

AESOP Council of Representatives Meeting

MINUTES

10th March 2016

Faculty of Engineering, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Presences: 26 Country Representatives and their Substitutes, altogether 23 with voting rights (3 Substitutes are attending the meeting together with the National Representatives), 7 Members of the Executive Committee and 1 AESOP Official (F)

Welcome address by the President Francesco Lo Piccolo

The President welcomes the Council of Representatives at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and opens the meeting. He briefly presents the agenda. (F)

The agenda is accepted.

Approval of the Minutes and Resolutions of the CoRep meeting in Prague

The President asks for comments on the CoRep Minutes and Resolutions from the last meeting in Prague. There are no comments. (F)

The Minutes of the CoRep meeting in Prague are approved.

The Resolutions of the CoRep meeting in Prague are approved and signed.

Progress report on the WPSC in Rio, 2016

Gerhard Schimak starts the report on the WPSC in Rio 2016, by referring that about 1016 short papers were accepted. The final number is expected to decrease in 20 or 25% until the period of registration and payment closes by the end of May. From all the papers that were accepted, about 20% came from Europe, another 22% from Brazil, 17% from the United States and 12% from China. Gerhard reminds the CoRep that the deadline for the Early Bird fee is due in the beginning of April.

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe continues the report by underlining the GPEAN role in this event, which occurs every five years. For the GPEAN and also for its members associations, like AESOP, it is important to put spatial planning and planning education in the world agenda but it is also important to strengthen the networking between associations. With that in mind, during the congress, GPEAN will be holding a number of meetings, such as the Associations' Presidents meeting and the Associations' Secretary Generals and Treasurers meeting. A Young Academics (YA) Representatives meeting and the YA Global Assembly are also scheduled to take place.

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe continues by highlighting that this event is also a great opportunity for the Thematic Groups (TG) to come together with similar groups from other associations, so GPEAN encourages that the TG Coordinators collaborate with other associations or groups in order to share experiences and plan future activities.

Paulo Pinho then reports on the fruitful meetings held in Rio de Janeiro with members of the LOC and, in particular, with the Chair, Rainer Randolph. The team is quite experienced in organizing similar events in the Brazilian context and so the organization of the Congress seems progressing well.

The Secretary General mentions the details of the CoRep meeting, which will take place on July 3rd, the day before the opening of the congress, and the details on the locations in the Praia Vermelha Campus of the UFRJ. The General Assembly will occur in the last day, before the closing of the congress.

Contrary to the early expectations and concerns, Paulo Pinho also refers that the prices in Rio are not so overrated, due to the fact that the local currency, the Real, has been devaluating over the last months.

Regarding the security issues, the Secretary General finishes the report by stressing that there has been a remarkable effort by the local authorities to make the city safer for visitors and that is becoming more visible.

Progress report on the PhD Workshop in Leuven

Gerhard Schimak invites Jan Schreurs from the Local Organizing Committee to present the Progress report on the PhD Workshop in Leuven.

Jan Schreurs refers that the organization of the workshop is progressing very well and there are reasons to believe that it will be a successful event. By now the LOC has received 38 PhD students' applications from all over the world and only four have been refused.

Jan Schreurs then briefly presents the List of Mentors and Tutors as well as the topics and the overall programme.

Following, Francesco Lo Piccolo addresses the proposed list of bursaries already approved by the ExCo and also the LOC's proposal to extend this financial support to a PhD student coming from a non-member school, in this case from an Ethiopian institute. The President shares with the CoRep members the recommendation from the ExCo that this exceptional case should be supported by the Hardship fund.

The Council approves the financial support from the Hardship Fund to the PhD student from Ethiopia to participate in the Leuven PhD Workshop.

Ratification of AESOP new members

The Secretary General presents the following applications for AESOP Membership: (F)

- The Public and Private Policy Department, ESSEC Business School, as an Associate Member, with positive reviews by Anna Geppert and Christophe Demazière;

- The Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, as an Associate Member, with positive reviews by José Miguel Fernandez Guell and Pantelis Skayannis;
- The Department of Architecture, Munich University of Technology, also as an Associate Member, with positive reviews of Karina Pallagst and Peter Schmitt;
- And an Individual Membership application by William Glover, from Arizona University.

