



Planning Education

Quality Issues in a changing European Higher Education Area

Edited by Anna Geppert & Giancarlo Cotella



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Quality Issues in a Consolidating
European Higher Education Area

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Editorial: Quality Issues in a Consolidating European Higher Education Area

Anna Geppert¹ & Giancarlo Cotella²

On the 12th of March 2010, at their meeting of Budapest and Vienna, Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process officially launched the European Higher Education Area as envisaged in the Bologna Declaration of 1999. During this decade, changes have been impressive. In ten years, the perimeter has enlarged from the 29 signatories of the Bologna Declaration up to 47 signatories in Vienna, all parties at the European Cultural Convention. This definition of Europe concurs with the perimeter of our Association, where Planning institutes from all countries belonging to the Council of Europe may apply for full membership. And defining a perimeter goes together with defining a vision, in this case the vision of a broader Europe.

At the same time, the Bologna Process has developed and produced important effects. From the start, the reform had three overarching objectives. Firstly, the introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate). By today, almost all European countries have adopted a three-cycle differentiation of their curricula, although there is still no consensus as to a single model in terms of duration of these cycles. In the field of Planning, the debate remains vivid, as have demonstrated the “Bologna surveys” of 2006 (Davoudi and Ellison, 2006) and 2009 (Ache and Jarenko, 2010).

The second objective, related to students and workers mobility, was the recognition of qualifications and periods of study. Here things appears to be more complex and, whereas instruments such as the ECTS and Diploma Supplement have widely spread on the continent, there is still a long way to go in terms of recognition of qualifications. In 2007, AESOP has dedicated its 2nd Heads of Schools meeting (Leuven, Belgium – 2007) to the question of the European recognition of the Planning profession, and the first issue of Planning Education (Geppert and Verhage, 2008) echoed our works.

The third objective of the Bologna reform was the development of quality assurance in the field of Higher Education and Research. Again, also in this concern we are witnessing dramatic changes. Two models still co-exist. The first, more supervisory, where quality assessment goes together with the accreditation of higher education institutions or teaching programs. The second, more advisory, where quality assessment is more oriented towards improvement of programs, where accreditation procedures may exist but are not done by the same organisations. Frontiers between these models are moving. For example France, where quality assessment used to be embedded in the accreditation process, has established in 2007 an independent agency responsible for quality assessment of higher education and research (Agence d'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur, AERES). As the previous two – and perhaps even more – this issue lies at the very heart of AESOP that, as stated in its motto, pursue the mission of ‘promoting excellence in planning education and research’.

In terms of procedures, methodology and criteria, Quality Assessment is undergoing radical transformation. In this context, the Planning field is sometimes challenged, due to its interdisciplinarity and to the structure of Planning Institutes themselves, characterized by a relatively small size and a strong and tight relation between education and practice. These questions have been the topic of the AESOP 3rd Heads of Schools meeting (Łódź, Poland – 2008) dedicated to Quality Assessment, and of the AESOP 4th Heads of Schools meeting (Lille, France – 2009) which brought new developments into this field and linked it to the question of the identity of the Planning discipline.

The present issue of Planning Education builds on the results of these two meetings, providing the reader with a restitution of the main issue that were at stake, complemented by a series of interesting insights. Altogether, it illustrates the state of the art of the debate around Quality Issues in relation to planning education in Europe, as it has evolved within the AESOP environment in the last years. At the same time, it introduces the role AESOP intends to play in this concern within the future consolidation of the European Higher Education Area. The publication is organized in three sections. Section 1, “The Evolving Landscape

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for European Planning Schools”, provides the context for the following discussion, through the presentation of a report from the “Second Bologna Survey” about the adaptation of the planning education field to the Bologna process, by Peter Ache and Karoliina Jarenko. Section 2, “Planning between Interdisciplinarity, Sovereignty and Loss of Identity”, examines the position of our discipline in the academic field. Simin Davoudi shows how interdisciplinarity may be our strength, while domestic examples are provided by Didier Paris (France) and Izabela Mironowicz (Central-Eastern Europe). Giancarlo Cotella reports from the workshop held in Łódź about the situation of Central-European Schools. Section 3, “The Role of AESOP in the Promotion of Quality in Planning Education”, presents the evolution of the Association's policy. The establishment of an AESOP Quality insurance policy, presented by Willem Salet and Maros Finka, is documented by the reports of the workshops in Łódź (Anna Geppert) and in Lille (Giancarlo Cotella) where these elements have been discussed extensively in participatory workshops. The question of developing further AESOP's vision of Quality in Planning Education included in our 1995 Core curriculum, in particular with respect to the three-cycle differentiation, is then analysed by Roelof Verhage, and supported by a workshop report jointly produced with Beata Banachowicz. Finally, Anna Geppert analyses the Dublin descriptors of academic quality, that were also debated in Lille, as reported by Andrea Frank.

Planning Education itself is in the process of improving its quality. Papers gathered in Planning Education 1 have been collected with the humble design of providing our community with a trace of our exchanges and debates, justified by the importance of the questions at stake. Its audience widely surpassed our expectations – since it has been made available on our website, in autumn 2008, the electronic version of Planning Education 1 has been downloaded over 2000 times. From then, convinced that a journal dedicated to Educational questions is of interest to the community, we worked hard intending to improve its editorial quality. For the current issue, the editorial work has been accomplished by Giancarlo Cotella, responsible for this edition. Following the 5th Heads of School Meetings (Istanbul, Turkey – April 2010), Planning Education 3 will focus on “Planning Education and Practice”. However, the 5th Heads of Schools meeting will not be the solely source of contributions. An open call for papers and a peer-review process will be launched in order to further improve the quality of our publication.

May Planning Education 2 be interesting and useful to the reader!

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**Section I -
The Evolving Landscape for
European Planning Schools**

The Adaptation of European Planning Schools to the Bologna Process

*Peter Ache & Karoliina Jarenko*³

AESOP realized a survey mapping the experiences member schools had had with the implementation of the Bologna Process in 2006. The following year, results were discussed at Leuven's Heads of Schools Seminar and a report published on AESOP website. The survey was conducted by the former president of the association, Professor Simin Davoudi from the University of Newcastle. An update of this survey was conducted in the beginning of 2008. The survey was kept relatively similar for comparison. Some minor changes were made, mainly related to the format: the first survey was conducted as a paper questionnaire and the update via internet using "w-poll" software. Some questions were formulated slightly differently in order to make use of the software's analysis tools.

Later on in the year the survey was sent out again, this time combined with a short questionnaire tracking course supply and focus of substance in planning schools for the UN-HABITAT 2009 Global Report in Human Settlements. The second round attempted to increase the sample for mutual benefit. Contact information of addressees was gathered from the AESOP members' and UN-Habitat schools' database. Respondents were encouraged to participate even though they had already responded in the beginning of the year. In this case they were asked to only answer the questions added on UN-Habitat's request.

This report presents results of both surveys realized in 2008 and compares them briefly with the first survey of 2006. Format of presentation has been adapted from the report of 2006 to some extent: respondents are listed at the end and results presented at school level. This was also requested for by a respondent of the first round of 2008. The surveys realized in 2008 including the report at hand were conducted by former president of AESOP, Professor Peter Ache and Karoliina Jarenko, who has drafted the main elements of this report. The work has been financially supported by AESOP.

Summary

This report maps the development of the Bologna Process in AESOP member schools until the year 2008. It simultaneously enhances the commensurability of European education through distributing information to institutions providing planning education.

All apart from one of the respondent schools had adopted the two-respectively three-cycle system and 75% used ECTS. Most commonly in use was a 3+2+3 cycle format. Advantages of the new system seem clearer to respondents than two years ago, when the first Bologna Survey was conducted. Many responses now describe challenges of the adoption with a note to the temporality of them: difficulties mainly relate to the transition itself and to the unfamiliarity of the new degree. Full stability requires adoption from the part of national accreditation practices and labour markets, making the process slow. The peak in stress to schools, teaching staff and students, however, ought to be behind now that curricula have been restructured and new courses running.

A widely reported advantage of the process had been the need to rethink curricula. Restructure had resulted in clarity, logicity and often also a wider repertoire of courses for students to choose from. A direct result of the Bologna Process itself had been the internationalization of curricula. This had had various positive effects such as the increased mobility of students and staff, ability to use highest international benchmarks in further development of education, better selection of (master) students and indeed also increase in the national status of planning education. The process had in some cases also resulted in the development of quality assessment systems altogether and linking the state's financial support to performance.

The negative effect that bothered respondents most was the removal of the national/cultural dimension from education. This weakness was seen crucial for the very practically oriented planning education. Other negative effects mentioned were the shorter cycles resulting in immaturity and un-readiness for work-life of students and higher fragmentation in learning competencies. The latter is especially the case for master

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students, who now often have different backgrounds (scientific but cultural, too). Shorter cycles, on the other hand, had increased the attractiveness of university studies. In the same spirit it was noted, that the BSc degree had brought an academic degree available to larger population.

A central question in the process has been the distinct natures the bachelor and the master degrees will have. Respondents of this survey described requirements for bachelors in the following way: basic learning, elementary skills, understanding simple realities, analytical orientation, ability to system decomposition, understanding of the planning systems, basic methods and instruments, a generic capacity of sharing a working prompt experience, preparedness to work as a team member, capability to identification of problems and management of simple planning processes. Masters should fulfil the following expectations: specialized learning, high skills, understanding complex realities, more creative planning orientation, synthetic and creative thinking, a specific capacity of leading a working group activity, preparedness to work as a highly qualified professional with specializations and of whom coordination and creativity is expected of, ability to manage planning processes and to develop methods and instruments, research orientation.

Outlooks on the employability of masters were very good, but concern for bachelors was widely reported. The national labour market situation effected outlooks greatly: where the need for planners was urgent, professional bodies and employers were more willing to accept "lower professionals" as competent planners. Other issues that concerned respondents were continuous change causing stress to staff and students and disability to concentrate on research, the ever-increasing budget constraints in universities and the lack of support from national professional bodies influencing national restrictions of education, that might nullify the advantages of the new system.

Responses to the surveys

An invitation to take the first round of the survey was sent to 68 persons via e-mail in February 2008. Twenty (20) responses were received during a month's period making the response rate slightly below 30%. The invitation for the second round was sent to 177 persons in August 2008. 45 of these had received the invitation to participate on the first round. 25 schools left a response making the rate 14%. Five schools and persons provided answers for the new part and also added to their previous responses: Karel Maier from the Czech Technical University in Prague (Czech Republic), Massimo Bricocoli from the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), Umberto Janin Rivolin from the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), Dejan Djordjevic from the University of Belgrad (Serbia), and Göran Cars from the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden). We thank these persons for the extra effort. In case responses of the second round differed from those of the first round, the more recent response was taken into account. Mostly responses simply gave more information providing a more thorough picture of the situation.

After two rounds responses were gathered from 40 schools in total. About a third (16) of the schools had participated in the study of 2006. These responses are marked with grey shading in the first tables. The number of AESOP member schools varies largely from country to country. Thus responses represent a different portion of the country's situation.

Table 1 : Schools respondent to the first round of Survey.

Country	Number of AESOP members in country	Name of university/City	Name of unit, department or school	Annual no. of UG students	Annual no. of PG students	Annual no. of PhD students	Staff (FTE) teaching	Student/ staff ratio
Belgium	3	Ghent University	Centre for Mobility and Spatial Planning	0	20	3	5	4,60
Bulgaria	1	Univ. of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia	Urban Planning Dep.	30	16	4	28	1,79
Czech Republic	3	Czech Tech. University / Prague	Fac. of Architecture	No response				
Denmark	2	Aalborg University	Dep. of Development and Planning, and Dep. of Architecture and Design	15	85	approx 15 plus external PhD students	55	2,09
Greece	3	Univ. of Thessaly / Volos	Dep. of Planning and Regional Development	No response				
Italy	15	Politecnico di Milano	Facoltà di Architettura e Società	100	100	12	56	3,79
		Polytech. of Turin	School of Architecture 1	500	100	15	8	76,88
The Netherlands	11	Utrecht University	Dep. of Human Geography and Planning, Fac. of Geosciences	60	45	7	6	18,67
		Wageningen University	land use planning chair group	50	25	2	4,75	16,21
Poland	7	Cracow University of Economics	Chair of Regional Sciences	80	80		20	8,00
Romania	2	Univ. of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest	Town Planning School	90	60	6	70	2,23
Serbia	1	Univ. of Belgrade	Fac. of Geography/Dep. of Spatial Planning	60	10		30	2,33
Slovakia	1	Slovak Univ. of Technology / Bratislava	Institute of Management	90	40	15		
Sweden	7	Royal Institute of Technology / Stockholm	Urban Planning & the Environment	60	50	35	60	2,42
		Swedish Univ. of Agricultural Sciences / Uppsala	Unit of Landscape Architecture, Dep. of Urban and Rural Development	100	20	5	5	25,00
Switzerland	2	Univ. of Applied Sciences Rapperswil	Dep. of Spatial Planning	30	10	0	12	3,33
Turkey	7	Yildiz Tech. University / Istanbul	Dep. of City and Regional Planning	370	50	20	36	12,22
		Middle East Tech. University / Ankara	Dep. of City and Regional Planning	No response				
United Kingdom	27	Heriot Watt / Edinburgh	School of Built Environment	50	80	3	12	11,08
		Heriot-Watt University / Edinburgh						

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Table 2 : Schools respondent to the second round of Survey.

