

AESOP COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES MEETING MONDAY, 15th JULY 2013

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
HEALTH SCIENCES BUILDING
ROOM A 003**

MINUTES

List of participants attached (appendix 1). The Council has a quorum required by the article 20a of AESOP Charter.

WELCOME ADDRESS and PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Speaker: Gert de Roo

The President welcomed members of the Council at the University College Dublin and opened the meeting.

The meeting began with a short introduction of all the members of the Council present at the meeting. This was followed by the brief summary of the discussion on the international dimension of AESOP which took place during the CoRep meeting in April 2013 in Gdańsk. Also the results of the questionnaire which examined the role and performance of the CoRep were introduced and explained.

President informed members of the Council about the state of art concerning cooperation with ACSP. Following the conclusions from the debate in Gdańsk, the relationship with ACSP will be reconsidered, with ACSP being AESOP's most important partner to participate in global debates and initiatives. AESOP prefers to participate jointly with ACSP in GPEAN activities, instead of the exclusive joint congresses. This could mean that the joint AESOP-ACSP congress in Dublin would be the last one. This does not mean that AESOP would no longer join forces with ACSP. ACSP has shown interest in cooperating with AESOP's Digital Platform Project which would be presented later during the meeting. AESOP and ACSP are also interested in developing links between American and European young academics.

Global activities of AESOP converge in GPEAN and AESOP would like to use World Planning Schools Congress in 2016 (Rio de Janeiro) as an opportunity to become more active in this global dimension.

Council accepted President's position in negotiations with ACSP.

SECRETARY'S GENERAL REPORT

Speaker: Izabela Mironowicz

According to the article 23c of the AESOP Charter *'after two years of the mandatory, period the Secretary General shall be re-evaluated by the Council'*. The mid-office report (appendix 2) has been made available for the CoRep member in the Files Repository before the meeting and the printed version has been distributed during the meeting.

During the meeting Secretary General focused on the latest developments including:

- presentation of the brochure for CoRep members;
- presentation of the membership issues;
- facilitating activities of the Council of Representatives;
- new AESOP Charter in action;
- activities of the AESOP Expert Pool;
- presentation of the new events: AESOP-IFHP Lecture Series and European Urban Summer School (EUSS);
- brief report from AESOP Silver Jubilee;
- presentation of the cooperation with European partner organisations;
- introduction to the AESOP website and database;
- cooperation with planning journals;
- presentation of the AESOP Brussels Liaison Office;
- information about Thematic Groups;
- AESOP latest publications – AESOP Silver Jubilee Yearbook.

Secretary General asked the Council to ratify new associate member of AESOP University of Gothenburg, Department of Conservation, as proposed by the ExCo following the recommendation of two positive reviews of the application. The new associate member was ratified.

Secretary General informed members of the Council that still eight countries did not fill in all the positions (Representative and/or Substitute) in the Council. The list of the positions to be filled is available on AESOP website. Secretary General reminded also that in 2014 there will be elections of the National Representatives.

Secretary General offered also any help in using all interactive functions of AESOP website, especially CoRep File Repository in order to facilitate preparation to the meetings.

Council was informed about new interactions which AESOP started with European Commission – DG for Regional and Urban Policies, DG for Innovation and Research, and with ESPON, URBACT and European Parliament. Council approved the new initiatives of the Secretariat to become more active at the European level.

Council ratified the decision of signing Memorandum of Understanding with European

Regional Science Association (ERSA).

Council welcomed the new AESOP Yearbook, describing all activities of the organisation, prepared by the Secretary General as Silver Jubilee Edition.

Council of Representatives accepted with satisfaction Secretary's General report from the office.

Summary:

The new associate member – **University of Gothenburg, Department of Conservation** was ratified by the Council.

The new interactions with European partners have been approved by the Council.

Memorandum of Understanding with **European Regional Sciences Association (ERSA)** has been ratified.

Council of Representatives accepted with satisfaction Secretary's General report from the office.

CoRep DISCUSSION:

Making sense together, how to enhance AESOP's democratic network and representing body, the CoRep.

Highlights of the analysis of the CoRep questionnaire.

Moderator: Gert de Roo

The President presented the most evident conclusions from the questionnaire exploring opinion of the members of the Council of Representatives on different issues:

1.

54% of the members would like to be clearly informed about their role in the organization, especially at the beginning of the mandatory period.

AESOP Secretariat therefore prepared a brochure for the CoRep members (distributed during the meeting and also available in the CoRep Files Repository on AESOP website).

2.

CoRep wants to be well informed and well prepared to reduce time for voting.

Both President and Secretary General reminded that since AESOP has the new interactive website all the members have a direct access to the documents prepared for each meeting. This however requires cooperation from the side of the members – they have to register as users on AESOP website to fully benefit from interactive services offered by this tool.

CoRep members stressed that the reduction of the time spent on voting should result in more time spent on essential debates. In this context CoRep is reluctant to accept too many e-votings with the exception of technical decisions. Additionally, CoRep members however found e-voting very useful in the context of reduced university funds for travelling to attend the meetings (see also 4).

3.

