



Date: 24th March 2009  
Ref: 094/09/AJ/dd

## Access to the Profession

Overview of the State of Play and Work in Progress

Report of Coordinator to General Assembly AG1/09

Final

### Summary

The General Assembly is requested to note the state of play in relation to work in this Thematic Area and to note progress being made in each Work Group. In particular Member Organisations are urged to respond immediately to the questionnaire on accreditation and validation if they have not already done so and to consider in light of developments noted in this report, the nominations to the various Work Groups in this Thematic Area.

### Introduction

On the occasion of the first General Assembly in 2009 it is my duty as Coordinator to report on the state of play in each of the Work Groups under my responsibility and to report on progress of specific work items. Therefore this short paper gives a brief overview of these aspects in relation to each Work Group and then goes on to discuss other matters relevant to this Thematic Area.

Member Organisations are asked to take note of the information included in this Report and to raise any points of concern during the debate at the General Assembly meeting, time permitting.

### Work Group Education

This Work Group, which is chaired by Ferenc Makovenyi of Hungary, has held two meetings since the last General Assembly. These meetings have opened a new line of work in which a deeper and more active understanding of the educational systems in each of our Member countries is being gathered. It is significant that this work has begun to show the overlaps with other Work Groups in this Thematic Area, a fact that highlights the need to hold a Workshop of the Thematic Area as described towards the end of this Report.

In addition to this work on educational systems the Work Group is monitoring developments in relation to the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive, monitoring developments in the collaboration of the ACE with the Schools of Architecture and, as mentioned above, coordinating with the output of the work of the Work Group Professional Experience. The output expected during the course of 2009 from this Work Group should serve to further underpin the understanding of the ACE of the complex and diverse situations that exists in the Member countries in relation to Education and Training for architects. Finally it is hoped that the current Members of the Work Group can begin to further develop the point of view of the ACE in relation to continuing professional development (CPD) and, in particular, take forward the principles set out in the Charter adopted by the ACE in 2001.

### Work Group Professional Experience

This Work Group, chaired by Michel Procès of Belgium, has more or less completed its work. A significant output is the synthetic document submitted for information to the General Assembly that has been prepared by the Chairman and which contains two tables as annexes. This Document and its tables set out a nearly complete view of all of the requirements for education and training of architects with special emphasis on the period of professional experience required. From the work in this Work Group the policy of the ACE that requires young graduates to have a professional experience before being admitted to the full practice of the profession has been reinforced. It is clear that there is a need

to take this information into account in other work of the ACE particularly in relation to the work of the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive (see below).

In relation to the Terms of Reference of this Work Group there is one task that still remains to be completed and this is the preparation of a Charter on the conditions that should be applied to the employment of graduates when they are undergoing professional experience in architectural offices. The ACE has identified the necessity of such a Charter due to the abuse that seems to occur in many countries whereby trainees undergoing professional experience are not adequately remunerated nor protected by social security benefits. It was agreed by the General Assembly that a Discussion Paper on this topic should be prepared and it is now intended to bring this matter to a close by the end of 2009.

#### **Work Group Accreditation and Validation**

This Work Group, chaired by Sarah Lupton of the United Kingdom, has a very particular remit and the timeframe within which the work assigned to it is short. The Work Group has met on two occasions since the last General Assembly and has already achieved significant progress in its work. This progress is embodied in the questionnaire on accreditation and validation that was issued in February to all Member Organisations for a response. At the time of writing only Germany, Belgium and Spain have responded to the questionnaire. Given that the work of the Work Group cannot progress further until a significant number of Member countries have answered the questionnaire you are urged to ensure that your country replies as soon as possible if it is not already done so.

It is expected that the work of this Work Group can be finalised over the next six months so that its final Report can be put to the second General Assembly in 2009.