Country	Number of AESOP members in country	Name of university/City	Name of unit, department or school	Annual no. of UG students	Annual no. of PG studens	Annual no. of PhD students	Staff (FTE) of teaching	Student/ Staff ratio
Austria	4	Vienna Univ. of Eco. and Business Administration	Inst. of Regional and Environmental Economy	0	40	10	6	8,33
Czech Republic	3	Brno Univ. of Technology	Fac. of Architecture	90	80	20	15	12,67
		Czech Technical Univ. in Prague	Inst. of Spatial Planning, Fac. of Architecture	300	250	47	10,1	59,11
Denmark	2	Aarhus School of Architecture	Dep. of landscape and urbanism	83	43	3	10	12,90
Germany	15	Technische Universität Dortmund	School of Spatial Planning	160	20	50	55	4,18
		Univ. of Kassel	School of Architecture, Urban Planning & Landscape Planning	700	130	63	50	17,86
		Technische Universität Berlin	Institut für Stadt- und Regionalplanung	50	40	10	17	5,88
Italy	15	Univ. of Napoli "Federico II"	Dept. of Urban Design and Planning	700	60	6	26	29,46
		Univ. luav of Venice	Fac. of Planning	60	40	10	32	3,44
		Politecnico di Torino	Dipartimento Interateneo Territorio	500	100	15	8	76,88
		Politecnico di Milano	Dip. di Architettura e Pianificazione	300	170	42	80	6,40
The Netherlands	11	Delft Univ. of Technology	Fac. of Architecture		60-70		65	1,00
		International Inst. for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation/Ensched	Dep. of Urban and Regional Planning and Geo-information Management		40	20	10	6,00
Norway	7	Univ. of Tromsø	Dept. of Planning and Community Studies	25	25	15	8	8,13
Poland	7	Wrocław Univ. of Technology	Fac. of Architecture	45	70	4	60	1,98
		Adam Mickiewicz Univ./ Poznań	Inst. of socio-economic geography and sp. management	180	120	7	75	4,09
Portugal	8	Univ. of the Azores/Angra do Heroísmo	Agriculture and Environment Department	100	15	5	5	24,00
Serbia	1	Univ. of Belgrade	Fac. of Geography Dep. for Sp. Planning	200	20		14	15,71
Sweden	7	Royal Inst. of Technology/Stockholm	Urban Planning & the Enviroment	20	40	48	13	8,31
		Luleå Univ. of Technology	Dep. of Civil, Mining and Env. Engineering	12	2	2	4	4,00
United Kingdom	27	Univ. of Liverpool	Civic Design	35	40	5	9,5	8,42
		Univ. of Westminster/London	Dep. of Urban Development and Regeneration		90	6	7,5	12,80
		Univ. of Cambridge	Dep. of Land Economy	60	100	60	30	7,33
		Univ. of Glasgow	Urban Studies		20-30	3to6	9	3,28
		Univ. of Reading	Centre for Planning studies, School of Real Estate & Planning	40	45	3	10	8,80

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Respondent schools are remarkably different in size. The University of Luleå (Sweden) educates 16 new students yearly while the University of Kassel (Germany) has an 893-student intake. Also the number of students in each cycle varies widely. Some schools educate most students up to the master level while some schools have a large number of undergraduate students of whom only a small portion continues with master studies. The case was the same with PhD students: in some schools there are only very few doctoral students, but in some the amount was almost the same as at master level. The University of Applied Sciences in Rapperswil (Switzerland), the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (the Netherlands) and the Cracow University of Economics (Poland) do not provide doctoral studies at all. The Ghent University (Belgium) reported no undergraduate students at all.

The number of full-time teaching staff is likewise variant. The Polytechnic of Milan (Italy) employs 56 persons while Luleå only has 4 persons working full-time. More enlightening is the student/staff ratio: how many students are there per teaching staff member. The median in respondent schools was 8, but variation wide: staff members of the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy) handle 77 students while the TU Delft (the Netherlands) has a ratio of exactly one. Also the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland) and the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Sofia (Bulgaria) have a ratio of below 2. Given the still quite low response rates, all following figures and statements have to be seen as indications only. However, they provide another stepping stone towards a better understanding of the current situation of the Bologna process within AESOP.

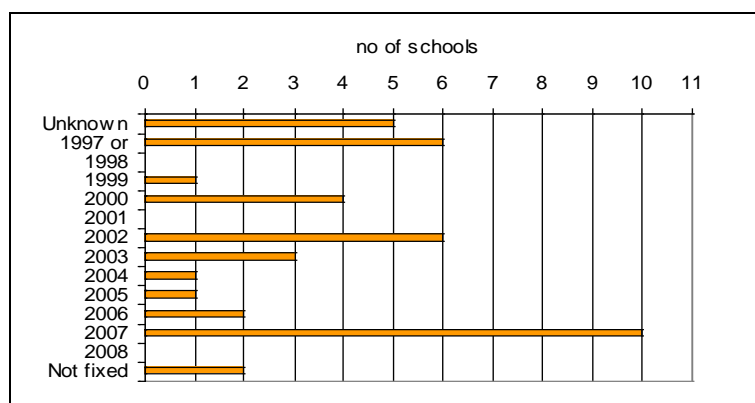
The two respectively three degree cycle system

Adoption of the new system

All but one respondent school had adopted the new system. The University of Liverpool in U.K. had not fixed the date of adoption. The Middle East Technical University in Ankara (Turkey) had not adopted the new system for the part of the city and regional planning department, but the rest of the school had made the transition already in 1962 (report of 2006). For most of the respondents, the adoption had taken place in the beginning of the millennium or before. Another peak had been in the year 2007, when 10 schools had adopted the new system. Almost all the schools of the latter peak participated in the second round of the survey.

In 2006 about four fifths of the respondent schools had adopted the new system and a fifth indicated they were on track to adopt by 2006/2007. Although the schools that participated in these surveys are not exactly the same, it seems this trend has been realized.

Figure 1 : Adoption of the new system in AESOP member schools.



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The composition of the cycles

Most commonly (25/40) the undergraduate cycle takes 3 years and the postgraduate cycle 2 years. In some schools the undergraduate cycle lasts 4 years and in some schools the master education is pulled through in only 1 year. A more intensive master education was, however, not systematically combined with a longer undergraduate cycle: 4+2 and 3+1 cycle-formats were also in use. The 3+2 format was most common in the survey of 2006, too. It was then noted, that the 4+2 format was popular in Eastern Europe; this seems to remain the case. The Heriot-Watt University in the U.K. has apparently changed from 3+1 to 4+1 format between the two surveys.

Figure 2 : Compositions of cycles in respondent schools.

<p>4+1 Technische Universität Dortmund, Germany University of Liverpool, U.K University of Glasgow, U.K Heriot-Watt University, U.K Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest, Romania Yildiz Technical University, Turkey Middle East Technical University, Turkey (4+2; 3) University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Bulgaria (4+1,5)</p>	<p>3+2 Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria Czech Technical University in Prague, the Czech Republic Aalborg University, Denmark Polytechnic of Milan, Italy Polytechnic of Turin, Italy University of Napoli "Federico II", Italy University Luav of Venice, Italy Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands Wageningen University, The Netherlands University of Tromso, Norway Cracow University of Economics, Poland University of the Azores, Portugal University of Belgrad, Serbia Slovak University of Technology, Slovakia Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden Swedish Univ. of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden Wrocław University of Technology, Poland (3,5+2)</p>
<p>3+1 University of Kassel, Germany University of Reading, U.K. Utrecht University, the Netherlands University of Applied Sciences Rapperswil, Switzerland (3+1,5)</p>	

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The duration of PhD studies, which was not inquired of in 2006, varied mostly between three and four years in schools. In terms of PhD programmes, the majority of schools (19 of 29) offer a cycle of 3 years in addition to the Master programmes.

<p>3 years PhD (19) University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia, Bulgaria Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic Czech Technical University in Prague, Czech Republic Aalborg University, Denmark Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark Polytechnic of Milan, Italy Polytechnic of Turin, Italy University of Napoli "Federico II", Italy University Luav of Venice, Italy University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest, Romania University of Belgrade, Serbia Slovak University of Technology, Slovakia Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden Yildiz Technical University, Turkey Heriot-Watt University, United Kingdom University of Reading, United Kingdom University of Glasgow, United Kingdom (3 or 4) University of the Azores, Portugal (3+) Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria (3+)</p>
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4 years PhD (9)

Ghent University, Belgium

Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation, The Netherlands

University of Tromsø, Norway

Wrocław University of Technology, Poland

Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

6 years PhD

Middle East Technical University, Turkey

Key changes in the structure of the curriculum as result of the Bologna Process

Out of the 36 schools that provided information for this question, 17 had restructured the planning curriculum as result of the Bologna Process. Most changes had been taken as positive.

The modular organization of the curriculum was considered more logical (the University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden), the University of Kassel (Germany), the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)) and giving students a more integrated comprehension on specific problems and themes (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the University of Napoli "Federico II" (Italy)). The bachelor studies are now more pragmatically oriented whereas master studies develop especially capabilities in research (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Wrocław University of Technology (Poland)). Master studies have made it possible for students to individualize their curriculum through optional courses and the thesis (the Ghent University (Belgium), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the University of architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the Technische Universität Dortmund (Germany)). In some schools, master studies are now offered in English language (the Ghent University (Belgium), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the University Iuav of Venice (Italy)).

As negative effects of the process, restructuring of the modules according to international exemplars has removed the national/cultural dimension from the education (the Wageningen University (the Netherlands)), but in some schools the new international aspect was seen as "opening windows" both cognitively and in terms of working possibilities in Europe (the University Iuav of Venice (Italy), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy)).

Changes noted in 2006 were very similar to those presented above. Respondents of 2006 had also brought up the new status of the planning degree as separate of that of architecture in this connection. This had resulted in national reforms of professional bodies in some countries. This will be discussed later on. It seems, that complaints on neutralizing the cultural aspect of planning education as result of the internationalization of the curriculum have grown stronger since the first survey of 2006. This may be due to several factors. Respondents have in fact more experience on the new system and its outcomes, but also may be noted, that cultural issues have become more and more popular in all societal spheres resulting in a stronger focus on them.

Challenges of the adoption

By far the most often mentioned practical problem in the adoption of the new system had been the reorganizing of courses from new basis and with new objectives (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden), the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), the Technische Universität Dortmund (Germany), the University of Kassel (Germany), the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany), the Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands), the Wrocław University of Technology (Poland)). Most named the organizing

itself, especially the concern for finding balance between the cycles, courses and modules and not treating students in transition in an unfair way. Some also brought up weaknesses in the way the organizing had been realized.

Most other challenges named were in tight connection with this. Switching the language had been difficult in practical terms (the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands)), as had been accompanying students along the change (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden)). The incompatibility of modules between universities during the transition period had produced barriers for students to go abroad (the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)). The shortage of staff (the Ghent University (Belgium), the University of Kassel (Germany)) and problems with school administration (the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria), the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)), let alone the opposition among staff and professionals (the Wrocław University of Technology (Poland)) had also put strain on those responsible for the realization in schools. Some had also had problems in getting professional associations acknowledge the new system (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)) or in introducing a new state exam at the baccalaureate stage all together (the Czech Technical University in Prague (the Czech Republic)). Troublesome had also been recruiting students to the BSc degree (the University of Tromsø (Norway)).

Most (21/30) thought that these problems are not been specific to the planning degree. Those who did often referred to the status of the planning profession and the tension between the planning and architecture degrees of which the latter one is held more prestigious (the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria), the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the University of Napoli "Federico II" (Italy)). The practical nature of the planning degree was seen a challenge also when there was no tension between the two professions/degrees (the Technische Universität Dortmund (Germany)). For example, very young people rarely see themselves as planners making recruitment for the UG degree difficult (the University of Tromsø (Norway)). A very practically oriented degree also has more pressure to continuous change according to the requirements of the professional world (the Utrecht University (the Netherlands)). The practical orientation has also led curricula to be more nationally oriented making the international aspect more difficult to integrate (the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Middle East Technical University (Turkey), the Aalborg University (Denmark), the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany), the University of Napoli "Federico II" (Italy)).

The most often mentioned challenge in the adoption of the Bologna Process that was specific to the planning degree was the multidisciplinary. This was especially the case at the Master level, where students after the Bologna Process often have different backgrounds (the Ghent University (Belgium), the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the University of Tromsø (Norway), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)). Language issues were seen more from the dark side when teachers had been used to using national cases (written in original language) in problem based learning and could not do so anymore (the Aalborg University (Denmark)). The positive side of the English language was also brought up in terms of new possibilities in development projects and partnerships worldwide (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)).

Often mentioned were also more practical issues relating to the transition: implementing the new Master degree and running the courses that need to be suitable for both old and new students (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden)) and especially when there were no Bachelor students from one's own faculty (the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark)), gaining acceptance of the new degree by professionals (the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany), the University of Napoli "Federico II" (Italy), the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria)) and by students and staff (the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands) and the University of Belgrade (Serbia)).

All these challenges were identified also in 2006. Back then a slight majority considered the problems to be planning specific. Problems caused by multidisciplinary and the wide scope of planning studies was on the agenda then, too.

Advantages of the new system

To the quality of planning education

Advantages to the quality of education were seen especially in the comparability of courses between countries that then had resulted in improving courses according to highest international benchmarks (the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria), the Wageningen University (the

Netherlands), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden), and the Middle East Technical University (Turkey)).

The structure of the degree had resulted in a broader selection of planning courses that 1) open perspectives to deepen students' insight in planning (the Ghent University (Belgium)), 2) allow specializations (the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), the University Iuav of Venice (Italy), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland), the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)), 3) allow international exchange (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia), the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden), the Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands)) and 4) provide flexibility in general (the Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland)). The multidisciplinary of MSc students was also seen as having improved the education (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia), the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)). The improvement in education and the better structure with its positive effects had then resulted in a better selection of students (the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria), the Heriot-Watt University (the U.K.), the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Austria)). Pleased respondents were also for the better structured and articulated curriculum (the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden), the University of Reading (the U.K.)).

The respondent of the University of Cambridge brought up the effects of the Bologna Process to the acknowledgement of the planning profession in Europe regarding both European (and national) characteristics and improving the status of the profession.

Issues noted in 2006 reflect those presented above. A couple of differences may be stated. Firstly, the improvement in the selection of students as result of a more attractive curriculum was not mentioned in 2006. Secondly, in 2006 several brought up a more practical orientation of teaching. In the follow-up, education is mentioned to provide more flexibility and possibilities for specialization.

To the acceptance of the new BSc/MSc qualifications (in social and cultural terms)

As advantages of the new system respondents mentioned the general acknowledgement of a master degree (the Ghent University (Belgium), the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the University of Napoli "Federico II" (Italy)) - also internationally (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands)).

The two-cycle structure had brought several advantages. First was the clarity of different levels in general (the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark)). The two degree levels was seen a way to bring an academic degree (BSc) accessible to a wider population (the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland)). In the U.K., where the master level is commonly 1 year long in respondent schools, the intensity has cut down the cost of education making the MSc degree more attractive to students from different socio-economic backgrounds (the Heriot-Watt University (the U.K.)). The bachelor degree has made graduation easier for weaker students – on the other hand some pitied losing good students after the first cycle (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden)). The second cycle of the system was also seen as a possibility to offer supplementary education to professionals (the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)).

