



AESOP 2008/09 Report to GPEAN

(December 2009)

1. Association Membership and Executive Committee (ExCo) Updates

AESOP membership is slowly growing – we currently have

- 115 Full Members
- 45 Associate or Affiliate Members
- 42 Individual Members
- 4 Honorary Members

AESOP is continuing efforts to increase its services and value to members. Part of this is AESOP's engagement with accreditation and quality assurance issues. These issues have gained heightened importance in Europe as part of the Bologna process, which started in 1999. AESOP is now exploring how to operate a kind of support service for interested member schools through experts from an expert pool. AESOP will be a facilitator but schools will pay the experts directly. Coordination of these activities will be through a special projects officer (Maros Finka) and the former AESOP president Peter Ache. AESOP is also reviewing its conference policy with a view to increase the academic quality of contributions. Finally, AESOP also continues its efforts to strengthen its Eastern and Central European membership.

In July 2009, AESOP's Executive Committee saw several changes:

- Christina Nilsson was voted to become the next president of AESOP. She will take the helm from July 2010 – taking over from Willem Salet who will become Senior vice president at that time.
- New young academics representative is Vojtech Novotny (Prague)
- Pantelis Skyannis became the 2nd AESOP representative to GPEAN – he will serve on the Steering committee
- Thomas Matta will be the new treasurer replacing Andreas Voigt.

2. Major Activities and Future Direction

AESOP's activities and services to its members are growing and included the following:

2.1 Communication

The AESOP website (www.aesop-planning.com) has become a key communication tool for the association. A consultancy has been commissioned to develop a more interactive web design.

2.2 Thematic Groups

A number of thematic groups form lively intellectual subject-specific networks within the association. Groups meet at the annual conference but also throughout the year by organising their own meetings.

2.3 Prizes/Awards

AESOP awards three prizes on an annual basis. The Excellence in Teaching award as well as an award each for best paper published and best congress paper.

2.4 Supporting Young Academics

One of AESOP's key activities is the support for Young Academics. The Young Academics have their own established website: <http://www.aesop-youngacademics.net/>

AESOP's annual PhD workshop was hosted by the planning school of the University of Manchester prior to the 2009 AESOP congress in Liverpool. The young academics network held their 3rd meeting in February '09 in Vienna under the title: "Planning as a rear view mirror or crystal ball." The next young academics workshop is planned for February 2010 in Prague.

2.5 Networking amongst Heads of Planning Schools

A fourth meeting of European-wide Heads of Planning Schools (HoS) meeting was held in Lille, France. And the next HoS meeting is scheduled for 16/17 April 2010 in Istanbul. There will be some joint activities with ISOCarp representatives. Further HoS meetings are planned in 2011 (Tirana) and 2012 (Hamburg).

2.6. Publications

AESOP has negotiated a deal with DISP journal and will use each of its issues to provide updates on AESOP congresses and activities.

A regular newsletter is also published and emailed to all member schools with job adverts, and new publications etc. from staff at member schools. See www.aesop-planning.com

2.7 Links with other organisations

AESOP has signed an MOU with ISOCarp (International Society of City and Regional Planners); it was agreed to establish mutual web-links and where appropriate invite and communicate with the respective other institution and the executive committee.

3. Future Congresses

The 2010 AESOP congress will be hosted in Helsinki, Finland 3-7 July. The local committee graciously extended an invitation to host the next GPEAN meeting.

The PhD workshop will be organised as a joint effort of several Scandinavian institutions on an Island in the Baltic Sea prior to the AESOP congress.

November 2009 (AF)