These applications for membership have all received the endorsement of the ExCo.

The Council unanimously approves the AESOP Membership of the Public and Private Policy Department, ESSEC Business School, the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus and the Department of Architecture, Munich University of Technology as Associate Members and of William Glover as an Individual Member.

Financial Matters

Thomas Matta starts the report by reminding the CoRep members that since 2013 the appointed financial auditors Prof. Louis Albrechts and Prof. Andreas Voigt have reviewed all AESOP finances. (F)

The Treasurer continues by briefly going through the 2015 Financial Statement, which has already been analysed by the financial auditors and proceeds to describe the 2015 AESOP Assets.

Following, Thomas introduces the Treasurer's Report and presents the 2015 AESOP's Financial Audit done by Prof. Louis Albrechts and Prof. Andreas Voigt and addresses their formal comments and recommendations.

Regarding the 2016 Budget, Thomas points out that there will be a significant loss in this year's income due to the lack of revenue from the annual AESOP Congress but, fortunately, the association assets can cover this loss.

Thomas Matta also refers that the Lecture Series is now an established AESOP activity and, therefore, is now also included in the budget.

The Council approves unanimously the 2015 Treasurer's Report and 2015 Financial Statement as well as the 2016 Budget. (F)

Finally, the Treasurer addresses the point 1.2 of the AESOP's Financial Regulations. In 2002 the CoRep passed the resolution that membership fees should be updated on the basis of EU inflation rates. The update shall take place whenever the cumulative effect of the annual EU inflation rates reaches 10% since the last fees update. The last fee update took place in 01.01.2008.

Thomas Matta informs the Council that despite the inflation the ExCo recommended not raising the membership fees this year, postponing this decision to next year.

The Council approves the decision to not raise the membership fees this year, postponing this decision to next year.

Suspension of members

Following the ExCo decision to postpone the suspension of the two members at risk, this point will be discussed at the next CoRep meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Regulation of AESOP Projects

The Treasurer begins to describe one of the Financial Auditors' advices that reads "The total assets of AESOP (EUR 292.831,15 per 31/12/2015) are still high. We suggest to limit the assets to a strategic reserve of two years of functioning and to invest the remaining in very carefully selected strategic projects, which reflect the goals and aims of AESOP." (F)

This premise was the starting point for the preparation of the "Regulation for AESOP Projects". (F)

As stated in the new Projects Regulation, “An AESOP Project is a specific task or initiative, intended to enhance and strengthen the activities of the Association in accordance with article 2 (aims) of the AESOP Charter, entitled to receive a special financial support, provided no costs are recurring to the Association.”

Thomas Matta explains the financial aspects of this Regulation, which implies that the AESOP projects are financed by the AESOP’s assets, through a specific bank account, which enables a separate and self-contained annual accounting system for each project. The AESOP projects are administered by the university in which the responsible person is affiliated or if, for some reason, this condition cannot be met, the administration of the financial resources allocated to the project remains with the AESOP Treasurer.

Anna Geppert stresses the fact that, according to this new regulation, any academic from any Full Member School can now propose an AESOP project.

National Representatives Elections

Paulo Pinho informs the Council that the National Representatives Elections will be open in the next few days until the end of May, and reminds the Council that the mandatory period for this position is two years.

Francesco Lo Piccolo emphasizes that despite the differences between countries it is fundamental that the election process is conducted in a transparent and democratic way.

Anna Geppert asks the current National Representatives that, along with the election results, they should provide some information on how the national election process was carried out.

Election of the AESOP Conference Officer

Francesco Lo Piccolo starts by referring the ExCo decision to change the name of Events Officer to Conference Officer.