The Bologna Process was used as an opportunity to rethink and restructure both the education and the practice systems in Romania. Thus it played for the advantage of the acceptance of the new qualifications but also eased out the employability of new graduates (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)).

Respondents of 2006 made frequent note of the fact that the BSc degree has not been fully accepted and students tend to continue with the MSc also when not necessary in light of their future aims. This aspect was not brought up in 2008 under this question, but is, however, present elsewhere in the responses (see e.g. next section on employability). The point of view concerns students that are aiming for an academic degree irrespective of the duration. A new observation is the effect the two cycle system has had on the overall popularity of education: the more intense cycles and the BSc degree have made it possible to new socio-economic groups to pursue an academic degree at all.

To the employability of new BSc or MSc graduates

Not many had experience on the employability yet. Outlooks were very good especially for the MSc graduates. Some concern for the acceptance of BSc's was expressed (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland), the Czech Technical University in Prague (Czech Republic), the University Iuav of Venice (Italy)). The new system is

expected to produce a reconfiguration of the labor market (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)). The national labor-market situation effected outlooks remarkably. In Sweden, where there is great demand for planners, the schools were more worried about attracting students to stay for the second cycle (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences). Schools in the U.K. with the history of changing the duration of the second cycle from 2 to 1 year had found no problems in the acceptance of the new shorter MSc (Heriot-Watt University, University of Liverpool). The labour demand had a positive effect on this, too (University of Liverpool). Outlooks for the BSc in the U.K. were also good because of the current demand in mid-level professionals in industry (University of Cambridge). The international job market had opened up for MSc's in some countries as result of the new system (University luav of Venice, the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Delft University of Technology, the University of Reading).

The national labour-market situation effected responses respectively in 2006. Sweden gathered then, that BSc students might find employment as trainees whereas in 2008 respondents believed employment would be found as full professionals. The situation in Romania seems to have changed too: two years ago it was presumed, that harsh competition would result in students requiring the MSc degree anyway whereas in 2008 a restructure of the labor market was in sight. Outlooks for MSc students were not inquired in 2006.

Other issues of concern

Other advantages of the new system mentioned were more on the negative side. The Wageningen University in the Netherlands was concerned that continuous change in the curriculum would begin to undermine the degree. Another concern was the ever-increasing budget constraints in universities (the Utrecht University (the Netherlands)).

Disadvantages of the new system

To the quality of planning education

Students in Belgium used to have to have a full master degree before entering the planning program. Changing into a normal master program has decreased the maturity of students (the Ghent University). In Turkey, changing the bachelor cycle from four to three years was seen in the same way: students would not be mature enough for the Master level (the Yildiz Technical University). Concern for BSc's not being capable to fulfil the requirements of the job was expressed in Germany (the Technische Universität Dortmund). The two years for the master studies was considered very short for teaching students all needed skills (the Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands)). Language issues were also brought up in this connection: not being able to use cases written in other language than English was considered to lower the quality of education – at least in providing understanding of national/cultural characteristic of the profession (the Aalborg University).

Concerns were also expressed for the master courses becoming too specific (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)) and for higher fragmentation in learning competencies (the University luav of Venice (Italy)). On the other hand, decrease in freedom (the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)) and the system forcing students on certain 'tracks' (the Utrecht University (the Netherlands)) were also brought up. A challenge of fairness and comparability was to find suitable requirements for knowledge for external students (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences). These concerns were brought up by the previous survey as well. Especially challenging was mentioned the challenge to find a balance between academic and professional aims of the MSc education.

To the acceptance of the new BSc or MSc qualifications

Almost all respondents expressed concern for the acceptance of the new qualifications, but none saw it as a lasting phenomenon. It was the unfamiliarity of the new degrees that caused trouble and this would be taken care of in time. This result is very encouraging, as in 2006 the acceptance of the first cycle degree was considered much more problematic. It seems indeed, that the two cycle system is beginning to stabilize itself in different countries and along with it the advantages the new system are becoming more apparent.

To the employability of new BSc or MSc graduates

Respondents from almost all countries are expecting a period of difficulties in employment for the new BSc graduates (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey), the University of Reading (the U.K.), the Aalborg University (Denmark), the University luav of Venice (Italy)). A respondent from the U.K., where the master studies had changed from a two year long to a one year long degree, expected employers to accept the new graduates fairly well, especially if

provided with suitable work experience (the Heriot-Watt University). As noted above, it is very encouraging that respondents now conceive the nature of the situation as temporary. Difficulties relate to the unfamiliarity of the new system and will dissolve as national institutions adapt to it.

Other issues of concern

As advantages of the two-cycle system have become widely identified, respondents were concerned that they might be nullified through national restrictions. For example, the national legislation limits Master level education possibilities of students from different fields and working possibilities of staff from different backgrounds in Bulgaria (the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia). In Romania the professional bodies want to lay down the rules and play a too big a role in the restructuring of the planning education (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest).

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

25 out of 33 (75%) respondent schools had adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Two years earlier a half of the respondent schools had adopted ECTS and 15% were soon to adopt. The European credit system seems to become the standard fairly quickly. An exception to this is the United Kingdom that uses the CAPs scheme and seems to be satisfied with it. The CAPs system is, however, not very different from the ECTS.

The key issue that obviously had needed to be addressed was comparability with the old system (the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Austria), the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), the Technische Universität Dortmund (Germany), the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)). One agenda had also been gaining acceptance and understanding from partner institutes that had not adopted the new credit system (the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (the Netherlands), the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)), from other degrees in one's own institutes outside the new system (the University of the Azores (Portugal)), and explaining new educational profiles to employers (the University of Belgrade (Serbia)). The workload to teachers and staff had worried some (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences). There had also been incomparability with ECTS and the old system resulting in exchange students having to take a high number of courses per semester in order to meet the 30 ECTS requirement (the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)). Worth mentioning is also a note made in the survey of 2006 by the Université Pierre Mendès-France: standardized credits will not eliminate the possibility of differences in the individual validation of courses by schools.

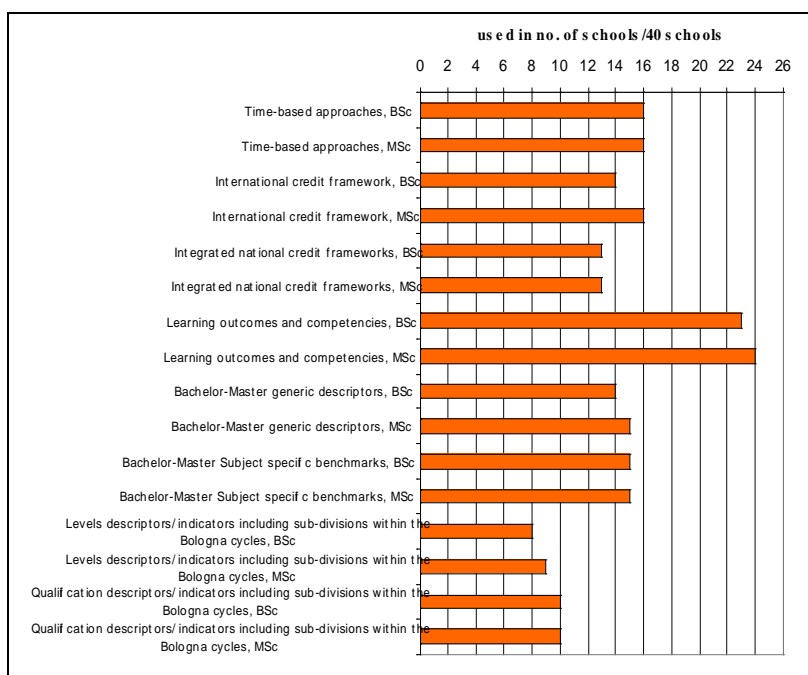
In general, the adoption seemed not to have produced very much trouble (the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (the Netherlands), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia)). Some of the respondent institutes had in fact had a fairly similar system before making the transition smoother (the Aalborg University (Denmark), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands)).

Degree qualification structures

One of the central questions in the adoption of the new system has been the distinction between the BSc and the MSc education. Some differences have already been brought up in the previous pages. Although the Bologna Process aims for commensurable education in Europe, the examination of qualifications reveals a wide variety of approaches to the distinction between the two degrees. National conventions in the accreditation of professionals play a key-role in defining aims for the degrees. It does seem, however, that approaches in different countries are slowly becoming more similar. Responses given in 2006 are more diverse and also seem to concentrate more on technical issues such as subjects addressed in education. Responses given in 2008 offer more mature insights on the distinct natures of the two degrees. The next section presents these views through the topics of required learning outcomes, professional qualifications and the accreditation of professionals. First are presented methods of classification.

The most popular methods of classification were learning outcomes and competencies, time-based approaches, subject specific benchmarks, generic descriptors and the international credit framework. Subject specific benchmarks were not as popular in 2006 but otherwise the list remained the same in the two surveys. Least in use were levels descriptors and indicators. There is no remarkable difference between the classifications of the two degrees. A larger number of methods were in use for the master degree: Learning outcomes were widely in use for the bachelor degree, and when reaching the master level, other qualification methods were added to the repertoire. Although most respondent schools have adopted the ECTS, a national credit framework was still almost as popular as the international one.

Figure 3 : Methods used to classify qualifications.



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Respondents were then asked to explain used criteria in a few words. Some inconsistency was found, however: the University of Liverpool (the U.K.) reports a 4+1 cycle format while describing a three-year duration for the classification of BSc studies.

To explain the international credit framework, some referred to ECTS in general, and some gave a number of credits required. The number of credits required in different schools varies to some extent especially within BSc studies. The bachelor degree consists of 180 credits in the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), in the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), and in the Slovak University of Technology while total of 240 ECTS is required in Romania (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest). Master studies require 118 ECTS in the International Institute of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (the Netherlands), 120 credits in the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania) and in the Slovak University of Technology.

Some explained integrated national credit frameworks with reference to ECTS (the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), the University of the Azores (Portugal), the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)). The University of Naples in Italy has “a classes of bachelors’ and masters’ system” and a Regional Commission addresses degree benchmarks. QAA is used for subject benchmarking in Scotland and in the University of Liverpool. Heriot-Watt uses SCQF as level descriptors. The University of Reading uses university-based descriptors and RTP/IC for learning outcomes. In Slovakia, the credit framework is based on descriptions of “core knowledge” of specific study fields described by the ministry, and in Serbia, on knowledge requirements stated by the Serbian Chamber of Engineers (distinct for second level professionals (BSc) and for licensed planners (MSc)).

These knowledge requirements in Serbia also produce the requirements for learning outcomes. The University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria) uses AESOP and ECTP to classify learning outcomes for bachelors and RTP/IC for masters. The Bloom’s taxonomy is in use in Denmark (the Aalborg University). The Polytechnic of Turin has defined learning outcomes as “basic learning” for bachelors and “specialized learning” for masters. This same spirit is present in many following explications concerning learning outcomes, generic descriptors, subject specific benchmarks and levels and qualification descriptors: the Heriot-Watt University in Scotland expects “knowledge and understanding” from bachelors and “critical knowledge and understanding” from masters, the University of the Azores (Portugal) expects “understanding simple realities” from bachelors and “understanding complex realities” from masters. The Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland) demands “elementary skills” from bachelors and “high skills” from masters. The Slovak University of Technology expects an “analytical orientation” from bachelors and a “more creative planning orientation” from masters. This is further defined in connection to

generic descriptors: bachelors are expected to handle “analytical thinking, ability to system decomposition, understanding of the planning systems, basic methods (and) instruments (...)” while masters are required of “synthetical (and) creative thinking”.

In addition to cognitive skills, under evaluation is often also the role of the graduate in a team and the type of work addressed. The University of Luav in Venice (Italy) expects “a generic capacity of sharing a working prompt experience” from bachelors whereas “a specific capacity of leading a working group activity” is required of masters. In Romania bachelors are expected to work as team members whereas masters are “highly qualified professionals (...) (with) specializations and of whom “coordination and creativity” is expected of. Masters are also more research oriented. Bachelors are addressed with “identification of problems and management of simple planning processes” in Slovakia, while masters manage planning processes and are able to develop methods and instruments.

Time-based approaches: the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. International credit framework: Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom. Integrated national credit frameworks: Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom. Learning outcomes and competencies: Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Sweden. Bachelor-Master generic descriptors: the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom. Bachelor-Master Subject Specific benchmarks: Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, Germany, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom). Level descriptors/indicators including subdivisions within the Bologna cycles: the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Italy, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom. Qualification descriptors/indicators including sub-divisions within the Bologna cycles: the Netherlands, Slovakia, Turkey, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden.

Changes in classifying qualifications and their implications

The Bologna Process had changed the methods in classifying qualifications in many schools. Most respondents stated these changes as positive. Reviewing the curriculum as a whole had produced a better orientation and clarity in courses and contents (the University Luav of Venice (Italy), the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the University of Reading (U.K)). The Bologna guidelines had clarified the classifications system, too (the Wrocław University of Technology (Poland)). Adopting the BSc had resulted in quicker production of professionals (the University of Belgrad (Serbia), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)) although some concerns for the preparedness of bachelors for work-life were expressed. The respondent from the University of the Azores (Portugal) felt that changes have forced students to be more responsible and that the whole process is now more creative. Negative implications stated often concerned the working environment (the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia), the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria)). Stability and calm were demanded in order to restore energy and the wellbeing of staff, but also the quality of research. The University Luav of Venice (Italy) was concerned about not having assessed the previous educational system: some intrinsic values and effects might have been lost without notice. The University of the Azores (Portugal) assumed, that dealing with uninterested students might now be more difficult.

Better structure and balance, and transparency of the qualification system were identified as positive implications of changes in 2006, too. In addition to the stress caused by the changes to staff, respondents of the previous survey also brought up stress to students caused by the more intensive education.

Professional qualifications

It was previously stated, that national conventions in the accreditation of professionals play a key-role in defining aims for the two degrees. The following section focuses on the role of national professional bodies in the regulation of education and the accreditation process, but also the role these bodies have taken in the Bologna process.

