



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

## 21 Key Messages for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century from the Architects' Council of Europe

The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) is an organisation, based in Brussels, whose Membership is drawn from representative national registration and professional architectural organisations of, at the time of publication of the book, all twenty-five European Union (EU) Member States and most Candidate Countries as well as Switzerland and Norway. As such, it is an Organisation that represents about 450,000 European architects. The ACE was founded in 1990 and its principal function is to monitor and influence developments at EU level highlighting those areas of EU Policy that have a direct impact on architecture, architectural practice, policy and the built environment.

For further information see: [www.ace-cae.org](http://www.ace-cae.org) or contact Alain Sagne, Secretary General, E-mail: [info@ace-cae.org](mailto:info@ace-cae.org)

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# Quality of Life

1. The architectural profession in Europe is committed to the implementation of the objectives of the **Lisbon Agenda** in achieving the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world provided that the holistic and integrated policies that are necessary to permit the achievement of effective sustainability for the living environment are adopted and implemented at the same time.
2. Given its significant impact on the prosperity of the EU Economy and on society, the construction sector, in all of its facets, deserves a high priority in the policies of the EU. Notably, more investment in **research and development** in this sector needs to be assured in order to adequately respond to the evolving demands of society, thereby underwriting the future competitiveness of the sector at EU and Global level.
3. The vitality of the design and construction sectors is underpinned by the immense contribution made by **small and medium-sized enterprises**, through which the vast majority of architects practice. The implementation of well-founded policies that take their nature into account is central to the future ability of the industry to meet the needs of society.
4. As society at large, and citizens in particular, are both the clients and users of the results of architectural services, it is imperative that public policies, at all levels, should strive to create an ethos within society that values **quality in buildings and in public spaces**. Moreover, it is important that awareness and the capacity to understand architectural values should be instilled as early as possible in the educational process, starting in kindergarten and continuing throughout all stages of formal education.
5. It is necessary to ensure that future EU programmes for research are properly formulated so as to include issues of importance such as quality of life, urban environment, innovative approaches to construction and the built heritage – **in short, architecture**. Furthermore, the ACE calls on the European Commission to ensure that it adequately takes into account the results of such research in all of its policy proposals that affect the living environment.
6. The sustainability of public and private buildings and the security of public spaces strongly influence the well being of citizens and thus the social structure of society. It is therefore necessary to ensure that all **aspects of sustainability** – socio-economic, cultural and environmental – are taken into account in the development of the living environment. In this respect, formal continued professional development for architects throughout their working lives becomes an essential undertaking that ensures their knowledge and skills keep up with the changing technological, social and regulatory environment.
7. The achievement of a quality result for any building project largely relies on the establishment of good working methods and relationships between all of the **participants in the project**. The adequate involvement of the architect, as well as the other actors, throughout the chain of events is necessary in order to ensure that consistency, efficiency and quality are more readily built into the process.
8. The adoption and use of key methodologies for the assessment of the impact of buildings on the environment is a matter of primary importance to the future quality of life. The ACE believes that the promotion and use of **life cycle costing and life cycle analysis** are essential to the achievement of these goals. Therefore, the ACE encourages the inclusion, in the evaluation criteria of all public procurement contracts, of principles that take into account environmental, quality and life-cycle factors so as to ensure that true value for money is achieved for society at large.
9. In the interests of ensuring a **quality-based selection** for the provision of architectural services, competition among architects should be based on pre-defined criteria, founded on competence and experience, that do not include price. Among the possible procedures, the ACE promotes **architectural (design) competitions** as a good method to enhance competition within the profession while contributing to enhancing quality and innovation in the procurement of architectural services.
10. The ACE acknowledges the value of devising new models for the procurement of public buildings and works, as prosperity and vitality in the community depend on quality facilities being available for public use. The objective of achieving good architectural quality in the living environment, thus contributing to its sustainability, requires that architectural services be delivered as independently as possible of economic and vested interests. Therefore, **public bodies**, when employing new models for procurement, cannot step back from their **responsibility** to ensure the incorporation of long-term architectural quality in the projects they promote.

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11. The implementation of the new **EU Directives on Public Procurement** in national law in the Member States will coincide with the beginning of a new period for the Structural Funds in the enlarged EU. This offers a splendid opportunity to initiate the necessary steps in the achievement of the objective to benchmark Community funding against the actual achievement of sustainability in the living environment.
12. The mobilisation of all actors in the creation of new policies for the **urban environment** is crucial for the establishment of a viable future for all citizens. The ACE will work actively to achieve this and will, in particular, contribute to ensure that the knowledge and expertise available to European Parliamentarians, and all policy makers, on these issues is further improved.
13. In order to achieve a high quality of life in our urban areas, there is a need to ensure a high level of co-ordination and co-operation between **cities and regions**. In this respect, the further implementation of the political principles set out in the European Spatial Development Perspective is an appropriate starting point of such conjoint actions.
14. Quality architecture, incorporating the full principles of sustainability, is a pre-requisite for an attractive, viable built environment that responds to the actual needs and **legitimate aspirations of our citizens**. It must be considered to be a substantial ingredient of well thought-out urban policies, not the cherry on the cake.
15. As the impact of urban development policies is so profound, fully participatory procedures for the development of urban planning, design and management policies within the EU, must include all stakeholders in order to ensure a sense of **shared responsibility for the quality** of the urban environment, in line with the principles of well-founded Governance.
16. In order to ensure that the consumer is adequately informed of the nature and cost of the intellectual services needed to achieve the realisation of a project in the built environment, appropriate information systems should be devised and permitted by Community law. Such systems, including those based on historical information, would allow the **consumer** to make comparative judgements on the quality of services offered by different suppliers so as to ensure the proper functioning of competition in the Internal Market.
17. The architectural profession has always cherished the enrichment that is gained through the **mobility of persons** and services and it supports the objectives of free movement that is underpinned by high standards of education and training and proportionate safeguards that recognise the need to regulate such mobility. However, in terms of the quality of the service delivered to the consumer, mutual recognition can only be effective if it is based on appropriately assessed, and agreed, **levels of qualification**.
18. The ACE supports the maintenance of high quality courses of architectural education, matching the "Bologna" model and based on a minimum duration of **5 years study** at university level before access to the practice of architecture. Such education should ensure the acquisition of the knowledge and skills set out in Article 3 of the "Architects" Directive and should be followed by at least two years of practical experience. This approach is in accordance with the recommended international standards for architectural practice as unanimously agreed by the International Union of Architects.
19. The impact on society of architecture is of fundamental importance to the **quality of life**. As such it is appropriate that the tri-partite consultations on the quality of the education of architects is maintained after the incorporation of the principles of the "Architects" Directive into the new horizontal Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications.
20. Architecture is a **fundamental feature of the history, culture and fabric of life** of each of our countries; it represents an essential means of artistic expression in the daily life of citizens and it constitutes the heritage of tomorrow. A sense of belonging, of identity, is an important feature of human society and culture. Architectural expression is frequently the carrier of such cultural and social needs and it is therefore important that these influences are adequately accounted for in design.
21. **The ACE firmly believes** that architectural quality and the specific nature of architectural services must be taken into account in all EU policies, measures and programmes, as called for by the European Council, thus leading towards the realisation of a European Architectural Policy.