The President then takes the time to appreciate and express gratitude for all the work done by Gerhard Schimak in the last few years as Events Officer. (F)

Regarding the election for the new Conference Officer, Paulo Pinho refers that even though two applications have been received, only one could be considered, from Zorica Nedović–Budić. The other application was not accepted because the respective candidate came from a school that does not belong to AESOP.

As Zorica Nedović–Budić was not present, Anna Geppert proceeded to present the application on her behalf, summarizing her own experience in working with Zorica Nedović–Budić in previous AESOP events, namely, the Dublin Congress and emphasizes her hard working and organizational capacities and, specially, her soft skills, which prove that she is indeed a great candidate for the Conference Officer position.

The Secretary General asks for comments or questions about Zorica Nedović–Budić’s application. There are no comments or questions.

The secret voting takes place with the following results:

YES 29 votes

ABSTAIN 1 vote

The Council elects Zorica Nedović–Budić as the new Conference Officer 2016 - 2020.

Quality Recognition of Planning Programmes

Francesco Lo Piccolo briefly reports on the developments of the Quality Recognition project. He informs the Council that the Pilot Phase is finished, the Certificates have already been sent to the schools Directors and, also, to the Rectors of the respective Universities. The objective is to strengthen the role of the Planning programmes and make them more visible within their universities. The responses from all the participant schools have been very positive. (F)

The President explains that the project has now moved on to the Standard Phase and has already received two new applications.

At this stage, it is necessary to establish the Excellence in Planning Education Board, therefore, Francesco reminds the Council, that CoRep members are requested to select up to 3 members per country to take part in this Board.

The next steps include opening a call for the Chair of the Excellence in Planning Education Board and create a section in AESOP's website dedicated to this initiative.

Francesco then presents the list of the Schools that have already received the Certificates and briefly goes through the financial aspects of this project, stating that, until now, the only expenses involved had to do with meetings of the Board members and this is likely to continue so in the future. This year, 2016, the Quality Recognition Programme did not applied for financial support and will use the outstanding budget of the previous year.

Given all the positive reactions, the Quality Recognition Programme is likely to move from an AESOP Project to a normal ongoing activity and, therefore, the ExCo members suggest that the Chair of the Excellence in Planning Education Board will be in the Executive Committee. The Council is asked to vote on this issue.

The Council unanimously approves the decision to include the Chair of the Excellence in Education Board in the Executive Committee.

AESOP Publications

Paulo Pinho refers that AESOP had already an agreement with Routledge, signed in 2008, concerning specifically with the European Planning Studies Journal. Since the deadline of this agreement was already surpassed, a series of contacts took place with the Taylor & Francis Group (which includes now Routledge) for the preparation of a new agreement.

The Secretary General presents the proposal for the new MoU between AESOP and T&F, which intends to be an extension of the previous agreement enlarging the scope of the cooperation between these two institutions, not only securing the presence of AESOP in the European Planning Studies (EPS) but also in a number of other publications, including some other benefits and discounts. Another significant aspect of this new memorandum relates to the active

presence of the Young Academics Network, namely in the Editorial Board of the EPS. (F)

Nikos Karadimitriou shared some concerns about the implications of this agreement in the development of the AESOP Transactions Journal. The Secretary General assures the Council that this agreement has no interference in the AESOP Transactions Journal or in any other AESOP publication and does not present any conflicts with possible future endeavours.

The President also emphasizes the excellent opportunity that this agreement represents to the Young Academics, providing a sponsorship for the 'Best Paper Prize Award' associated to the YAN Annual Conference and the possibility to publish the winner's paper in one of the Routledge Journals.

Abdelillah Hamdouch suggests to include one new point in the agreement concerning the organization of a Book Series under the seal of AESOP. This suggestion was very well received by the Council and Paulo Pinho promises to forward this additional recommendation to be considered by T&F.

GPEAN Report

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe presents GPEAN current members and main activities, namely, the WPSC in Rio, the Book Series, "Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning" and a number of networking activities to strengthen the collaboration among members as well as the collaboration with international partners.