Regulation/accreditation of the planning courses by professional bodies

Most respondent schools (27/36) have their planning courses regulated/accredited by a professional body or bodies. These bodies are often associations, professional chambers or ministries. Forms of regulation vary from the use of formal standards in course and curriculum planning to the accreditation of graduates as planners. 25% report no course accreditation/regulation. In the survey of 2006, only a fourth of respondents reported regulation and/or accreditation by professional bodies.

Formal accreditation is the case in Italy, where graduates are required to take an exam in order to access the position of a junior (BSc) or full (MSc) planner. This exam is conducted in collaboration of the school and professional bodies (Polytechnic of Turin). In Bulgaria, the Chamber of Bulgarian Architects accredits full recognition and access to planning jobs after master studies and again after two years of practice (University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia). The Flemish Ministry of Spatial Planning accredits graduates as “spatial planners” in Belgium (the Ghent University). The Romanian Planners Registry awards graduates with “a right of signature”. This right may be awarded to graduates of the planning degree after 5 study years, but also to other bachelors: architects, engineers, sociologists, etc., after a 2 year master programme in planning (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest).

The Ministry of Education in Italy accredits the planning programme, through assessing indicators concerning programme design, research, internationalization, and service delivery (the University luav of Venice). In the Netherlands, programmes are evaluated and accredited every second year by the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (the Delft University of Technology). Dutch, German, Austrian, Danish, Hungarian, and Swedish schools have established co-operation for a conception of a joint MSc (the Wageningen University). This co-operation is formalized in a network called the Euroleague Spatial Planning Initiative. The network aims at having a common qualification system for the courses/MSc qualifications. In Romania all educational programmes are submitted to authorization by a national board 3 years after creation and from then on, once every five years (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest). This national board takes into account the opinion of the professional organization R.U.R that regulates the right to signature. The assessment concerns widely all aspects of education from the physical environment of studying to the quality of staff and libraries, processes of learning and results in research. Programs and curricula are assessed and accredited also in Slovakia (by the national Accreditation Committee) (the Slovak University of Technology), in Germany (AQAS) (the University of Kassel), in Poland (the Adam Mickiewicz University), in the United Kingdom (by RTPI and RICS) (the University of Liverpool, University of Westminster, the University of Glasgow, the University of Reading, the Heriot-Watt University) and in the Czech Republic (the Czech Chamber of Architects) (Czech Technical University in Prague). Standards of programmes and courses are used in Austria (EQUIS standards) (the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration).

Changes in criteria and/or the procedures for accreditation

Only a third (12/34) of respondent schools had had changes in the criteria and/or the procedures of accreditation by professional bodies. Most did not indicate whether these changes had been positive or negative. Out of those who did, 8 out of 10 stated these changes had been for the good. Negative issues mentioned were mostly related to the workload and “the artificial and unneeded unification of formal features of education” (the University of Belgrad (Serbia)). Transparency was an often-recognized positive result (Politecnico di Milan (Italy), the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (the Netherlands), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia)). Closely related were notes on an internationally comparable system (Politecnico di Milan (Italy), the University of the Azores (Portugal)) and increase in attractiveness that had resulted from the international aspect (the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (the Netherlands)). Positive had also been giving more weight on learning outcomes and traineeship experiences (the University luav of Venice (Italy)), introducing the possibility of changing one’s field of speciality after BSc (the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)) and the introducing of an accreditation system altogether (Technische Universität Dortmund (Germany)).

Key professional bodies for planning in respective countries

Respondents were asked to identify the key professional body/bodies for planning in their country. Most identified several bodies. 9 of the 16 respondent countries identified a national body specific to the planning profession. These countries were Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, and United Kingdom. National bodies associated with another professional discipline such as architecture or engineering where named by 8 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovakia, Serbia, Slovakia, and Germany. Belgium and Turkey named public authorities.

In the report of 2006 Italy was taken as an example of how the Bologna Process has been instrumental in the recognition of the planning profession as separate from architecture. This recognition manifested itself also in the division of the former Professional Body of Architects into a body of architects, planners, landscape designers and heritage experts. By 2008 two new bodies had evolved: a national institute of planners (Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica) and a national society for planners (Società Italiana degli Urbanisti).

The support of professional bodies in adopting the Bologna Process

About a half (13/25) of respondent schools felt national professional bodies had been helpful in the adoption of the Bologna Process. The ways of help had included close work with universities (no further specification: the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland)) in planning a well-functioning system of education that fulfils both international and national requirements (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the University of Liverpool (United Kingdom)), in discussing the impacts of the process on national level (the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)) to adjusting their own activity accordingly (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), the University of the Azores (Portugal)), and giving "mental support" (the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)).

Reasons for not being helpful given were the inertia between professions and actors resulted from the acknowledgement of the planning profession as separate from that of architecture (the University luav of Venice (Italy), the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland), the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria), the University of Belgrade (Serbia), the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia)) and simply the lack of interest and/or resources (the Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland), the Ghent University (Belgium)).

Reasons for the lack of support given in the survey of 2006 were similar to those above. The inertia between architects and planners complicates the situation in many countries and reluctance to participate and help the process in many cases results from insecurity in one's own status. Some development may, however, be seen: Support from professional bodies had increased from the previous survey results. Back then only a fifth reported receiving help and support from professional bodies in their country. It was identified, that professional bodies "wait and see" how the transition proceeds before participating (the University Pierre Mendès-France). This may indicate that the process is slowly stabilizing itself and that many central obstacles have been passed.

Other changes resulting from the Bologna Process

Planning schools were asked to identify any other changes in planning education triggered by the Bologna Process that had not been addressed in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked whether these changes had been positive or negative. Although changes identified as negative were also reported, all respondents chose the option 'positive' for the average.

Several schools noted improvements to education. Internationalization was the most often mentioned one. Exchange programs have become facilitated by the recognition of credits (Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)) and joint degree agreements have been signed (Polytechnic of Milan (Italy)). Increased mobility of staff was also recognized (Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)). Enabling comparison between different countries had increased competition (Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)), but also brought more attention to comparative planning issues (the University of Reading (United Kingdom)). The modular structure of the curriculum was considered an improvement in Romania, where education had formerly been based on a weekly schedule. The rethinking of the whole curriculum had improved education in general in the Technische Universität Dortmund (Germany). The Bologna Process had also triggered the development of quality assessment systems and linked the state's financial support to performances (the University luav of Venice (Italy)).

Many saw planning education having higher status after the Bologna Process. Clarifying what planning in fact is had increased the profession's importance in the U.K. and Italy (the University of Cambridge, the Polytechnic of Turin). In the same spirit, planning education had received larger popularity in Poland (the Adam Mickiewicz University). In the Netherlands, acknowledgement of merits had focused on the Ph.D. trajectory through a debate on the differentiation between academic Ph.D's and professional ones (the Wageningen University). Research orientation had become stronger in Romania, too (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest). An interesting idea has emerged in the Czech Republic: BSc programs are used as supplementary education to basic level planning administrators. Over time they are planned to replace re-training courses.

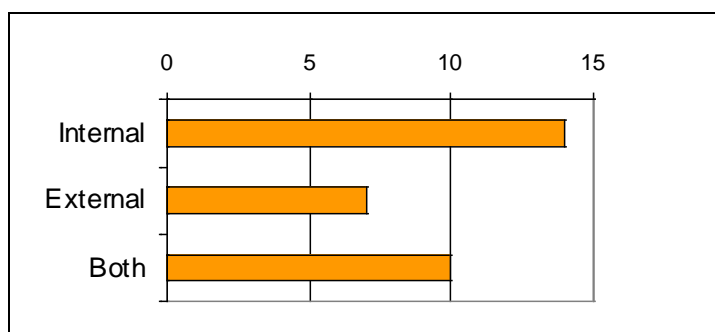
Not all changes were merely positive. Having new students with different backgrounds for the second cycle was an issue itself (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences). The position of admission students is difficult in Romania. The number of state financed PG places is remarkably lower than the number of UG graduates, but the European Council of Spatial Planners (CEU, former ECTP) requires a minimum of 5 years of studies from professionals (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest). Other negative changes noted were the increase in procedural issues (The University luav of Venice (Italy)) and bureaucracy (Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)) through quality assessment and international partnerships.

Research assessment

Research assessment was not directly addressed in the survey of 2006. Many respondents, however, had made note of an increase in international comparison of schools through evaluation of various performance. This comparison has been taken as positive apart from the possible stress improvements and changes cause to staff. The following section reports methods in use for research assessment.

Almost all (34/37) of respondent schools had procedures to assess research or scientific productivity. Exceptions were the Yildiz Technical University in Turkey, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the University of Belgrad in Serbia. Responses are found in table 14. The popularity of different methods is portrayed below in figure 4. All schools use a variety of benchmarks in assessment.

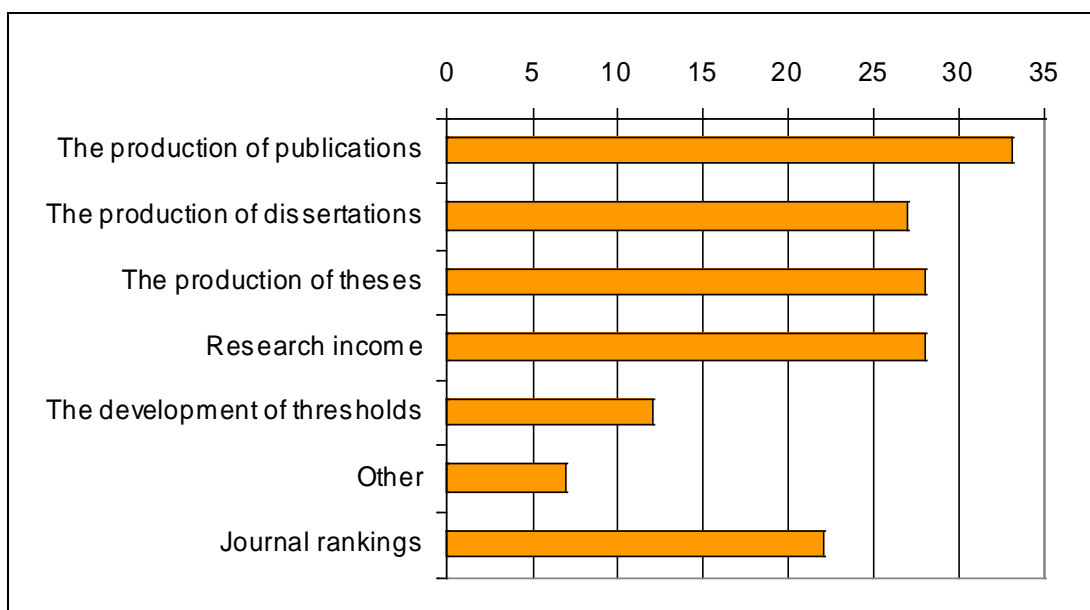
Figure 4 : Most commonly research assessment is conducted internally.



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Research assessment is more commonly internal than external, but many – 27% - schools use both an internal and an external evaluation. Formal criteria are clearly more commonly in use. Only the University of Tromsø (Norway) uses a free format evaluation. Evaluations most commonly (25/37) take place annually. Three, four and five-year cycles were also named. From different performance benchmarks, the production of publications was most commonly followed. Three out of four schools followed also the production of theses and dissertations as well as research income. Well over half of the schools kept an eye on journal rankings as well. The Aalborg University (Denmark) was about to join this group of schools but hadn't finished listing relevant journals at time of responding. The development of thresholds was the least followed given benchmark.

Figure 5 : Research performance methods in use



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The production of publications: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. The production of dissertations: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. The production of theses: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. Research income: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. The development of thresholds: Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden . Other: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, United Kingdom. Journal rankings: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Turkey, United Kingdom. The Bologna Process had resulted in a need of changes in research assessment in the Wageningen University (the Netherlands) as the former system was based on bibliometric criteria and did not benefit the idiosyncrasies of the research tradition in planning and architecture.

Positive examples of research assessment practices

Schools were asked, whether they are aware of a research assessment practice that they held especially positive. Very few named an exemplar. The University of Venice (Italy) reported a compatriot: the Polytechnic of Milan. The Polytechnic of Turin (Italy) and the University of Dortmund (Germany) were proud of their own systems, but did not describe these. The University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania) felt they could contribute: the Planning School “develops a research component within the national supported framework and provides advanced counselling to ministries and other bodies at national level. The research is used for policy design and for linkages between national spatial planning and EU level. The University has an inner system of research assessment and contribution to research which is a criterion for academic career.”

The potential role for AESOP in the future

Planning schools were finally asked if they saw AESOP having a role in the quality assurance process and/or in the professional qualifications process or in the research assessment process of its member schools. It seems member schools are open to and even expect a job enlargement from the association. Almost all (27/30) felt that AESOP could have a role in the quality assurance process and/or in the professional qualifications process and two thirds (20/30) of respondents saw a possible role for AESOP in the research assessment process.

The quality assurance process and the professional qualifications process

AESOP taking a larger role was seen especially beneficial for smaller countries with limited resources for accreditation (University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia). Most often was proposed, that AESOP would provide an international alignment on minimum content of planning courses/requirements for professional education (the Ghent University (Belgium), Politecnico di Milano (Italy), the Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania), the Czech Technical University (Czech Republic), the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)) or a framework for the quality assurance (the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland)). If all-European professional qualifications were to be developed, AESOP would be the natural agent to do this (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)) as there exists no other international quarter that might take this role (the Yildiz Technical University (Turkey)) and be qualified to compare the qualities and structures of the study programmes (the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden)). A similar role to that of UNESCO-UIA, that has established a system of international validation of architecture schools, was suggested (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)). A cemented content for planning courses/degree requirements was not recommended, however, because of the diverse needs and traditions in various countries (the Wageningen University (The Netherlands), the Czech Technical University (Czech Republic)). Possibly, then, collaboration with national professional bodies would be best (the Slovak University of Technology (Slovakia), the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland), the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Austria)). AESOP could, for example, ratify national qualification processes and propose changes to qualifications (the University of the Azores (Portugal)) or harmonize systems in member countries (the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)) through providing strategic guidance and monitoring (the University of Reading (United Kingdom)).