#### **Work Group Professional Qualification Directive**

This Work Group, chaired by Toal O'Muiré of Ireland, is dealing with a topic of central importance to the policy work of the ACE and indeed to the reasons for the foundation of ACE. It is closely monitoring the implementation of the Directive on the Recognition of the Professional Qualifications and assisting Member Organisations in understanding the profound implications of this new Directive. It is also acting as an effective Mirror Group to a new network known as the European Network of Architects Competent Authorities, which is helping competent Authorities to cope with the changes in administrative procedures, that the Directive has brought with it. The Work Group has held one meeting and one telephone conference since the last General Assembly and it has taken account of important developments at EU level.

The most important development is the establishment of a Sub Group of the Coordinators Group, which will deliberate and report to the Coordinators on any qualifications notified to the Commission in the field of architecture. The establishment of this Sub Group of Experts was confirmed at the meeting of the Coordinators on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2009 and represents a victory for the ACE and its lobbying activities. Despite the fact that the Sub Group of Experts is fully under the control of the Coordinators Group it is hoped that it could become even more effective than the old Advisory Committee under the Architects Directive. The Work Group has recommended that the ACE should have knowledge of who are the appointed Experts in each Member State so that it can transmit relevant information to the Experts when and if it comes to hand. In a debate in the Executive Board in late 2008 it was agreed that this Work Group should remain in existence for some time to come and that it should hold at least one meeting a year to take stock of developments. In light of this it can be reported that there are no specific outcomes that are expected from the Work Group but that Member Organisations should remain vigilant as to developments at a national level ensuring that any developments are reported to the ACE.

#### **General Reflections about this Thematic Area**

Reflecting on the reports for each Work Group noted above it seems that the work in this Thematic Area touches on matters of fundamental importance for the architectural profession. It is also evident that there is a strong overlap in the work being done by the Work Groups and for this reason it is intended to hold a Workshop of all Work Groups in this Thematic Area during the month of May 2009. At the time of writing details are still being worked out but it is expected that the announcement of the Workshop will be made prior to the General Assembly in Helsinki.

Of particular concern in assessing the commonalities between the Work Groups is the objective of the ACE to ensure that the Professional Qualifications Directive and in particular Annex V.7 of the Directive will contain listings of qualifications that truly represent the full set of qualifications in each country. This objective is needed in order to bring about more convergence between Member countries of the requirements in terms of education and training for architects. It is interesting to note that this fact has been recognised by our Swiss Colleague, Pierre-Henri Schmutz, who, with the backing of the Executive Board, held an informal meeting on the topic in January 2009. The concerns raised at that meeting echo the concerns raised above and highlighted the fact that this matter of understanding the full set of qualifications required in each country straddles both Thematic Area 1 and Thematic Area 2 in the work of the ACE. The Executive Board has supported the objective of P.H. Schmutz to bring greater understanding to the subject matter and I am pleased to report that he has been mandated to continue this work with a wider Group during the course of 2009. As the work progresses it is hoped that Member Organisations will be able to bring support to the conclusions that will be reached so that the interest of the profession across Europe will become better understood and that cross-border working will become easier to undertake.

Finally it is important to recall that the ACE undertakes collaborative work and exchange of experiences with the European representative association for Schools of Architecture, the EAAE, in the form of a Joint Working Party (JWP). The JWP is co-chaired by a Representative of the EAAE and by Dalibor Borak of the Czech Republic for the ACE. The work in the JWP covers many of the topics discussed above and allows for coordinated responses of the profession and schools to European initiatives that affect the quality of education and training for architects. This collaboration is important as it brings a closer understanding between the profession and educators in the interest of a high quality of qualifications.

#### **Conclusion**

It is the objective during 2009 to ensure greater coherence and a continued high level of output from the working structure of Thematic Area 1. In particular I have high hopes that the Accreditation and Validation work can be completed and that a clear vision of the structure of education and training requirements in our Member countries can be developed in order to bring about convergence in these requirements over the years to come.

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**End of the Report**