Regarding the WPSC, the importance of this event as a platform for the GPEAN member associations to interact with each other and develop a number of crossed activities is highlighted. It represents also a great opportunity for the Thematic Groups Coordinators to take part in this activities and plan meetings with other associations' special interest groups.

GPEAN intends to hold various meetings during the WPSC, such as Associations' Presidents Meeting, Secretary Generals and Treasurers Meeting, Conference Chairs Meeting and a Young Academics Networks/Unions Meeting.

The Dialogues Book Series has been published every two-three years since 2004. Currently, Dialogues 6 focuses on the "The Right to the City" and is

expected to be published in 2016. Every association nominates papers from their community fitting in with this theme. In the case of AESOP, Best Congress Paper Prize winners and nominees from previous years have been reviewed and nominated.

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe refers that GPEAN is an accredited partner for Habitat III, and, as such, it has been invited to the PrepComs (1st and 2nd already held, 3rd will be organised) and it has also been asked for feedback to certain reports and debates namely the debates on the Habitat III New Urban Agenda, “The City We Need” principles.

GPEAN is also a member of the World Urban Campaign, the UN-Habitat’s partners’ platform. An important goal has been campaigning to place the «urban agenda» in development policies and to have an «urban» Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to be included in UN’s SDGs for 2015-2030. This campaign has been very successful and resulted in the establishment of the SDG number 11 which reads “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

GPEAN also holds a membership of the network called Habitat UNI - Universities Network Initiative. UNI has Thematic Hubs as follows: Informal Urbanism; Urban Governance; Climate Change; Food Security; Urban Futures; and Gender Thematic Hub. Cross-cutting activities between these hubs and AESOP Thematic Groups is a possibility that can be explored and encouraged.

UNI also carries out Urban Lecture Series, which comprise 15 minutes-long videos by planners and academics and they are currently looking for new people and contents, and nominations from our community for dynamic speakers for these Urban Lecture Series are welcome.

It should also be noted that some of the members that were supporting UNI recently withdrew, and among them are Norway and Sweden. AESOP CoRep representatives from these countries could perhaps explore the process behind this and help support this initiative. Urban Gateway is a way of joining UNI.

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe finalizes by stating that GPEAN is also planning to cooperate with ISOCARP through possible joint training/teaching activities and joint sessions in congresses with a focus on bridging theory and practice, education and profession.

Maros Finka refers that he will address the Habitat III Europe Regional Meeting “European Habitat” that is taking place in Prague in the next days and that will involve a wide range of participants who will debate regional priorities for the New Urban Agenda and policy recommendations and expresses his concern for the lack of presence of AESOP or other European associations in such meetings. This could represent an opportunity for the Spatial Planning Education dimension to be introduced in the making of these policies and in the development of the New Urban Agenda.

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe mentions the latest decision of the ExCo, that AESOP should become an accredited partner to Habitat and explains that while GPEAN is already an accredited partner to Habitat, there was a suggestion that each GPEAN member association should also apply to become an accredited partner on their own in order that, all together, we could have a stronger voice in this important international organization. This would not guarantee that AESOP would be invited to the discussions of the New Urban Agenda but will surely represent more visibility for the Continent and specially for our Association.

AESOP Transactions project

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe starts by introducing the project and the working group, which consists of herself, Andrea Frank, Nikos Karadimitriou and Olivier Sykes.

Transactions of AESOP is intended as an AESOP journal, produced by an Editorial Team and owned by AESOP. It will be an open-access online journal and a refereed, double-blind peer-reviewed journal.

Its main aim is promoting excellence in planning education and research, by supporting and disseminating, as a public good for AESOP members, scholarly work produced by AESOP members or participants to AESOP events and activities. Its role is to publish articles that make a major theoretical, conceptual or empirical contribution to the development of planning as an academic discipline; to stimulate and shape research agendas in planning; to showcase the contribution of planning education and research to advancing knowledge in the social sciences and humanities.