The role of providing and facilitating the exchange of information on planning education was seen very important, too (the Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Cracow University of Economics (Poland), the Heriot-Watt University (United Kingdom), the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden), the Middle East Technical University (Turkey), the Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands)). Issues mentioned explicitly were the mapping of the outcomes of the Bologna Process (the University of Napoli "Federico II" (Italy)), updating the geography of core curricula of the planning schools in Europe, monitoring the dynamics of planners' labor market in Europe, defining strategic axes/domains of research, assessing the evolution of European planning systems and cultures (the University luav of Venice (Italy)), and providing contact information (the Wageningen University (The Netherlands)). Organizing conferences was seen valuable too. A topic suggested for a conference was the problems on planning education (the Cracow University of Economics (Poland)).

Proposed was also, that AESOP would support academic mobility through coordinating lecture visits (the University of Architecture Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria)) thus contributing to staff development or playing a role in study exchange programs (the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)). A job enlargement towards politics was also suggested (the University luav of Venice (Italy)): AESOP could act as a reference body for EU institutions, making their attention alive and aware on needs and planning related problems (Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)). Planning schools provided numerous ideas for future roles for AESOP in 2006, too. Ideas were very close to the ones given in 2008. A new one was the role of a link between planning schools and EU institutions.

Research assessment

Few offered AESOP a direct role in the assessment process of research. The respondents from the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden) and the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Austria) suggested that AESOP would take up quality assessment and accreditation and the Middle East Technical University (Turkey) felt AESOP could act as the controlling and coordinating body in assessment.

Others saw AESOP's role relating more to providing information concerning assessment. AESOP could, for example, trigger discussion about a review system that would do justice to the planning discipline and provide benchmarks (the University of Wageningen (The Netherlands)). Or it could provide suitable criteria in terms of societal effects of academic productivity (the University of the Azores (Portugal)), and provide a list of international experts who are qualified and prepared to do review tasks (the Wageningen University (The Netherlands)).

Facilitating research partnerships⁴ (the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)), identifying strategic research domains (the University luav of Venice (Italy)), revising the diversities of national education processes (the Brno University of Technology (Czech Republic)), distributing research programs (the Utrecht University (the Netherlands)) and keeping a list of running research projects (the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland)), and holding seminars for exchange of experience (the Luleå University of Technology (Sweden), the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest (Romania)) would help through providing comparison and setting strategic priorities. It was suggested, that AESOP could publish annual reports on schools' scientific productivity according to international indicators (the Polytechnic of Turin (Italy)) or have its own AESOP Research Journal (the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland)).

Some felt AESOP should contribute to research assessment only indirectly through helping members improve their substance competence. Means mentioned were existing initiatives, publications and awards (the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria)), seminars (the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland), the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia (Bulgaria)), establishing guidelines on course content (the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom)), and facilitating co-operation in application on European research funds (the Wroclaw University of Technology (Poland)).

⁴ "particularly in the areas of (1) assessment of current trends in urban development within our countries (2) articulation of a both open and articulate system to favor the inter schools dialogue, (3) exchange of data and programme / projects experiences between different countries" (University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu Bucharest).

Possible roles in quality assurance and/or professional qualification process:

- Describing minimum requirements for professional qualifications/course content
- Participation in national processes
- Providing quality assurance framework
- Providing a system of validation of schools
- Providing information
- Possible roles for research assessment:
 - Quality assessment and accreditation
 - Providing information concerning assessment
 - Help through providing comparison and setting strategic priorities
 - Contribution to research assessment only indirectly through helping members improve their substance competence.
- Other roles:
 - Facilitating personnel and student mobility
 - Being active towards EU institutions

Section II -
Planning between Interdisciplinarity, Sovereignty and
Loss of Identity: a Debate

Planning and Interdisciplinarity

Simin Davoudi⁵

A fundamental question for planning education and practice is: what is planners' unique competence that no other professions can legitimately claim as theirs? What distinguishes planners from geographers, architects, environmental scientists or professional mediators? There is no easy answer to this question, partly because "planning has not developed as an intellectual discipline in its own right" (Grant, 1999, p. 4). Instead it has drawn on other foundation disciplines. Given that the relative importance of these in planning education is fluctuating all the time, "the intellectual basis of planning is exceptionally flexible and fluid" (op cit p. 5). While some consider this 'interdisciplinary' basis as a weakness - making it difficult for planners to know exactly what belongs to planning- others see it as a key strength. Indeed, interdisciplinarity is now regarded as a virtue despite the fact- or may be because- it is rare, operationally demanding and intellectually challenging. A discussion on interdisciplinarity needs to start with an understanding of what constitutes disciplinary knowledge.

What is a discipline?

The rise of mono-disciplines, since the 18th century, has been due partly to the orientation of western cultures towards analysis rather than synthesis. Therefore, "modern scholarship lays inordinate emphasis on specialisation – which in modern university attests, implies and entails the segregation of knowledge into distinct 'disciplines'..." (Baigent et al, 1982). Disciplines are therefore social constructs that have evolved through historical processes. They involve both objects and methods of study. When we speak of an academic discipline we imply not just a particular subject matter, but also a system with a number of social and functional dimensions (Harriss, 2002). Functionally, disciplines provide a set of rules for: what constitute a 'problem', what counts as evidence, or what is considered as acceptable methods by which knowledge is produced, evaluated and transferred? Socially, disciplines provide shared languages, concepts and tools; they create identities, peers, careers, and even 'professional refuge' for activities that otherwise might not be valued (Petts et al, 2008). Through such social and functional dimensions, disciplines perform important roles in verifying knowledge claims. They become deeply structured to the extent that there is a danger of 'disciplinary tribalism'. Hence, disciplinary structuring is so deep that it is difficult to overcome just by good intentions. Nevertheless, there is a value to be gained from moving beyond disciplinary boundaries; not least because complex societal challenges do not respect disciplinary boundaries.

Multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary?

In the literature as well as our daily conversations we tend to come across a confusing set of terms, such as multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. They are often used interchangeably despite conveying different meanings (See Sillitoe, 2004). Multi-disciplinary approach involves a number of disciplines coming together but each working independently and primarily with their own frame of reference and methods. Hunt and Shackley (1999) call this the 'science of interaction' whereby disciplines can co-exist in a particular context but retains their boundaries. When it works well, it is productive and allows problems to be looked at from different perspectives. So, as Petts et al (2008:596) suggest "it should not be seen as failed interdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinarity involves occupying the spaces between disciplines to build new knowledge (Sands, 1993). It is a synthesis of knowledge whereby our understanding is modified in the interplay with other perspective. Hunt and Shackley (1999) call this the 'science of integration' whereby coherence between the knowledges that are produced by different disciplines is sought (Lau and Pasquni, 2008). Transdisciplinarity (or pluridisciplinarity) creates a cross-road in which different disciplines intersect, problematise and challenge each other (Sands, 1993). It transcends, re-negotiates and re-draws traditional disciplinary boundaries (Petts et al, 2008). Hunt and Shackley (1999) call it the 'science of hybridisation'. Trans-disciplinary approaches involve organisation of knowledge around complex subjects, or real world problems, rather than disciplines. Such approaches are more likely to produce outcomes which are more than the sum of different parts. One of its positive by-products is a greater awareness and reflection on one's own particular disciplinary knowledge.

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A continuum!

In practice, however, there exists a continuum of approaches rather than neatly separated categories that I outlined above. For example, at their weakest, these approaches may be no more than cooperation, while at their strongest they can be transformative and capable of recasting disciplines. In general, interdisciplinarity occupies the broadest position on the continuum which also explains its wider usage than the other two. However, even here, it is possible to distinguish between two different types: 'cognate interdisciplinarity' and 'radical interdisciplinarity'. The former happens within natural or physical, or social sciences while the latter takes place between them (Evans & Marvin, 2006) spanning the natural and the social. It is important to note that such categorisation doesn't necessarily suggest superiority of one type over the others; it basically highlights the fundamental differences between the often interchangeably-used terminologies.

Epistemological challenges and institutional barriers to interdisciplinarity

As mentioned earlier, working across disciplines is hard. Firstly, there are a number of epistemological challenges, notably the persisting disciplinary silos with regard to: the understanding of what constitutes knowledge and what is seen as legitimate methods for producing new knowledge; the intellectual traditions; and, problem definitions. As Baigent et al (1982) argue, disciplinary "experts" tend generally to regard fields other than their own with considerable suspicion – spurious at worst, at best irrelevant. And, 'interdisciplinary' research is often actively discouraged as being, among other things, too speculative". Secondly, there are several institutional barriers to interdisciplinary working, such as: research and educational funding mechanisms, institutional practices, research assessment exercises, journals' publication strategies, refereeing processes, and so on.

Despite these barriers, interdisciplinary perspectives provide a useful means of dealing with complex or 'wicked problems' which cannot be addressed satisfactorily by a single discipline. In the real world, some of the interesting and complex questions are left at the interfaces between disciplines. Addressing these requires synthetic and integrative approaches. It is this need for integration which puts spatial planning in a position of strength.

To make interdisciplinary work, certain conditions have to be met. These include for example: mutual trust and respect among participants; confidence in one's own discipline but without being defensive; space and time for sharing of knowledge, different framing of problems and construction of methods; acknowledging that the aim is problem setting and problem solving rather than doing interdisciplinary work for its own sake; and, availability of intermediaries which are not necessarily people but can also be processes.

The challenge for planning

Addressing the problems and opportunities of our contemporary interconnected world needs new forms and patterns of intellectual inquiry that challenge existing disciplinary and institutional boundaries. Spatial planning with its roots in multiple disciplines and its focus on integration has the potential to play a major role here. However, so far the emphasis in planning as elsewhere has been primarily on the instrumental rationale for interdisciplinary working. To move forward, there should be more emphasis on its intellectual challenges. The questions are:

- Does planning education involve picking and mixing from multiple disciplines, or does it involve redrawing the disciplinary maps in an attempt to understand and explain complex phenomena?
- Does it involve a 'science of hybridisation' or 'integration' of different forms of knowledge or is it just about 'interaction' between them?

The aim of this brief contribution has been to reflect on the notion of interdisciplinarity and planning, but there is another significant aspect of planning which has not been touched upon due to limited space here. That is the interrelationship between disciplinary and experiential knowledge (Davoudi, 2006). Indeed, it is in the infusion of these disciplinary and experiential knowledge that planning has carved out a distinctive place for itself in the family of social sciences. Indeed, the answer to the questions posed at the outset of this paper lies here. What distinguishes planners from geographers, for example, is that planners are engaged in 'doing'. It is about not only understanding space and place, but also aspiring to change them. It is about not only 'critical thinking about space and place' but also using this knowledge as the basis of 'action and interaction' (RTPI, 2003:1).

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Interdisciplinarity and Planning in France

*Didier Paris*⁶

The aim of this short contribution is – thanks to a concrete example at a national level (France) – to emphasize how an epistemological issue can be approached through the specific history of a discipline, and can also have an institutional dimension, both influencing the way we do our job as academics. We won't insist here on the epistemological dimension of the debate relative to interdisciplinarity in planning, as this issue has been discussed extensively in the previous chapter, and we just underline that interdisciplinarity is broadly consubstantial to the nature of planning, an intellectual field which has the ambition to focus on complexity – and action – in cities and territories.

The notion of academic discipline in France

In France, academic disciplines also have an institutional dimension. This can be explained by the existence of the C.N.U., the “Comité National des Universités”. The C.N.U. is an administrative body under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education. Half the members are elected, half are appointed by the ministry. The C.N.U. has two main missions. Firstly, the C.N.U. grants the new doctors a national “qualification” which allows them to apply for the “Maître de Conférences” status (lecturer – UK – or associate professor – US). They also grant the “Maître de Conférences” another “qualification”, after they have passed their “Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches” (more or less after 10 years of practice), which allows them to apply for “Professeur des Universités” status (Reader – UK – or Professor – US). It is possible to grant the “qualification” to become “Maître de Conférences” or “Professeur” to those, in our field, who carry out a scientific activity, through the production of articles, reviews, or books, even if they do not have a Ph.D or “habilitation”. Such people are often practitioners in planning. Due to their own experience, they can be “qualified” to become a full time academic (if they are recruited, after the “qualification” step).

Secondly, the C.N.U. also manages carriers. The academic staff can get a promotion (with a positive impact on the person's income) after individual evaluation by the C.N.U. (half the promotions are proposed at this national level) or by the Scientific Council of each university (half are proposed at the local level). The C.N.U. can also grant a sabbatical period requested by colleagues (half the periods are proposed at this national level), and the Scientific Council of each university can do so as well (half are proposed at the local level).

The C.N.U. is divided between 74 “sections”, so 74 disciplines. For instance, n° 21 is ancient and medieval history ; n° 22 is modern and contemporary history ; n° 23 is geography ; n° 24 is urban and regional planning etc. Often, especially for the “qualification”, the debates within the urban and regional planning section concern the boundaries of the field: is this historian, this geographer, this economist, this architect, this political scientist, this lawyer, this sociologist etc. part or not of the field? Of “our” field? So, the question is to know whether planning is a discipline or a field, in which multiple disciplines can bring different things, especially their own concepts.

The need for interdisciplinarity in French planning schools

In the planning field, the words used to name the curricula – more or less the equivalent of “planning” in English – are, in French, “Aménagement”, “Aménagement du territoire”, “Environnement”, “urbanisme”, “développement des territoires”, or a mix of all these terms. One of the reasons for the foundation of the Association pour la Promotion de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche en Aménagement-Urbanisme (APERAU) in 1984 was to identify these curricula, mainly implemented in the 1970s and 1980s. The older institutions (Institut Français d'Urbanisme, Institut d'Urbanisme de Paris) joined the movement.

In the beginning (1960s), these curricula often seemed to parallel those in Geography. The main vocation of classical Geography was to prepare students to become geography and history teachers, and not to be planners, even if many students became planners in the 1960s. But some academics, often geographers, but also biologists, sociologists or lawyers, thought that it was possible to create new curricula, gathering different fields and offering new academic practices in a specific planning program.

⁶ University of Lille, President of APERAU International (Association pour la Promotion de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche en Aménagement-Urbanisme)

The schools of planning have academic staff from several disciplines, or can draw on the skills of the different departments in their own university. Better yet, due to the varied origins of academics in the 24th section (urban and regional planning), planning schools have resources inside this section: planner and economist, planner and geographer, planner and architect etc. For example, in the last ten years, the members of the 24th section in Lille came from geography, history, architecture, civil engineering, political science, and economy (now retired). The schools of planning can work with schools of architecture to teach urban design or the history of architecture. In France, the schools of architecture are not part of the university. Of course, planning schools can recruit practitioners to teach these subjects.