CoRep wishes to have a say (consulting) in setting the agenda for the meetings.

CoRep meeting in Dublin was the first meeting for which the CoRep was consulted in this respect, however the members might desire to play more significant role proposing their own topics to be discussed.

CoRep sees its important role in info sharing, however this should preferably lead to new AESOP initiatives or improving existing ones. Information sharing could include national developments only if they are of interest of wider (European) AESOP community.

4.

Due to financial restrictions CoRep members (62%) find it hard to be present at all meetings. Therefore a linkage between the AESOP Heads of Schools meeting and CoRep meeting is valued as a way to keep expenses at the lowest possible level.

5.

In order to avoid repetition of agendas with the July conference meeting the CoRep meetings & the AESOP Head of Schools Meeting might have to be held in February-March.

The discussion also pointed at the role of CoRep members in identifying new potential members in the countries they represent. CoRep members see their role also in encouraging member schools to apply for hosting AESOP events.

CoRep members take also on the obligation to help identify/clear financial issues of the member schools which failed to pay membership fees. Sometimes there is a simple bureaucratic obstacle easy to be resolved with the help of the representative of the country while without support being difficult to be identified by the Treasurer.

Another important issue is the role of AESOP and particularly CoRep in supporting PhD researchers within their countries and interact with young planning professionals.

The other important topics to be discussed by the CoRep which have aroused from the questionnaire and the discussion are as follows:

- bidding rules for the AESOP events;
- status of planning profession/planner in different countries;

- how to use AESOP potential and
- position of planning schools/faculties/departments at the universities and role of AESOP in helping members to overcome the threats of being marginalised.

The discussion confirmed the importance of the identified topics to be discussed and investigated the options to structure them in order to deliver possible solution(s) or at least good practices.

The guidelines for hosting AESOP events should be discussed and maybe re-arranged. Benjamin Davy expressed the opinion that CoRep might offer more help/advice with structuring the most important AESOP event, the Annual Congress. There is actually some time for this debate as the call for hosting the next congress (2017) will be launched only late in 2014.

Benjamin Davy found the question about position of planning schools within universities to be urgently addressed, already during the next CoRep meeting in winter/spring 2014 (Hamburg). Konstantinos Lalenis stressed that planning schools are likely to be forced to re-arrange their courses due to economic crisis. Deborah Peel noticed an important connection between the status of planning profession and the position of planning schools within universities. The Council generally shared this opinion. The Council expressed the wish to explore these connections in more detailed way during one of the forthcoming meeting. The role of AESOP in this configuration has also to be examined.

The President reminded the Council that AESOP established Expert Pool which aims to support the quality development and assurance at the member schools and this is meant to be useful to member school to deal with the hard conditions. President's proposal to discuss these interlinked issues during the next CoRep meeting was accepted.

Benjamin Davy on behalf of the CoRep expressed a word of gratitude to the President for his questionnaire and important debate on the results.

Summary:

CoRep accepted e-voting with some restrictions.

CoRep will be involved in setting the agenda for the meeting in the future.

CoRep members will be more active in identifying potential new members in their countries.

CoRep members will be more active in helping Treasurer with finding the solution for the members which failed to pay the fee.

CoRep would like to discuss new guidelines for bidding for the AESOP events and the involvement in structuring AESOP Congresses.

Council of Representatives would like to discuss the status and role of the AESOP Expert

Pool in the context of status of the planner and (weak) position of planning schools within universities.

ELECTIONS OF THE NEW EXCO MEMBERS

Speaker: Izabela Mironowicz

In answer to the open call the Secretary General received one application for the position of **AESOP Treasurer 2013-2017**. The applicant is current treasurer, Thomas Matta affiliated to the University of Applied Sciences in Rapperswil, Switzerland, an AESOP member institution. The statement of motivation and CV of Thomas Matta were made available for the CoRep members in the File Repository before the meeting.

Thomas Matta presented briefly to the Council his profile and plan of activities.

In answer to the open call the Secretary General received one application for the position of **AESOP President 2014-2017 and AESOP Vice President 2013-2014 and 2016-2017**. The applicant is Francesco Lo Piccolo affiliated to the University of Palermo, Italy, an AESOP member institution. The statement of motivation and CV of Francesco Lo Piccolo were made available for the CoRep members in the File Repository before the meeting.

Francesco Lo Piccolo presented briefly his profile and described his plan for AESOP activities during his terms of office which would focus on widening European cooperation in the institutional context as well as strengthening collaboration between member schools and generations.

Both candidates left the meeting to allow Council discuss their applications. The discussion that followed focused on experience and reliability of Thomas Matta who was able to implement new tools into AESOP finances (new functions of the website). CoRep appreciated long involvement of Francesco Lo Piccolo in AESOP activities as he was working as a chair of the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Award Committee. Also the vision for future AESOP developments satisfied the aspirations of the Council. The Council shared the confidence that Francesco Lo Piccolo is well informed, capable, active, and always present on different AESOP events, and as such is an excellent candidate for the position.