The contents of the journal issues are made from a combination of contributions which include: the AESOP Best Congress Paper Prize winners and nominees (about 15-20 papers are nominated each year by congress track chairs); the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Prize winners; the AESOP Thematic Groups' (TGs) conferences and workshops, from which nominations can be made with a view to promoting our TGs and providing access for TG outputs; in addition, special issues could be from AESOP Congress Tracks or developed with Editorial Board members. The plan is to have two issues per year – initially pilot issues and this will be open-access, with running costs paid by AESOP.

The original idea of the journal has been developed by Nikos Karadimitriou and Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe and was already presented to the AESOP CoRep twice, in the 2015 March CoRep in Madrid purely for information and feedback, and then in the 2015 July CoRep in Prague for approval as a two-year pilot project.

Despite its approval it also raised some important concerns and discussions regarding the practicality of the concept, whether there would be interest in publishing in a new journal that is not yet indexed, and whether inviting authors nominated for Best Congress Paper Prize but subjecting their invited papers to a review process would still be interested. The pilot phase is intended to test these issues. Another issue raised was the copy-editing component of the budget.

The working group for the Transactions of AESOP focused mainly their work in addressing these questions. They contacted the Best Congress Paper (BCP) nominees from the 2014 Utrecht and 2015 Prague Congresses to see to what extent they are interested in publishing in an AESOP-owned open-access Journal. An important proportion of the authors are likely to consider submitting their work to the new Journal knowing that their papers would be subject to a review process. Of the 17 papers, whose authors confirmed their interest in submitting their papers for review, 12 of them already did so and the authors of the remaining 5 papers asked for extra time to revise their papers.

Further to these on-going developments, the Working Group also prepared "Author Guidelines". This document was sent to the authors of the 17 papers, who accepted to submit their work for consideration for publication. It is planned to publish about 6 papers per issue. The goal is to publish the first pilot issue as soon as possible in 2016. The Pilot Project Team will also write an editorial to introduce both the journal and the activities of AESOP covered in the Transactions of AESOP Journal. Following the Editorial, the journal will include

an article authored by a prominent planning scholar as an opening piece, to be followed by five or six papers selected from the Best Congress Paper Prize nominees.

The InPlanning team was also contacted regarding the design of the Journal as well as the design of format and templates of articles to be published. Costs regarding these services are included in the proposed budget.

Regarding the Review process, an Editorial Board was set up by sending 34 scholars an invitation to become a member of the Editorial Board of the Transactions of AESOP during its pilot phase. Among other functions, members of the Editorial Board will act as reviewers for the papers submitted to the Journal. The review process started in February.

The Working Group believes that a Copy-Editor is crucial for the quality and reputation of the Journal. This was an issue raised by the CoRep members too. Costs for copy-editing services were estimated and incorporated into the budget.

In the first year of the pilot project, the Working Group will carry out all the contacts, will handle submissions, appointment of reviewers for papers and the blind review process, and all associated correspondence. However, by the end of the pilot phase, the Journal infrastructure should be completely built, and this would include an editorial assistance. The completion of this infrastructure is envisaged by the second year of the pilot phase and incorporated into the budget.

Nikos Karadimitriou adds very briefly that the next plans are to create a template based on AESOP's Identity Guidelines and discuss the copyright agreement with the authors.

At the end of Ela's report there was a question regarding which online platform would be used to publish this open access journal. Ela explains that there is not yet a decision concerning if the access should be done directly from the AESOP website or if it would be using another type of platform such as InPlanning.

Another question raised was about indexing, which Ela assured it was already planned and included in the publication costs.

Maros Finka also questions if there were some considerations on how to alternatively fund this project on the long term without using only AESOP's

financial support. Ela explains that there were a lot of discussions around the financing model not only among the Working Group but also in the past two CoRep meetings, Madrid and Prague. The general outcome from those meetings was that this should be a service provided for free by AESOP. The project was created to be truly open-access so the idea of putting a price on the access was not even considered and will not likely be in the future. In the Pilot Phase, in terms of submitting the papers there was not a distinction between AESOP members and non AESOP members, but this particular issue could be addressed in the future if the number of paper submissions is considerable.