APERAU has adopted a quality charter for teaching, and the members are evaluated. Several principles of the charter are oriented towards interdisciplinarity:

- Quality and consistency of teaching.
- Promote the identity of the field of planning, especially regarding the names of the academic programmes.
- Promote common knowledge (culture) and multidisciplinary studies throughout the various curricula.
- Implement programmes with:
 - a multidisciplinary approach to teaching;
 - a collective workshop, when possible on topics suggested by professional and/or political bodies: a genuine study, not a topic imposed by teachers;
 - internships in the private or public sector, but with a genuine mission;
 - the production of a master's thesis – often related to the profile of the internship.
- A staff made of academics from different fields (geography, economy, sociology, law, political studies, history, engineering...), and especially from planning, AND professional planners. Professionals are not part of the permanent staff. Sometimes the permanent staff can be reduced and complemented by external teachers and professionals.
- At master's level, particularly for the second year, we emphasise the recruitment of students coming from different fields such as planning (of course), architecture, geography, political science, economy, sociology... because the job of a planner has many facets and requires different backgrounds, due to the variety of missions: economic planning, neighbourhood policies, urban design...
- Promote research in the field of planning so as to enrich teaching.

Interdisciplinarity is therefore at the heart of practices French schools. But it is also interesting to consider that the field of planning, as compared to other academic disciplines, is more oriented towards "implementation". Planning would then be a science of action, implementation, management of processes, "the way to do", through a holistic approach of complexity in cities and territories, while geography, economy, sociology, etc. would be disciplines mobilised for specific descriptions, explanations, analyses (landscape, economic law, society...). Architecture would be a practice at the same time, but could be also include an historical and esthetical approach.

This has an impact on the way French "planners" do their job, as compared to other disciplines, for instance through the relationships they can have with those who are in charge of public – or private – decisions: politicians, practitioners, developers etc. Academic planners can be hired as consultants, they are solicited for public debates. The topics for the workshops of planning students are often suggested by these actors. So obviously, the way planners do their job is different from a pure sociologist, geographer, or even economist. The danger is to lose the necessary distance between action and the analysis of action. This is the specificity of planning, and the reason why planning is so fascinating.

Interdisciplinarity and planning, interdisciplinarity in planning: advantages and disadvantages

Izabela Mironowicz

There are two ways of setting up a new scientific discipline. The first and probably the most usual is based on division; it happens when within the field of study some specialization has grown up after developing its own methods and defining a separate object of research. In this way climatology and oceanography come from Earth sciences, zoology comes from biology and archaeology comes from history. But there is another way of defining a new scientific discipline. The foundation of this method is interdisciplinarity. Autonomy of planning does not come from specialization, on the contrary its new value emerges at the 'crossroads' of many disciplines, originating from different methods and notions. Not only planning is set up this way – there are many examples of this kind of 'creative mixture': biotechnology, computer sciences, 'cosmic' sciences. It is to say that interdisciplinarity is not accidental nor artificial. Neither it is temporary. Interdisciplinarity is an effect of rising challenges and naturally generated problems. Nobody could claim that there is no 'intellectual independence' or 'quality' within a discipline having a tradition from Aristotle's 'Politics' and Vitruvius' 'Da Architectura'.

Actually, interdisciplinarity is the essence of planning. We all – as planning schools – do appreciate this richness of planning. We all consider this variety as the main advantage of our discipline. What is a disadvantage of interdisciplinarity is a form – arrangement, structure and layout of institutions and organisations which are not relevant to this complex essence. In fact the most difficult task we – planning schools – have to face is how to join essence and form. This task is difficult across European universities but probably Central and Eastern European countries have a bit longer way ahead comparing with their Western European partners.

There are phenomena which have grown from the interdisciplinarity roots of planning we notice across the continent. The first is 'edge position' of planning schools (or whatever they are called) within the universities. Edge position is only an euphemism for 'weak position'. This is true about every 'interdisciplinary' faculty, institute or department because of being far from decision centres, tending rather to cooperate with other universities than to reinforce the position within 'Alma Mater'. Planning is not in 'core disciplines' of social sciences, nor technical sciences, nor environmental sciences, nor fundamental sciences being based on all of them and because of a very specific object of study (shared with all of them) – space.

The second is not clearly defined career prospects because of coming from different disciplines. Institutional framework is not well prepared for this. At my university – which is university of technology – one of researches obtained Masters in math and PhD in spatial economy (presenting a thesis on computer simulations on spatial development) conferred by university of technology. A very practical question is – where does this person have to apply for a habilitation degree? Where is the official body joining the knowledge from fundamental sciences and technical sciences? Being 'torn' between different institutions we are getting lost with our scientific careers or we have to 'prove' our value in front of scientific councils of institutes of Building Environment, Architecture, Geography, Social Sciences... There are very few specialized 'planning' (or 'urban planning' or 'regional planning') schools. Institutional framework doesn't stimulate interdisciplinarity.

Planning is a discipline deeply involved in practice. Of course there are many other disciplines having strong links with 'practice' – from medicine to economics, from computer sciences to climatology, but research-practice relationship in planning is more essential. What describes it probably in the best way is comparison between internists and surgeons (Schulman, 2002) – internists make a diagnosis in order to act, surgeons act in order to make a diagnosis. Planners need to work both like internists and surgeon: they have to understand in order to act but in the same time they have to act in order to understand. It is to say that it is not enough to use 'classical' analysis or synthesis to deal with spatial problems, sometimes we need to use some kind of 'black box' and simply perform. For years and centuries it has been the only method in planning. For the last century planning has been developing wide theoretical background (in order to act) but there are still many study areas which need to be 'tested' in practice to get the ultimate answer. What is optimistic about practice is that it involves full spectrum of interdisciplinarity of planning. Practice brings together specialists from urban design to urban management, from social sciences to transport modelling and from environmental engineering to economics. We planners have to act together. This creates specific challenges for planning schools which need to stay 'in touch' with practice. It doesn't

mean that they are practice-dependent but they need to carry on link with practice which allow planning schools to 'act in order to make diagnosis'. This leads us to the last but not least question.

There are professional bodies across Europe. Their position within legal system and professional involvement differs between particular places. Sometimes they are professional societies focused on quality of planning profession and professional standards, sometimes they are corporational chambers gathering practicing planners. What differs them is the influence on planning schools as well. Professional bodies are or want to be involved in education process. There has been a long or even endless debate how to teach for practice. Answers from professional bodies usually emphasis 'skills' rather than 'theory' whereas universities tend to focus on advancing knowledge. This is not a fundamental opposition, the difference comes from different perspectives and express natural distinction between research and its implementation into the practice. A dialogue between universities and professional bodies is reasonable and undoubtedly needed. In European countries this 'conversation' takes many different forms – from monologue to instruction. There are countries where 'professional' accreditation for planning courses is more important than any other quality assessment and there are countries where professional bodies apart from informal personal links are completely excluded from teaching process. But everywhere there is a link (or tension?) between those who teach planners and those who 'use' them as a product of this teaching process. It is to say that in planning schools there is an essential need for cooperation with professional bodies and defining the way of this cooperation.

Interdisciplinarity in East European countries

Twenty years of transformation have been long enough to share a few problems concerning interdisciplinarity in planning across Europe but not long enough to get rid of a few specific East European problems.

The first reason why we – East European planning schools – have been experiencing deeper transformation than our Western European partners are massive changes: social, economic, legal, political. All of them have influenced universities in many ways – from fund rising to new forms of employment, from organizational structure to traditional directions of cooperation. Maybe it would be enough to remind that in 1992 – only 18 years ago – the Red Army still had its forces in many East European countries. This is the way we have walked through.

One of the most significant aspects of this massive change is increasing number of students. In academic year 1990/91 in Poland there were 403.800 students comparing with 1.937.400 in academic year 2007/08. In Czech Republic in academic year 1991/92 there were 111.900 students and in 2007/08 – 344.000; number of Estonian students increased from 25.064 in 1993/94 to 68.168 in 2007/08. On the one hand we should be pleased with this enormous 'educational shift', on the other hand teaching conditions have become more difficult. The number of academic staff hasn't been tripled or quadrupled as well as the number of lecture rooms. As a consequence the academic landscape of the East European countries has changed.

Most notable was the 'private sector educational revolution'. As public (or state-run) universities couldn't supply the 'education demand' – Eastern European countries decided to allow private tertiary education institutions. This change has to be seen in the context of institutional framework.

Eastern European higher education institutions in a few countries had a strong tradition of autonomy and self-governance (i.e. Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary), but during the communist period 1945-1989 a Soviet style model of higher education was implemented. In this system a set of centralised, state-run, public institutions was established providing specialized education in broad fields like engineering, medical sciences, humanities. As a result, the landscape of higher education is and remains to this date characterised by a multitude of highly specialised institutions: universities for the humanities, natural sciences or formal sciences, technical universities and colleges of applied technology (or 'polytechnics'), medical universities, agricultural universities, universities of economics, pedagogical universities and art academies. Tertiary education institutions mostly followed the traditional European model of 4-5 year long qualifications leading directly to MA or MSc degree.

However, the most significant change in higher education in recent history was initiated when Poland became a signatory of the Bologna Declaration and thereby agreed to implement comparable degree structures organised into three consecutive cycles (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate) which meant that institutions had to transform their long continuous programmes into a two-cycle system (undergraduate and Master studies) with an added third cycle representing doctoral studies. In addition, all study units (courses) have to be assigned credits that conform to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to facilitate the mobility of students. Three-cycle programmes and ECTS have been introduced very efficiently in Eastern

Europe. In Poland traditional long programmes (9-12 semesters) are only retained for specific study areas such as medicine or pharmacy.

What is interesting about studies in planning, interdisciplinarity and this new institutional framework is that planning schools are within many different structures. One can find studies in planning within universities of technology (i.e. Wrocław, Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava, Warsaw, Dresden, Cottbus, Riga, Buchrest, Belgrad, Ljubljana) where they have been traditionally run at Faculties of Architecture; within universities at departments/faculties of geography (i.e. Poznań, Belgrad, Gdańsk) or social sciences (Łódź, Warsaw); within universities of economics (i.e. Cracow, Warsaw); within agricultural universities or so-called universities of life sciences (i.e. Tallin, Warsaw, Wrocław). Planning schools are not only within 'old traditional' public universities but also within new market-responding private universities. The picture seems to be pretty interdisciplinary, doesn't it? This new model has produced – especially in bigger countries (i.e. Poland) – a few more difficulties.

The first, already mentioned as a trans-European, concerns cooperation. The most notable problem with it concerns the final degree. In Poland Bachelor/undergraduate degree requirements vary depending on the conferring institution. At non-technical universities a minimum of 6 semesters of study (3 years) and 180 ECTS are required, leading to a professional title of 'licentiate' (BA/licencjat). At universities of technology, a bachelor requires a minimum of 7 semesters (3,5 years) and 210 ECTS leading to the professional title of 'engineer' (inżynier). For the Master's degree a minimum of 4 semesters (2 years) and 120 ECTS for those who hold a Bachelor's degree from a non-technical university are required. For those who hold a professional title of 'engineer' the legal framework wants only 3 semesters (1,5 years) and 90 ECTS. Graduate programmes in planning are open to students with a non-planning background as long as they have completed 60% of all compulsory courses of an undergraduate planning degree. This is relatively easy to achieve for students in environmental studies, geography or architecture. This framework doesn't make students' mobility easy. Universities have to deal with this structure with all their good will, but 'the form' is definitely not prepared to contain 'the essence'.

Figure 6 : General Degree structures in Higher Education in Poland.

Doctoral's degree programme (third cycle)		
Master's degree programme (second cycle)		3-4 semesters
Licentiate (licencjat)	Engineer (Inżynier)	Master's degree programme (continuous cycle)
6-8 semesters	7-8 semesters	9-12 semesters
Bachelor's degree programme (first cycle)		

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Secondly, the traditional division of tertiary education institutions influenced many new-established bodies. A good example is the State Accreditation Committee – the only statutory body entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating the quality of higher education. Its opinions and resolutions have a legally binding effect: the Committee has a power to stop the studies which don't meet defined criteria or give them only provisional (one year) permission to 'upgrade' standards. The Committee is divided into 'sections' relating to particular kind of studies. There are accreditation sections for technical universities, for universities of economics, for universities and for medical universities... but nobody could review planning schools across different kind of universities. A structure of the State Accreditation Committee relates to the post-war division of universities and interdisciplinarity is not within its main goals. As a result different commissions are responsible for the same studies in planning being able to evaluating only few of them run by 'their' respective kind of tertiary education institution. Again 'the form' has missed 'the essence'.

Thirdly, in Eastern Europe there is a strong tradition of 'technical' approach to planning. After WWII, with new territorial borders of many countries, Eastern Europe was faced with the task of rebuilding its largely destroyed cities, infrastructure and devastated economy. Under Soviet influence, communist governments rejected participation in the Marshall plan and reconstruction followed new socialist economic rules. This meant that all important political, social and economic decisions were made by the communist party, reducing planning practice to a technocratic design task. Plans did not require wide social acceptance nor studying economic results. It was enough that they were accepted by an executive and political authority.

With no urban planning studies as a separate track in existence, urban planning became a professional specialisation for graduates of architecture or engineering. As a result the Eastern European practice has been still 'learning' interdisciplinarity.

