seems that there is no chance that this will change in coming decades. It is even more likely that *zeitgeist* urbanism will replace planning as a scientific label within and universities and in wider socio-political arenas, as urbanism apparently sounds more sexy and scientific in mainstream market led economic environments in Europe.

In contrast, the AESOP network has served as an excellent information and communication base for all the European basic and research projects in the European Union, which were initiated in the last two decades by the European Commission, by ESPOON, European foundations and national governments. Two established and widely read European planning journals, *European Planning Studies* and *disP – The Planning Review* are linked to AESOP, serving a Europe wide readership with up-to-date planning research. Today, 2012, 25 years after the Cappenberg meeting, AESOP is an established association, with 153 institutional members in 40 countries. It has been worthwhile for all, who shared the vision of a European network of planning schools to invest time and efforts in establishing the association.

Potsdam, 6 January 2012



Photo 8, 9: Audience of the lecture by Klaus Klaus R. Kunzmann, 28th January 2012 (Photos: AESOP SG Archives)

among world planning schools one-third is located in Europe and European academics are deeply involved in the education at world-wide universities (UN Habitat 2009). The problems planning schools have to face today are important not only for the universities or for the discipline of planning today, but also for the future spatial dimension of development as such. Kuznmann defined 10 main constraints of planning education:

- the low profile of planning in the society;
- the weak position of planning in the academiae;
- the A+B+C+D... game in planning schools (describing the position of separate “big names” in planning with their own teams in their shadow not communicating with other “big names” in planning and their teams);
- the structural construction of the Bologna Agreement;
- the widening gap between theory and practice;
- the information overload;
- the publishing challenge overload;
- the language issue (which was actually the euphemism of the domination of English as the *lingua franca* and the consequences of this domination);
- the spatial turn of sector planning; and
- the ambitions to converge planning systems in Europe.

The lecture evolved into a vibrant discussion, which finished over the Magnum bottle of champagne delivered by Anna Geppert directly from Reims.

The AESOP Silver Jubilee Birthday Meeting reflected the nature of the organization: friendly, open for cooperation, focused on projects and activities. We hope we will be able to continue...

On behalf of AESOP I'd like to express our gratitude to the Technische Universität Dortmund. We are deeply indebted to the Dean of the Fakultät Raumplanung, professor Christa Reicher and also to professor Frank Othengrafen, professor Thorsten Heitkamp, Dipl.-Ing. Katharina Heider, Eva Gehrmann and Franziska Sielker. Our special word of gratitude goes to professor Benajmin Davy for his outstanding lecture. We also owe the word of gratitude to Thomas Hengstenberg and Schloss Cappenberg for hosting our event.

There are no words to give justice to the contribution Klaus R. Kunzmann made to AESOP and to this event. We are honoured and pleased that his lecture launched the Lecture Series.

We would also like to express gratitude to our partners, which accepted our invitation and undertook joint initiatives with AESOP. We believe we will all benefit from it and the synergies we are producing will also affect the planning landscape of Europe.

Please note in your agendas:

4–5 May 2012:

AESOP Heads of Schools Meeting, Oslo

2 June 2012:

AESOP-IFHP Lecture Series, Paris. Andreas Faludi “Twentieth Century Foundations of European Planning” – joint project of AESOP and IFHP within the framework of the Decade of Planning

11–15 July 2012:

AESOP Silver Jubilee Congress, Ankara

22–30 September 2012:

European Urban Summer School – joint project of AESOP-ECTP-CEU-IFHP-ISOCARP within the framework of the Decade of Planning

AESOP Council of Representatives Meetings:

5th May 2012, Oslo and 10th July 2012, Ankara

AESOP General Assembly:

13th July 2012, Ankara