Maros Finka proposes a future reflection on how to turn this into an advantage for the AESOP members schools, anticipating that this is will be a question which we will be confronted in the future. This proposal was also supported by other CoRep members and a discussion follows on the idea that more important than the possibility of turning this into a paid service and imposing different fees for members schools, it would be more important to invest and ensure the quality of the published articles and of the journal itself.

Jan Schreurs shares his concern about considering the Transactions Journal separately from the InPlanning platform, since both are AESOP projects and have complementary aims.

Francesco Lo Piccolo and Paulo Pinho agree that these topics are linked together, along with PlaNext, and suggest that they will be addressed later in the meeting, in the points dedicated to the InPlanning Project and to the AESOP Projects.

Progress report on the InPlanning project

Camilla Perrone refers that the InPlanning platform is organized in two levels. One is the general InPlanning platform which operates internationally and functions as the headquarter of the project and the other is the InPlanning Country platforms which aims to make visible within the international platform, the cultural and linguistic specificities, diversities and identities that have been emerging in planning cultures. Apart from the General Editorial Board, there are several countries that already have their own Editorial Boards.

The usage of the platform and the InPlanning services have significantly increased but at this point the associated costs are not yet covered by the turnover. The InPlanning assets are also mentioned as well as the featured products, the PhD Series, the YA Booklet Series, several international journals, PlaNext, Planning books and Video Lectures.

After Camila's presentation, a question was raised regarding statistical information about the usage of the platform, such as number of visits, number of downloads, etc. Camila explains that the technical team is currently working on a new version of the platform that will be able to provide that kind of data.

The Treasurer also addresses the question about the financing of this Project and inquires if there are any other sources of income apart from AESOP. Camila Perrone answers that up to now no other resources have been involved but there are plans to apply for some European projects and arrange other forms of subsidies.

Several concerns were also raised regarding the InPlanning finances and the fact that the Auditors were not satisfied with the preliminary financial report provided. Thomas Matta confirms that in fact the report was not satisfactory.

The President addresses also this issue and introduces another which regards the legal status of the project. Francesco Lo Piccolo explains that the legal document of constitution of the InPlanning Project was only made accessible in the past few weeks, raising, nevertheless, a lot of concerns, namely, the fact that a private company is directly involved and, on the contrary, neither AESOP nor the University of Groningen are members of the InPlanning cooperative. Given this fact, the President suggests two possible solutions: one is to rewrite this founding document, including AESOP as a founding member and owner of InPlanning or, in alternative, to prepare a legal contract in which InPlanning would be simply considered a service provider for AESOP.

Both these solutions implicate urgent measures from the Executive Committee who decided to recommend the suspension of the InPlanning Financial support until all these issues are satisfactorily clarified.

A general discussion followed, with several members of the Council expressing their concerns on the financial and institutional issues affecting the project. On the other hand, the valuable and innovative aspects of the project have also

been pointed out, as well as the importance of preserving the publishing initiatives already available in the platform.

YA Network Report

In the absence of Nadia Caruso, Francesco Lo Piccolo briefly presents the Young Academics Report on her behalf. He starts by introducing the program of the next Young Academics Network Conference, that will be held in Ghent, from 21 to 23 of March and praises its organization, the selection of keynotes and themes, expecting it to be a very promising event. He also briefly mentions the 2016 PhD Workshop in Leuven which is organized in close cooperation with the Young Academics team.

Regarding PlaNext, Francesco Lo Piccolo refers that the journal is consolidating, the issue number two is already finished and the issue number three is also coming to an end. Issue number four is being planned. He proceeds to summarize the estimation of the involved costs and mentions that the YAN has been looking for alternative ways to reduce these costs.