On the contrary planning research in Eastern Europe is often based on interdisciplinarity. In many countries there is a tradition of 'Academy of Sciences' – state-run institution with high scientific rank gathering researchers to discuss different problems. Usually 'academy' doesn't focus on teaching, but members are often academics from different universities. It explains why cooperation in planning research and teaching between universities is not only actually possible but often even flourishing. For example in Poland in 1958 the Polish Academy of Sciences established the Committee on Spatial Economy and Regional Planning (CSERP) with the objective 'to inspire and define new studies in spatial economy and planning in Poland'. The committee, by drawing on academics from different universities and professions, not only established a multidisciplinary approach to planning, but also fostered discussions of planning-related research, and initiated the development of planning researchers and institutions. And, in 1991, based on the initiative of members from the CSERP the first guidelines for planning education and the first two 5-year long continuous programmes in planning were established at Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań (Faculty of Geography) and Wrocław University of Technology (Faculty of Architecture). Owing to turbulent conditions at the time, the programmes were recognised and confirmed retrospectively by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 1992 a year after their initial implementation. Being experienced in acting together Polish academics were deeply involved in preparing guidelines in planning education. In Poland Ministry of Science and Higher Education defines organizational and scientific requirements for institutions to be fulfilled in order to provide degree programmes in a specific area and level of study, including the minimum number of academic teachers. There is also state level guidance and standards for each of the 118 state recognised fields of study. The latest guidelines for planning education were completed and ratified in July 2007. These guidelines are the effect of sufficient cooperation of almost all planning schools in Poland in order to ensure interdisciplinarity.

What is the main challenge is how to implement interdisciplinary-taught young planners into the practice. This process is still not efficient enough comparing with Western European countries. Market demands designers prepared to work on local plans rather than 'urban mediators' or 'spatial managers'. But this gap is being more and more narrow.

Conclusion

Interdisciplinarity is our great advantage and big disadvantage. Within the discipline it gives us a wide perspective, opens new fields of study and opportunity to use new methods and tools but within the institutional framework interdisciplinarity produces a few problems which should be discussed and resolved. Eastern European countries seem to share the main challenges with Western European partners but they additionally need to overcome a few institutional difficulties coming both from TEI's structure and planning practice. But generally the process of integration and harmonisation have certainly positively influenced planning schools both in Eastern and Western European countries.

HoS Workshop Report Exploring cooperation possibilities with schools in Central Europe in planning education and research, Lodz 2008

Giancarlo Cotella'

Introduction

The third workshop organized during the HoS Lodz meeting 2008 focused on somehow different issues if compared to the other two, mainly concerned with AESOP core curriculum's role in quality assessment and accreditation. Titled Exploring cooperation possibilities with schools in Central Europe in planning education and research, the third workshop aimed to constitute a first collective attempt to discuss the role of Central and Eastern European planning schools inside the broader AESOP framework, and focused on the definition of future possibilities for cooperation and networking and on the analysis of the benefits of such activities for both AESOP as a whole and its different member schools.

The meeting has been attended by a good number of experts from both the Central-Eastern and the Western side of the continent, ensuring the confrontation of a high variety of perspectives and interpretations within a proactive environment based on sharing and mutual understanding. The aim of the present report is to bring together the main elements of the discussion and its most important outcomes.

Not "How" but "Why"

Whereas the main issue raised by the workshop's title concerned the exploration of cooperation possibilities, as soon as the discussion took off it appeared clear that to start from the definition of cooperation means would not have led to many concrete results. A preliminary brainstorming of proposals, ranging from the formalization of national sections of AESOP, through the organization of informal yearly national meeting (following the examples offered by UK and the Netherlands) up to the establishment of a specific thematic group dealing Central and Eastern Europe showed how, before any speculation on future means for cooperation, there existed the evident need to understand the main issues that such a cooperation should have dealt with.

Therefore the efforts of the participants rapidly left the issue of "how to organize networking and collaboration", and converged on answering the question "why to cooperate?". The discussion moved on the exploration of existing challenges and barriers as well as main common elements characterizing planning activity in the present Central and Eastern European reality, in order to consider them as the driving elements for future cooperation. In general, the audience widely recognized how CEE's planning schools face specific problems, mainly due to the peculiar situation of the planning discipline in such a context. Two main elements have been pointed out as common issues needing further exploration:

- The scarce importance attributed to planning activity by the different government bodies, together with its weak institutional alignment.
- The persisting strong division of the planning activity in two branches, namely identifiable with on the one hand with the practice of physical and urban design and on the other one with the realm of regional economic planning.

CEE Contextual Embeddedness of the Planning Discipline

Due to its scarce legitimacy vis a vis the governmental sector and its plural character, planning is hardly recognized as an stand-alone discipline in Central and Eastern Europe. Such a situation is well reflected by a highly sectoral education system that alarmingly translate the multidisciplinary of planning in the fragmentation of planning education through many different institutes specialised in technical science, geography, economy and social science, hence allowing for a further weakening of its legitimization.

Nevertheless the widely shared need of recognition of the planning discipline by the public authority as a stand-alone, although multi-disciplinary, practical activity and teaching subject, such a situation is perceived as hardly solvable in the short term. A pessimistic view emerged from many different interventions describing the many attempt that have been put into practice, both in planning education and practice, in order to promote planning, without the achievement of many concrete results for such efforts. The main causes behind the described situation have been identified as follows:

- The scarce maturity of the discipline of spatial planning, intended in present terms, in Central and Eastern Europe;
- The widespread negative identification of the planning activity with central control consolidated in the previous historical period.

It was stressed several times how, in the Central and Eastern European context, planning activity is, in people's mind, still very much embedded with its socialist representation, and therefore seen mainly as a constrain for the market freedom that both governments and economical stakeholders are willing to preserve.

How to Go on? Hints for Future Collaboration

Once individuated the critical elements of the present situation, it seemed interesting to build on them in order to further define what could be the main themes that should characterize future cooperation between planning schools of Central and Eastern Europe. Few interesting common ideas have emerged from the discussion:

- The will to cooperate to further explore and better define the current situation of the planning discipline in the Central and Eastern European context;
- The need to identify the main challenges for the future legitimization of planning activity and planning education;
- The need to organize networking and collaboration activities focused on the promotion of planning vis a vis the political sector and the different society stakeholders.

The Crucial Role of Planning Education

Furthermore, it is believed that planning will grow in importance as an activity, as further rationalization of the distribution of human activities in the space will be growingly required by both the government and the market sectors, the excellent education of the future generation of planners has been pointed out as the primary goal of possible future cooperation efforts. While cooperation in scientific research do not suffer particular handicaps, also due to the many networking platform offered in the past years by the EU and other international organization, planning education is still a field where cooperation activity needs to develop new and more efficient means.

In this sense, whereas cooperation between CEECs is likely going to be very important, mainly due to the common heritage that such countries have to deal with, even more important will be to

establish permanent links with Western European planning schools in order to take advantage from established experience. In this concern, AESOP is considered to provide a perfect multi-cultural environment that may help to establish specific cooperation activities:

- Bi- or Multi-lateral agreement on the mobility exchanges of teaching staff and students;
- Organization of abroad workshops and projects in order to analyse peculiar case studies from different contexts and get in touch with different research approaches;
- Exchange of pedagogical and organizational “good practices”.

Final Remarks

The establishment of specific cooperation activities between the different AESOP members on specific CEE focused issues, both for what concerns planning education and practice, is considered an important incentive that will enhance the attractiveness of AESOP environment for Central and Eastern European planning schools, and may contribute to increase the number of AESOP members from this side of the continent as well as to further widen and depth cooperation activity in the name of European integration.

As planning education is highly contextually embedded activity, in order to achieve such an important result AESOP should carefully consider the possibility to elaborate a flexible Quality Assurance system, for the lack of flexibility of such a tool may translate into the lack of recognition of the peculiar challenges faced by the planning discipline in CEE.

Section III -
The Role of AESOP in the Promotion of Quality in
Planning Education

Towards a System of Quality Assurance for Planning Schools: The Policy of AESOP

Willem Salef⁷ & Maros Finka⁸

Introduction

The enhancement of the scientific and professional quality of European planning schools is in the heart of AESOPs mission. The leading motto for the quality assurance is to “promote excellence in learning, education and research”. The fulfillment of this motto is pursued via a wide range of activities, including the annual conferences and head of school meetings, the thematic groups, the active group of Young Academics, the AESOP prizes for academic papers and teaching performance of planning schools, the recently started AESOP publication series on Planning Education, and a large amount of specific initiatives to collect and disseminate information concerning the quality assurance methods, instruments and procedures, to promote the internationalization of staff and students and to assure a high scientific and professional quality of education and research.

In this paper, we first briefly discuss the unique object of planning studies and the characteristic challenge of double valorization: both in the professional practices and in the domain of science. The policy initiatives of AESOP towards the quality assurance of planning studies have to address both worlds and they have to pay account to the requirements of their different context. Next, an indicative list of ongoing policy issues is given with respect to the quality assurance policies. Finally, we will discuss the backgrounds and the detailed conditions for the establishment of a unique new AESOP facility: the ‘quality assurance experts advice’ to local planning schools which will be provided via a new European wide Pool of Experts.

Planning studies: A tale of two masters

Planning studies face the challenge of valorisation both in practice and in science. A basic reference for the quality assurance of planning studies is the core curriculum for planning schools. Since 1995, the core curriculum (designed by AESOPs working group on planning education) has been a crucial reference for AESOPs quality assurance policies and it is still understood as a guideline for member schools, providing a wide definition of planning, basic processual and substantive competences included in the planning curricula. The core curriculum is used as a reference basis for reviewing the applications for the admission of new member schools into the AESOP. As a result, the planning schools themselves consider the AESOP membership as recognition of ‘belonging to the domain of the planning discipline’. The core curriculum reflects the wide regional differentiation of planning systems and practices of the planning schools over Europe. The ‘spatial planning intervention’ is considered as the quintessential object of planning studies in this core curriculum.

The spatial planning intervention is context bounded, it is heading towards a better future of spatial organization, it mobilizes knowledge and action in line of this aspiration and its eventual impact will be tested in new practices of spatial organization. So, the characteristic object of planning is in all its facets directly related to experiences in practice (the intentions, the methods of knowledge and action and the outcomes). The experiences in practice are quintessential substance for this type of scientific activity, it is not exaggerating to say that planning studies are rooted in practice. The basic ingredients of the spatial planning intervention are evident for practitioners of planning but they are not at all evident for scientific researchers. Scientific planning schools do not intervene in practice. Planning schools educate the planning practitioners of the future, however, AESOP as the representative body of planning schools does not represent the practitioners of planning: it represents the ‘scholars’ of planning. Planning studies take a distanced scientific attitude towards the practices of planning. The distanced position, however, is not detached from practical meaning. The specific rationale of planning education and research is searching for ways to improve the ongoing practices of planning. The challenge is to find better ways for organizing

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collective spatial action in a legitimate and effective way (including all sorts of private and public sector initiatives, and manifold combinations). Planning education and research must make sense in practice. Even in the most fundamental or critical explorations, scientific planning knowledge must make sense in practice. At the same time, it is not pragmatic intervention itself, it is distanced scientific activity and must pay account to all established norms of scientific education and research.

The consequences of this doubly based identity are immense. Planning studies are highly interrelated with practices. Planning education involves practitioners, planning research is often organized in collaboration with professional networks in practices. The valorization and the dissemination of scientific findings take place in practices. At the same time, but according to completely different norms and methods, the scientific performances have to be valorized in the scientific domain. It requires that the same output of planning studies has to be valued in two completely different forums, including different criteria of quality measurement, different languages and different platforms of dissemination. There is no third way allowing a 'sui generis' valorization of planning knowledge because of the interweaving of planning studies with various scientific studies. The increasing multi disciplinary and interdisciplinary organization of local schools has both advantages and disadvantages. The new multi actor governance context of planning schools offers many opportunities for the enriching of planning knowledge. Also, there is a certain risk of losing autonomy of the planning discipline in current processes of academic regrouping and rescaling. The best remedy to the increasing uncertainty of external positioning of planning studies seems to invest in the own meaning of planning knowledge and from this self-confident position to keep an open mind for opportunities of enrichment via external relationships. This requires that planning knowledge meets all academic standards enabling open contacts in larger academic configurations.

New policy issues of quality assurance

The double position of planning studies requires a double strategy by AESOP in order to optimally facilitate the quality assurance systems for local planning schools. On the one hand effective cooperation with associations of planning professionals will be needed in order to enhance the interrelationships between planning schools and the professional practices of planning. With this regards, it must be mentioned that AESOP recently has joined the initiative by the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP) to form a Europe wide platform consisting of the representative professional planning associations (such as ECTP, ISOCARP, IFHP, CAMONA) and the representative association of European planning schools (AESOP) in order to promote the social and political position of the planning profession in European countries and in order to strengthen the mutual interrelationships. Various operational policies may be expected from this recently established platform of cooperation between European and global planning associations. AESOP is also planning specific meetings with the aim to promote further contacts between professional and scholar fields of planning, such as the 2010 Head of School meeting on the professionalization of planning studies in Istanbul which is organized in direct cooperation with ISOCARP. Also the Young Academics organize various joint activities and ateliers with young ISOCARP professionals. On the other hand, the scientific position of local schools has to be enhanced in the academic context. AESOP may help to deepen the understanding of the unique object of planning knowledge and create better conditions to enhance the scientific quality of this characteristic planning knowledge. With this regards, a process has started to improve the quality of the annual planning conferences and the thematic networks (getting more and more scientifically well based conference papers and promoting the quality of the research methodology). With regards to dissemination of scientific papers, AESOP will discuss with editors the characteristic disciplinary basis of planning journals and it will take efforts to promote the rating of planning journals and book publications.

Further development of the AESOP initiatives in this field we can see in the integration of the broad scale of AESOP activities supporting the quality development into the specific quality assurance (QA) support system for planning schools using the institutional structure of the AESOP. This should provide efficient platform for comprehensive quality support, competitiveness improvement and safeguarding the quality of education and scientific work reflecting the changing requirements concerning the learning processes, professional performance and schools of planning management. The aim is to develop a specific on planning schools oriented system of quality assurance support reflecting specifics of spatial planning as interdisciplinary study and research field and prospective creative activity with high societal responsibility and strong links to societal practice and spatially differing planning cultures. Definition of joint quality standards reflecting the diversity of European planning cultures, introduction of joint assessment processes, joint curricula development and exchange among planning schools and professionals is crucial for recognition and free movement of planning professionals as well.

Important part of the activities integrated in the QA support system is the development of the healthy competition and cooperation among spatial planning schools via strengthening the quality standards for all AESOP activities and providing open European platforms for competition and mutual exchange in education, research and management. This is a precondition for future quality development not only at the schools of planning, but in the planning practice too, as the quality of outputs from planning schools (planning professionals, know how, expertise, etc.), their transfer and implementation into the planning practice are important preconditions for efficient spatial development management, safeguarding its sustainability, territorial cohesion, optimal environment for European knowledge based society development and competitiveness, reflecting diversity and multiculturalism as required in the Lisbon Strategy.

