

Milan, 8.6.2015

To the Secretary General (secretariat@aesop-planning.eu) and the AESOP Council of Representatives.

Application as Chair of AESOP Excellence in Teaching Award Committee

Motivation letter

Dear Secretary General, Dear Aesop Council Representatives,

I am writing to express my deepest interest in serving as Chair of Aesop Excellence in Teaching Award Committee. I have been involved in this challenging experience as Member of the Teaching Award Committee since 2014 and during these first two years I have particularly appreciated the value and opportunity offered to me.

In fact, on the one hand, it has been particularly interesting to discuss, together with the Chair of the Committee and the other members, principles and eligibility criteria for application, trying to identify the challenges of contemporary education in the Urban Studies and Urban Planning and Policy fields. On the other hand, I had the great opportunity to get in touch with innovative and diversified proposals presented by the colleagues who have applied in the last and current edition. The process of evaluation of Workshops, Traineeship, theory modules at Bachelor and Master Level presented, offered to me and the other colleagues, ideas and suggestion to advance in understanding and trying to cope with the complexity of teaching at academic level in our specific field. What is the role of planning and planning studies in contemporary society? How can we support our students in understanding the complexity and articulation of the urban world and the contemporary urban question? How can we transmit them an approach able to withdraw disciplinary boundaries? How can we provide them the correct balance between theory and practice? How can we deal with the challenges of internationalisation and the relevance of the local context in our field? How can we support students in becoming reflective practitioners? How can we train them to use their expert knowledge and at the same time dialogue with everyday tacit knowledge? How can planner use their expertise to support the intelligence of democracy and consider them as actors in the complex urban arena? All these challenges are part of our everyday teaching efforts and activities and the Excellence in Teaching Prize aims at valorising experimental and innovative ways and methodologies trying to address these and other important questions.

As Member of the Committee, I have had great opportunities to learn from the applications I have managed so far, and I have also tried to implement in my courses some of the lessons learnt. As lecturer, before, and, currently, as Associate professor at Politecnico di Milano (at Bachelor, Master and Phd Level) I have had the opportunity to both experience the interest and complexity of everyday teaching to an international community of students coming from all the corners of the world, trying to develop a common language of exchange and a shared as well as plural understanding of planning studies' and profession's role in contemporary world. During the last years in fact, Politecnico di Milano has launched an internationalisation program, based on the use of the English language at all teaching levels and investments for international chairs and visiting professorship opportunities. This has provided our academic community the necessity

to face the above-mentioned dilemmas in a new international environment, fed by the heterogeneity of urban, planning, teaching cultures represented by our new students and teaching community. In this perspective, I have been active as member of a task force supporting the valorisation of our Bachelor and Master level, with the organisation of a dedicated website, the organisation of Open day presentations and summer school for secondary school students aimed at presenting our Educational offer, as well as in the organisation of meetings with the word of practice, through presentation of professional opportunities for our graduates. All in all, I have been serving my Institution on communication and valorisation tasks and innovative design of planning courses in the last ten years.

For all these reasons, I propose you to consider my application as Chair of the Excellence in Teaching Award committee, based on my previous experience and interest in further supporting this AESOP activity. Concerning the future of the Excellence in Teaching Award, in fact, I am quite convinced that the valorisation of the results of the Award could be further enhanced: winning proposals, together with other positively evaluated ones, could be not only presented during the Aesop Conference in the occasion of the General Assembly, but could also become the object of in-depth discussion within the tracks dedicated to Education and set the basis for voluntary experimentation networks between interested AESOP members. Erasmus Plus and other EU funded programs could provide us a number of interesting opportunities to consolidate some of these light experimentations.

I have been member of AESOP since I was a PhD Student in the late 90es and was among the founders of the Young Academics of AESOP; more recently, since 2012 I have been serving as COREP member, as vice-representative and representative of Italy. I am also the contact person for AESOP in my University. I am deeply convinced about the great value of our Association and willing to serve in this and other tasks, in order to contribute to its further development and advancements.

Thanking you in advance for considering my application and the attached CV,

I wish we all the best for the future of AESOP.

Best regards,

Valeria Fedeli

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Valeria Fedeli', is written on a light-colored background.