He also mentions the collaboration between the Young Academics and the Senior Academics which has resulted in excellent scientific work materialized in the Booklet Series and presents the titles for 2016 in preparation: Series A Exploring foundations for planning theory: Rationalism - Charles Hoch in conversation with Jurgen Utz; Series B Exploring abstractions in the planning debate: Ananya Roy in conversation with Sara Hinkley, Enrique Silva, Jennifer Tucker, and Lana Salman; and Series C Conversations in planning practice: Place Matters, The case of the Flanders Structure Plan, Kristian Olesen in conversation with Louis Albrechts.

Best Published Paper Prize: New Committee Members

The Secretary General informs the Council of the new Committee members for the Best Published Paper Prize.

Following the procedures for AESOP committees, two of the members of the Best Published Paper Prize Committee have already served for over 5 years,

with their term ending in 2015: Aspa Gospodini and Piotr Lorens. The Chair of the Best Published Prize Committee, Karina Pallagst proposed as new committee members: Garri Raagmaa, Associate Professor at the University of Tartu (Estonia) and Alison Brown, Professor at the School of City and Regional Planning, University of Cardiff/UK.

Project submissions for Financial Support

The Secretary General presents the list of Project submissions for Financial Support:

The Transactions of AESOP Journal requested an amount of EUR 5,390.00 which had the full support of the ExCo.

The Council approves unanimously the financial support for the Transactions of AESOP Journal with EUR 5,390.00.

The European Urban Summer School made a request of EUR 10,000.00. The ExCo recommends to exclude the printing costs from the budget, reducing the amount to EUR 6,000.00.

Abdelillah Hamdouch suggests that the printing services could be supported by the hosting schools.

The Council approves unanimously the financial support for the European Urban Summer School with EUR 6,000.00.

The Booklet Series applied for an amount EUR 1,950.00, corresponding to three booklets. The request is supported by the ExCo.

The Council approves unanimously the financial support for the Booklet Series with EUR 1,950.00.

The PlaNext made an application to fund two issues for an amount of EUR 3,600.00. This request is also supported by the ExCo.

The Council approves unanimously the financial support for the PlaNext with EUR 3,600.00.

Regarding the applications of the InPlanning project and of the InPlanning Editor-in-Chief project, of EUR 10,000.00 and EUR 2,000.00 respectively, the ExCo recommends suspending all the financial support until the legal status of the InPlanning project is clarified and a complete financial report is provided. The Secretary General made clear that this temporary suspension is only of the financial support and not of the project itself.

Some members of the Council addressed a few questions regarding the duration of this suspension and regarding the total investment made by AESOP in InPlanning over the past years. Francesco Lo Piccolo explains that the plan is to have this issue resolved by the next CoRep meeting in July but that will depend on the answers and solutions provided by the InPlanning team and on the consultation of legal experts. The Treasurer informs that, since the foundation of the InPlanning, AESOP has already invested approx. EUR 35,000.00 in this project.

Concerns are then raised about maintaining the link to InPlanning on the website and about having the name and logo of AESOP involved in such a project and reflections are made if there should be any more drastic measures until all the issues are clarified. There is an agreement that even though there is an obvious urgency in clarifying the legal status of the project, there should also be a concern about preserving all the scientific work available in the platform, and so the suspension of the financial support is thought to be enough for now. There is also a suggestion that all the members should be made aware of these issues to prevent any misleading situations in the future.

In this respect, the Council decides unanimously to offer total support to the Executive Committee to take the necessary steps to resolve the InPlanning Project situation.

The Council unanimously approves the suspension of the financial support to the InPlanning project and to the InPlanning Editor-in-Chief project.

Regarding the Lectures Series, the ExCo agrees that this initiative has surpassed its project phase and, therefore, shall be included in the normal AESOP's Annual Budget.

For future consideration, Thomas Matta informs the Council that Izabela Mironowicz expressed the intention of stepping down from both the organization of the Lectures Series and of the European Urban Summer Schools, and so these positions will be on offer in due time.

Closing

Finally, the President closes the meeting by reminding the Coordinators of the Thematic Groups of the importance of submitting their annual reports in time, and thanks the Council members for all their valuable contributions.