

Turin and Nijmegen, April 2016

To the attention of the AESOP Secretary General

Hereby we submit the **Annual Report 2015 for the AESOP Thematic Group *Transboundary Spaces, Policy Diffusion, Planning Cultures***

The Thematic group "Transboundary Spaces, Policy Diffusion, Planning Cultures" was launched successfully in 2015, and first events are being organized.

The Thematic Group is coordinated by Giancarlo Cotella (Politecnico di Torino) and Stefanie Dühr (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen), who took over the coordination of the TG in Utrecht in July, during 2014 AESOP Congress. At the Utrecht conference we elaborated a strategy to (re-)launch this group and fill it with life. We reported on the planned activities in our last annual report.

The progress and activities which we want to report on for the year 2015 are as follows:

- We set up a mailing list of contacts working on the topics of the Thematic Group as well as a LinkedIn group, building on our networks and knowledge of research in the field.
- At the Annual Congress in Prague, we officially launched the Thematic Group. The launch session was widely advertised through the mailing list, an announcement on the AESOP website and so on, and it was well attended with approximately 50 participants from different nationalities. The TG coordinators presented the objectives of the group and the proposed communication means, and invited the participants to discuss ideas for future activities. A lively discussion ensued with many suggestions by the new group members on how to bring the network to life, notably in relation to future workshops and sessions, but also in relation to the 'target group' or professional or institutional 'users' of research and knowledge created by the group.
- One of the suggestions for future events was put forward by Karina Pallagst (TU Kaiserslautern), who offered to investigate whether a first symposium of the TG could be organized and financed by her University during 2016, when it would be difficult to organize a meeting due to the fact that the congress will be held in Brazil. This possibility of a 'European' meeting was confirmed after the annual congress, and the symposium is currently being organized, and will be held at TU Kaiserslautern on 19 and 20 September 2016. The organizational and financial support of TU Kaiserslautern and of Karina Pallagst and her colleagues is gratefully acknowledged.
- During the launch event also the communication channels of the TG were discussed. Group members voiced that they would prefer different platforms than the site set up on LinkedIn or a Facebook account, for – not least – privacy reasons. It was agreed to instead set up a mailing list through Googlegroups which allows self-subscription and through which members can share news, and to use the AESOP website more actively for communication. This will be set up in due course, while meanwhile the list of group members' email addresses serves as basis to disseminate information on the symposium etc..

- A dedicated Track (Track 11 on “Planning across borders”) was moreover organized during the Prague annual congress. The co-organisers of the track were, as for the Utrecht congress, Stefanie Dühr and Jochem de Vries, as well as for the Prague congress involving Wil Zonneveld. Most of the participants in the sessions of this track are also members of the new TG, and it was therefore discussed whether a track on this topic could be organized at each AESOP annual congress held in Europe. This point was brought up in the meeting of country representatives during the Prague conference, too, and it was agreed with the AESOP Secretary General and President that it should be possible to ensure tracks connected to AESOP Thematic Groups at future congresses. This is certainly something we will follow-up on for the next European congresses with a view to ensuring continuity in discussions related to the topics of this Thematic Group.

Best regards,

Giancarlo Cotella and Stefanie Dühr

Thematic Group Coordinators