



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

## PRESS RELEASE

### Conference “Designing for the Future – The Market and Quality of Life”, 10 April 2008

#### **Architects Conference sets out the Brussels Statement for a sustainable built environment**

*Architecture is a central element towards achieving a sustainable, high quality built environment, says the ACE<sup>1</sup> (Architects' Council of Europe)*

At an international conference organised on 10 April 2008 in Brussels by the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), held under the Patronage of José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, over 400 of Europe's leading politicians – at International, European, national and local level - administrators, industry representatives and professionals in the field met in Brussels to draw up the agenda for tomorrow's built environment.

In his opening speech to the Conference, Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission spoke about the new integrated approach that the Commission has adopted to its buildings that is to include an architectural policy and he unveiled an international urban design competition for the Rue de la Loi (European Quarter) in Brussels that is a joint cooperation between the Commission, the Region Brussels-Capital and the City of Brussels. In a later presentation during the day, Charles Picqué, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region gave more details about the competition and about the objectives that are to be pursued to achieve ambitious targets for the buildings within the area, which is the subject of the competition, notably in terms of energy efficiency and architectural quality.

During the Conference, Richard Parker, Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University, pointed out that while modern architecture has a shared communal ability to cultivate real beauty, this is often “profoundly incompatible with markets - the defining institutions of our time – and there is thus a need to bridge this democratic deficit”.

Professor Riccardo Petrella from the Academy of Architecture of Switzerland-Italy urged the audience to “reinvent cities as places of “common goods”, providing public services for all” and to renew them as spaces of representative and direct democracy.

Jean-Marie Beaupuy, Member of the European Parliament, President of the European Parliament Inter-Group Urban.Logement lent his support to the architects call when he said “We need to have a more coherent approach to the forms of governance in cities, as this will help to improve the social, cultural and economic standards of its citizens, so this October the

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<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1990 the ACE is the representative association for the architectural profession, acting as its voice in relations with the EU Institutions. It currently has 45 Members who are the representative and regulatory architectural bodies from all of the EU Member States, the Accession States, Norway and Switzerland. It therefore represents, through its Members, over 450,000 architects across Europe.

#### SECRETARIAT GÉNÉRAL

Conseil des Architectes d'Europe AISBL  
Rue Paul Emile Janson, 29 B-1050 Bruxelles  
Tel. : +32 (0) 2 543 11 40 Fax : +32 (0) 2 543 11 41  
E-mail: [info@ace-cae.org](mailto:info@ace-cae.org) Website: [www.ace-cae.org](http://www.ace-cae.org)

Inter-Group will present a report to the European Parliament on introducing an integrated approach”.

Building on the spirit of the Bristol Accord on Sustainable Communities and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, and in the context of the EU Treaty concept of Territorial Cohesion, the Conference overwhelmingly agreed the Brussels’ Statement (attached in annexe). This stressed that:

- architecture is a positive tool in steering investments towards sustainable development;
- developing cities demands an integrated, holistic approach, with input from politicians, architects, developers and civil society;
- planners, designers, the construction industry and end users must work together to create and maintain a quality built environment to provide solutions for sustainable cities;
- public procurement at all levels should be used to promote sustainability and quality, and particular attention should be given to rectifying the current misuse of Public-Private Partnerships.

ACE President Juhani Katainen welcomed the Statement, which he said demonstrated that architects are “now setting the agenda for the built environment, working with city leaders, practitioners and citizens to make cities worthy of their citizens”.

In a closing speech to the Conference, Janez Podobnik, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia and President in Office of the EU Council of Ministers, reminded the audience that in the past architects and politicians had together created epoch-defining buildings – from the pyramids of Egypt to the buildings of renaissance Florence – and that they continue to do so nowadays. They will continue to fulfil that role in building the new Europe, harnessing growth to develop a high quality built environment for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Contact Alain Sagne, Secretary General at:

{ HYPERLINK <mailto:info@ace-cae.org> }

For further information on the ACE see:

{ HYPERLINK <http://www.ace-cae.org> } or

Enclosure: Conclusions of the ACE Conference on 10 April 2008