Gert de Roo and Benjamin Davy were confirmed as the scrutineers. The results of the confidential voting were as follows:

Election of Thomas Matta as an AESOP Treasurer 2013-2017:

26 votes for; 0 votes against, 0 abstain;

Election of Francesco Lo Piccolo as an AESOP President 2014-2017 and AESOP Vice President 2013-2014 and 2016-2017:

24 votes for; 1 vote against; 1 abstain.

Summary:

Thomas Matta was elected for the position of AESOP Treasurer 2013-2017.

Francesco Lo Piccolo was elected for the position of AESOP President 2014-2017 and AESOP Vice President 2013-2014 and 2016-2017.

PRESENTATION OF AESOP NEW PROJECTS

1

AESOP AS PUBLISHER AND DIGITAL PLATFORM

Speakers: Gert de Roo and Izabela Mironowicz

The idea of AESOP becoming publisher (InPlanning) arose on the basis of widening the service for the members in the context that commercial publishers are reluctant to publish affordable textbooks, especially in national languages. This could be extended to many national interesting research. Also the 'publishing time' with big commercial publishing companies is becoming ridiculously long. At the same time the societal context shows adaptivity to a digital base for information sharing – the use of smart phones, tablets, notebooks to share information is increasing. Therefore, these two ideas – widening options for publishing and making it all digital come together in the project of Digital Platform.

The operational concept (InPlanning) of the AESOP Digital Platform was presented by the President. The essence of this project is its interactive character, while respecting copyrights, supporting peer review, and building on a sound financial system. Financially, after investment costs the project has a potential to produce small profit for AESOP to be used for supporting other projects. The main advantages of digital publishing are: independence from commercial publishers, accessibility for students, opportunity to share textbooks and the most popular books and papers, disseminate research results, animate discussion.

CoRep accepted already allocation of some funds on this project in the budget 2013.

Secretariat together with the webmaster will be continuing the work on how to make AESOP website a gateway to the Digital Platform 'InPlanning'.

The discussion started with considering relevant questions:

- What sort of publications would be in the open access and what sort of publications would be restricted to the certain users (i.e. AESOP member institutions)?
- What format of the publications would be available (pdf/e-book)?
- Who would be the editor of the publications?
- Who would be reviewing the publications?

The latter two questions stress the issue of academic quality of the publication.

The answers for these questions were as follows:

AESOP would be the publisher and ExCo would be working on the format of Scientific Board in order to ensure the quality. This format, including national profiles of the board, would be presented to the Council to be discussed and accepted. President would appreciate any suggestions from the Council how to structure Scientific Board(s).

Generally the idea is to have pdf format of the publications, which would be available for a very little charge (self-financing of the project). There are tools available to prevent files to be re-sent and also to be printed more than defined number of times.

Fernando Nunez da Silva suggested considering collaboration with partner organizations in order to widen the access to national sources (available in national languages).

Deborah Peel was concerned about legal aspect of the project, especially copyrights and open source.

Jan Schreurs suggested that the digital platform should open the possibility to discuss the publications.

Karel Maier raised the issue of competition with the commercial publisher, which requires very careful preparation of the implementation of the project. This preparation should include very strong editorial board(s), which would be responsible (on behalf of AESOP) for the quality of the publications.

The interaction between the members of the Council clarified the idea of national editorial boards and joint AESOP European editorial board which would link international and national context.

There were also remarks that commercial publishers' editorials are not that excellent as they used to be.

Rachelle Alterman suggested to get in contact with university (non-commercial) publishers which might be quite good partner in this project.

The Council accepted the proposal of the President to continue the discussion during the next meeting in winter/spring 2014 in Hamburg on the basis of more structured framework.

The Council accepted the project as one of the flagship AESOP projects. President is responsible for the further development.

2.

SENSE OF HISTORY

Speaker: Hans Mastop and Gert de Roo

Hans Mastop presented the project Sense of History which aims at in-depth and critical

overview of the centenary of planning in Europe.

AESOP can compose the materials (texts, plans, books, projects, site visits, films, interviews...) presenting what was done in the field of planning with the contemporary reflection on planning and its achievements. This project would build upon AESOP's knowledge database, looking back and exploring ahead.

In the longer term it might be a collaborative exercise, subsequently building 'the library of European planning'. In the shorter term it could be a multimedia publication and formation of knowledge database with sidebars of good and bad examples. Responsible for the project are: Hans Mastop as former President of AESOP and Derek Martin as past SG of IFHP. President and Secretary General will be helping encouraging members to collaborate on it as well as providing technical and organizational support.

CoRep highly appreciated the project and ensured the project team the CoRep members would be encouraging their national members to collaborate on it.

The project was approved by the CoRep.

Summary:

The Council accepted the AESOP Publisher and Digital Platform as one of the flagship AESOP projects. President is responsible for the further development.

The framework of ensuring quality of the AESOP Publication in the context of AESOP Publisher and Digital Platform Project would be discussed during the next meeting.

The Sense of History Project was approved by the Council.

The members of the Council offered their help in developing national context of the Sense of History Project.

Conclusions

The President expressed his satisfaction with the active and vibrant debate and the inspiring ideas for the future which arose during the discussion.

The President closed the Council of Representatives meeting.

Izabela Mironowicz



AESOP Secretary General