



Strategic Priority 3: BAUKULTUR

Urban Issues

Housing Group

Date: 03/04/2019 - Ref: 65/19/PO

Taking into account the recommendation made last year by Member Organisations at the Pecha Kucha (GA 1/2018) to put greater focus on Housing issues, the ACE Executive Board has decided to re-launch a Housing Working Group and invited Dr. Andreas RUMPFHÜBER (practicing architect and author of several books / research on housing issues) to think about the possible objectives that such a Work Group could pursue. The present note contains his first reflections.

ACE Member Organisations are invited to designate experts to take part in the new ACE Housing Work Group. We hope to hold the first meeting of the WG in Brussels, in July 2019 (tbc), in order to further discuss and agree objectives and select a chairman.

Housing in Europe

Housing is currently being discussed intensively all over Europe.

In general, it is striking that the discourse on housing is dominated by economic concepts and guided by the interests of the building industry. This discourse does not include qualitative ideas of spatial or even architectonic solutions. Affordability has become the most dominant and unifying term at European level, discussing housing and mirroring the reality of many tenants in Europe's urban agglomerations. Yet this discourse also mirrors Europe's juridical framework, and the Housing work group would need to address the extent to which the European Parliament may intervene in national housing policies.

In some European Member States participation has recently been discussed as an emancipatory tool of governance, increasingly allowing the population to take part in decision making processes. Yet such participatory projects, as well as other bottom-up and possibly innovative initiatives in relation to housing are empirically marginal. Furthermore, the current housing discourse, especially in its focus on "economic" terms, like "affordability", is limited and not qualified to address the changing reality of our society and its population (step-families, single-house-holds, change/decrease of earnings / labour, etc.)

These and other topics could become the starting point for an ACE Housing Work Group.

ACE Housing Work Group

The goal of an "ACE Housing Work Group" would be to bring together various national and local initiatives and, by relating to the national regulations, rules and habits of each participant country, conceive of an "advocacy" strategy on an European level that would mirror the interests architects and emphasise the knowledge of the architectural discipline for sustainable housing solutions.

The work would :



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- Define a common goal, formulate a “research” question – which should be a precise focus of such a working group.
- Map and bring together the various housing initiatives and ideas spread out across Europe, but not currently networked.
- Analyse and categorise current initiatives in relation to the European juridical framework
- Develop a common strategy to place and promote an “architects” initiative on various political/strategic levels within the European Union (local, national, trans-national).

Parallel to such a work-group, the ACE should aim to conceive a trans-national research project (possibly funded by the European Union) in cooperation with Universities in Europe, in order to secure its impact. Such a research project would allow for external funding for ACE’s initiative and work, but also would allow for the inclusion of experts from other disciplines (i.e. Economists, Lawyers, Sociologists). Such research could significantly inform the work of the group and the policy making of ACE.