

Helsinki and Vienna, January 2025

To the attention of the AESOP Secretary General,

Hereby we submit the Annual Report for the AESOP Thematic Group **Transboundary Planning and Governance** for the year 2024.

2024 was a very active year for the TG with two main events: The annual AESOP Congress in Paris in July and a one-day roundtable event in Bratislava in October. Moreover, the TG coordinators have published an academic reflection on the TG activities and two TG meetings were held.

AESOP Congress in Paris

At the AESOP Congress in Paris, the TG was responsible for coordinating the Track “BORDERS: Transboundary planning for sustainability and cohesion” (chaired by Alois Humer, Thomas Perrin and Simin Yan). The track contained six sessions with approximately 30 presentations. In addition, one special session entitled “Beyond left-behindness: Small and Medium Sized Towns”, organized by Loris Servillo, was part of the track. All sessions were very well attended and sparked lively discussion. Following discussions in Paris, a call for a special issue was launched (see future activities section).

Bratislava event “Inclusive and Cohesive Urban Development in European Cities European Reflections and Learnings for a Post-War Urban Planning”

On October 18th the full day roundtable was organized at Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. The event resulted from a continuation of previous debates on transboundary planning and governance in the context of war, specifically the war in Ukraine. The event was organized by Nataliia Yehorchenkova, Oleksii Yehorchenkov, Maros Finka (all STU) and the TG coordinators Alois Humer and Eva Purkarthofer. The event received financial support from AESOP to invite keynote speakers from Ukraine to attend the event.

At the Bratislava event, emphasis was put on listening to challenges and threats of urban and regional planning in Ukraine and to discussing learnings and options for a post-war era. The event was transdisciplinary and the list of speakers stretched from Ukrainian politicians and stakeholders to national and international researchers in the field. As a result, contributions were diverse and painted a varied picture of post-war planning. Some explicitly highlighted the situation in Ukrainian cities while others provided input and learning from post-war urban planning from other places and from historical experiences. The setting of the event helped to connect the practitioners’ and the researchers’ inputs by being a fully hybrid event, taking place at the premises of Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and being livestreamed via zoom to the online community of AESOP and particularly Ukraine. A total of approx. 60 participants joined the event, half of them onsite and half of them online.

The day started with words of welcome and the introduction of a well-designed program by Thomas Dillinger, the Vice-president of AESOP, the hosts of the event at STUBA and the coordinators of the AESOP TG Transboundary Planning and Governance. Session 1 set the agenda with an opening panel discussion, followed by contributions of colleagues from Ukraine in Session 2 and of colleagues from across Europe in Session 3. While the first sessions were

performed in hybrid way with presentations onsite and online, the final Session 4 split up the audience into one onsite world café and one online paper session. Thematically, the debate offered a wide range of issues from housing policy, environmental concerns, infrastructure provision, socially inclusionary urban development and urban economic recovery more broadly. Examples from other places and times of the world gave hope but also warning about the difficulties of urban planning after war times. Summarising some of the learnings in a few words, cooperation and exchange on all levels – from neighbouring municipalities to large-scale European integration processes – was identified as a promising way forward. Integrative, cross-sectoral urban planning may play a crucial role in reestablishing a post-war country in many respects of social, economic and ecologic life. Immediate action in urban planning to recover cities and regions is equally important as thinking ahead strategically with long term visions.

Some impressions from the Bratislava event:





Debate article “Transboundary Planning and Governance: from challenge to solution in times of crises?” published in EJSJ

The TG coordinators published a brief academic reflection on the status and activities of the TG as open access debate article in the *European Journal of Spatial Development* (Purkarthofer & Humer, 2023). The article highlights the recent changes and activities of the TG and outlines a potential future research agenda related to transboundary planning and governance. The article can be accessed here: <https://journals.polito.it/index.php/EJSJ/article/view/405>

TG meetings

Two TG meetings were organized during 2024: One in person meeting at the AESOP Congress in Paris (July 10th) and one online meeting (December 3rd). The meetings were attended by 15-20 participants and served to review past TG activities, plan future activities and share information on relevant events and calls. In the Paris meeting, we also continued planning the Bratislava roundtable event.

TG communication channels

The main communication channel of the TG is a mailing list with approximately 160 subscribers. The TG website (<https://aesop-planning.eu/thematic-groups/transboundary-planning-and-governance>) continues to be updated to reflect the thematic focus and activities of the group. The website also introduces the main activities of the TG (AESOP Congress, journal collaboration, other conferences and workshops) and is updated regularly with news items such as workshop announcements, calls for papers and news related to the TG itself.

Future activities

1. The TG is responsible for organizing Track 4 “GOVERNANCE: Institutions, actors and ideas crossing boundaries and enabling learning” at the AESOP Congress 2025 in

Istanbul (chaired by Eva Purkarthofer, Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ, Mehmet Penpecioglu and Elisa Privitera). The call for abstracts is currently open and to date already 150 abstracts were submitted to the track.

2. Special issue “BORDERS: Transboundary planning for sustainability and cohesion”: A special issue following up from the track presentations at the AESOP Paris Congress will be published in the *European Journal of Spatial Development*. Nine abstracts were accepted and full papers are expected in March 2025. Alois Humer, Thomas Perrin and Simin Yan will act as guest editors. The special issue will be published during autumn 2025.
3. Special issue “Inclusive and Cohesive Urban Development in European Cities: European Reflections and Learnings for a Post-War Urban Planning”: This special issue in the *European Journal of Spatial Development* follows up from the Bratislava event. Six debate articles and four research articles were submitted to the journal in December and are currently under review. Alois Humer, Eva Purkarthofer, Nataliia Yehorchenkova and Oleksii Yehorchenkov will act as guest editors. The special issue will be published during spring 2025.
4. Two TG meetings are planned for 2025: One in person meeting at the AESOP Istanbul Congress in July and one online meeting in December.

Best regards,
Eva Purkarthofer & Alois Humer