As the European schools of planning are integrated part of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) one of the aims of the AESOP activities in the field of quality development and assurance is to promote involvement of European planning schools in QA activities in EHEA providing comprehensive information about the QA issues, assessment criteria, activities of international institutions and their relevance for the planning schools. This should be supported via establishment and activities of the Quality Assurance Pool of Expertise (QAPE). The main aims of the QAPE is to cumulate knowledge and create reference basis for benchmarking and innovations, to deepen joint understanding the different European planning cultures and QAS specifics, to support QA activities of the European planning schools by providing independent expertise offered by international experts representing the QAPE. This should be understood as a user friendly reflection following own interests of the schools to improve their quality in the life long planning education, research and management.

The role of QAPE should overstep the border of academic environment by providing information about the best practices, problems, models, methods and specific experiences from planning environment in order to deepen joint understanding the different European planning cultures and quality assurance specifics in collaboration with leading European professional organizations. This collaboration can be supportive for the transformation of good examples and best practice experiences to the differentiated parameterized quality indicators, incl. principles of equality and inclusion used in the assessment processes.

The establishment of AESOP Pool of Experts

The successive Head of School meetings of Leuven 2007, Lodz 2008 and Lille 2009 held intensive and very fruitful debates on alternative options to extend the AESOP facilities of quality assessment on top of the regular recognition of planning schools according to the indicators of the core curriculum. Such different and ambitious options have been explored, as the possible introduction of a special AESOP 'vignette of excellent performance', or to define 'standard quality indicators' that should enable the comparable measurement of local performances, or even new procedures for a full accreditation by AESOP. Finally, all deliberation has resulted in the unequivocal conclusion that only light institutionalization of quality assessment will be feasible in a European wide association with many different local cultures and - even more important - that local schools prefer information and experts advice by international experts above a new round of accountability. With respect to quality assessment, the role of AESOP is complementary to the role of the other European institutions in the field of the higher education system and - within this framework - to the national systems of accreditation. Complementary to European university institutions, such as the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQUA), AESOP has outstanding potential to promote specific quality support with respect to the education and research in the field of spatial planning. The specific contribution by AESOP to the already existing national and international procedures of quality assessment is not to formally assess, to accredit or to certificate the local schools of planning but to create the platform for comprehensive quality support via specialized communication & information and via additional services on a voluntary base, such as advices to local schools via the AESOP pool of international experts. AESOP intends to collect and to provide relevant information and models of good practice to its members, including the following:

- comprehensive information about the quality assessment criteria and procedures, about the methods and instruments of quality assurance, different quality assessment procedures of international institutions, their activities and relevance for the planning schools;
- the benchmarking reference basis collecting the information about good practice in teaching, and deliberate performance in research and planning practice, about the inspiring practice in the management of planning schools;
- the transforming of good examples and best practice experiences to the (differentiated) parameterized quality indicators (for local uses of benchmarking).

In this way a sound data basis will be developed on behalf of the improvement of the competitiveness of the local planning schools in different cultures and a continuous process of safeguarding the quality of the education and the scientific work under changing conditions (in particular the changing output requirements).

In addition to this trajectory of information and communication, a new and unique instrument will be developed in order to provide an interactive and reflective assessment of local schools (in the role of 'critical friends') via the establishment of an international QA Pool of Experts. This interactive and reflective assessment will be organized as a unique instrument. The present statement marks the transition of the stage of exploring different potential uses of the AESOP Pool of Experts to the stage of implementation and defines the goals, the terms of the product and the way of organization of the new reflective assessment facility. The new facility will be organized as a process of mutual learning, on the one hand giving advice to and reflecting with the local schools but on the other hand also enhancing the learning process at AESOP wide level about the different contexts and challenges of local schools: the different environment of the activities, the different planning cultures, the planning systems and the specific societal contexts of the planning policies. AESOP will use the information for gradually developing differentiated sets of quality indicators which might be useful for local bench marking.

Quality Assurance Expertise Pool

Goals

The QA Expertise Pool is proposed to be one of the crucial instruments in the quality assurance policy of AESOP. The establishment of the QA Pool of Experts aims at mobilising informed advice by international experts on behalf of local planning schools. The QA Expertise Pool embarks on a trajectory of 'learning by experience', learning not only about different performances but also about the consequences for European wide standards of quality. The process of learning via local experiences has to be organized explicitly in order to enable progress of central (AESOP wide) quality assurance policies. This pool should integrate the materialised expertise and the human potential of outstanding experts from the AESOP member schools and cooperating professional organisations. The function of the AESOP QA Expertise Pool is to carry international experience to local schools. When local schools develop new planning curricula or research programs, or when they face more specific problems with respect to quality of education, research, or the management of both, they might learn from the materialised expertise collected in the pool or appreciate advice by AESOP experts about international experiences and international quality standards. The advices are meant for local use (confidential) but by providing this service the group of experts may deepen the expertise on the differentiated spectrum of local conditions and problems.

The main role of the expertise pool is:

- to provide independent expertise offered by the international experts knowing the regional or local specifics of existence and educational process of AESOP member schools;
- to provide the outside, user friendly reflection following own interests of the schools to improve their quality based on own problem definition and self-analyses of the schools;
- to launch specific activities supporting the competitiveness of the AESOP member schools
- to inform AESOP about the differentiated local experiences in order to deepen the understanding of differentiated quality indicators.

The uniqueness of this new QU facility of AESOP lies in the following points:

- the mobilisation of the prestige and cumulative international expertise of AESOP to local schools;
- the independent character of expertise offered by experienced participants knowing the regional or local specifics of existence and educational process of AESOP wide member schools;
- the outside view and user friendly interaction and reflection, following the own interests of the schools to improve their quality on the basis of own problem definition and self-analyses of the schools;
- offering the support for developing own quality assurance system development by focusing more in depth on quality issues and problem solutions instead of formal assessment.

Product

The QA Pool of experts offers a reflective and interactive assessment of performances of local schools. This regards both the three cycles of planning education, the research and the management:

- curriculum bachelor planning education;
- curriculum master planning education;
- curriculum PhD education;
- Research plan planning school;
- Management of planning school.

The qualitative assessment is at request and at costs of the local school. The local school may decide which parts of the above mentioned options will be addressed. In order to enable a qualitative assessment by outside experts, the applying schools are required to produce a SWOT analysis of the substantive matters which they like to have assessed. Furthermore, in order to enable a really reflective advice on future performance, the schools are required to define the dilemmas on the future of their school on the selected substantive matters. The coordinator of the Pool of Experts deliberates with local school about the intensity of the assessment (only written advice, or also visit to school, duration of visit, etc.).

Organization

The coordination of the QA Pool of Experts will be arranged in a structural way. Every outgoing President of AESOP will act for a period of two years as the coordinator of the Pool of Experts, to be succeeded after two years by the next outgoing president. Peter Ache will be the first coordinator from July 2009 until July 2011. The coordinator will act as the responsible contact person for the outside world, applications of schools will be addressed to the coordinator. The coordinator will closely deliberate on all relevant policy issues with the Quality Officer of EXCO AESOP (presently Maros Finka). The coordinator may or may not be assisted with some experienced colleagues in a core group in order to support the process of implementation (according to his own preferences) but only the coordinator will be responsible for the implementation of the facility and will act as the visible contact person for local schools: (s)he will nominate the experts and the ad hoc groups of experts for local assessment for respective tasks and activities, (s)he prepares and signs the contracts with local applicants, etc. The ad hoc selected groups of experts will implement the advice to local schools resulting in a (confidential) written report on behalf of the local school and the coordinator. The coordinator produces an annual report of generalised findings to AESOP EXCO.

Qualification of experts for the expert pool

The activities of the QA Pool of Expertise are managed by the coordinator. The experts creating the QA Expertise Pool are recruited from the AESOP member schools and (possibly) the collaborating professional organisations. They are nominated by the member schools, by the COREP members, or EXCO members, or they can offer their capacity by themselves. The members of the QA Expertise Pool should represent broader experience of the teaching, research and planning practice as well as of the management of the educational process (including the quality assurance). Their expertise can be based on their own involvement in the education and research in the schools of planning or on their reflections from the collaboration with them from the position of planning practice. They should represent regional/local specific as well as international experience. Persons who may have personal ties or interest with the applying school or university shall not be considered for this particular expert team.

Procedure guidelines for development a case of QA experts` support

The process of expertise will be initiated by a planning school of a university that seeks for expert assistance. The school will indicate the issue(s) that the assistance of AESOP is sought for. The school seeking for the assistance should attach own self-evaluation including SWOT analysis and dilemmas for future actions as seen by its staff. The request of the school should be directed to the coordinator of the QA Expertise Pool. Upon receiving such request, the coordinator will first consider (possibly with his core group) whether (1) such request is conform to the AESOP mission of the quality assessment, and (2) the request is complete to start the assessment procedure. The coordinator may ask for additional information in order to enable the assessment. If these two prerequisites are fulfilled, the coordinator will nominate the ad hoc expert team out of the list of the expert pool on behalf of the implementation of the local assessment. The ad hoc expert team will comprise three persons at the minimum, with one member as the chair. The coordinator arranges the contract with the local school (including the budgeting of costs). The documentation submitted by the school for the expertise will be distributed by the coordinator among the

members of the designated expert team. The types and sequence of the procedures of quality assessment will be individually set by the expert team for each individual case of expertise, following the nature of expertise and issues requested as well as any other considerations. Typically, the steps of the expertise procedure will consist of the next steps:

- request for additional information, particularly explanations concerning the issue of the expertise and the self-evaluation;
- internal discussion of the received materials among the members of the ad hoc expert team;
- possible personal visit to the school or any other direct contact by a member / members of the expert team with the school staff, with interviews and discussions of preliminary findings;
- elaboration of interim report and recommendations by the expert team and providing it to the head of the school;
- personal visit to the school by the expert team, with discussing of the interim report;
- elaboration of final report and recommendations and providing it to the head of the school and to the coordinator of QA Pool of Expertise.

All documentation will be collected by the coordinator. The coordinator selects relevant issues for AESOP on behalf of his annual report. Before publishing or providing any part of the documentation from the part of AESOP, consent of the head of the school is necessary. However, this may not obstruct accumulation, use and dissemination of knowledge received by experts and expertises for the benefit of the quality of planning education.

Learning process

The experience on diverse modes and models of planning gained during the cases of the quality assessment expertises will be collected and recorded in the QA Pool of Expertise Web Archive in order to cumulate knowledge. The coordinator sends the generalized information in his annual report to AESOP (leaving out the confidential parts) and also all relevant other documentation to AESOP on behalf of dissemination on the AESOP web, after having acquired the agreement of the local head of school. This information will be made public for the AESOP wide member schools and for the general public. Generally applicable findings, especially those dealing with matters for identifying modes and models of planning education and their applications by particular schools, will be made public.

Start

COREP Liverpool approved the present proposal. The coordinator of the QA Pool of Expertise will start the implementation of the pool and he will announce via AESOP Website a Call for Applications as soon as the process of implementation is ready for the kick-off.

HoS Workshop report
Defining the possible role and means of AESOP implication in quality assessment procedures of planning curricula, Lodz 2008

Anna Geppert

The diagnosis: an active implication of AESOP in quality assessment and advise on planning curricula is needed and appears as a new task to undertake:

A consensus appeared among the participants to the workshop as to the fact that we have reached a moment where an active implication of AESOP in quality assessment procedures of planning curricula is needed.

Participants provided various examples where the lack of a « warrant » of European level resulted in difficulties in :

- national accreditation procedures, due to the fact that national authorities often lack criteria, or even a wider idea, about what is necessary to build a good planning education (interdisciplinarity, balance between theory and practice, etc.)
- promotion of planning curricula (versus architecture or other fields strongly organized and well known, towards students, etc.)
- creation of good planning curricula (lack of expertise)

The exchange leads to the conclusion that this is definitely a new task for AESOP, and of outmost importance to support the member schools.

The prospects: series services that AESOP could or should be able to provide:

As second step, participants to the workshop reflected on the nature of services that AESOP could provide for the benefit of its members – in a nearer or further future. The strength and legitimacy of AESOP as unique representative body for planning schools, bringing together a wide membership, could be used in different ways for expertise, advice and promotion of quality.

A brain-storming resulted in a list of possible actions. This list is not limitative, nor definitive, it provides elements which could be built upon:

a. A pool of experts: identify a number of confirmed experts which could be asked to provide external (international) view upon request. For this, AESOP would have to:

- Define a framework (What qualities should experts have ? What are the ethical requirements (not related to the school in present or past, etc.)
- Define their possible roles : international experts for accreditation / quality assessment procedures, advice for establishing new Planning curricula or improving existing ones (new topics, new levels...)
- Establish and run an « experts database ».

b. A pool of excellent programs: identify a series of interesting programs, good practices, examples which might be used by the schools as inspiration or demonstration. For this, AESOP has some resources to start with :

- Excellence in teaching prize,

c. AESOP criteria of excellence: AESOP has a core curriculum (workshop 1 is discussing it), which says what values and criteria we stand for in Planning education. These criteria could be promoted and strengthened by :

- Addressing national authorities from supra-national point of view (providing the criteria, not the accreditation or assessment itself)
- Addressing and discussing with professional bodies (ECTP, Isocarp...) and sister-organisations (RTPI, ACSP...)

d. AESOP label: building upon the Core curriculum, an AESOP « label » could be considered.

- Today, full membership is de facto a label (there is an assessment). However, as there is no regular assessment, it remains a very fragile one.
- A stronger « label » could be given :
 - upon request (voluntary, not systematic, the school bearing the cost of the expertise)
 - it should be delivered to planning programs (not universities overall) and for a certain period of time
- Conditions : as for experts pool, AESOP would have to look very carefully into the organisation of such a label.

Conclusion: next steps

The new task is of use for schools and ambitious. However, it also arises the question : how to get this done? We need a working group with meetings, but also more support (secretariat, surveys, etc)... a serious work goes beyond the limits of networking and requires means beyond AESOP's existing capacity in terms of funding or human resource. Possibilities :

- Funding: Possibilities (Funding by the European commission, such as Erasmus mundus action 4, Innovative programs, ESPON on planning capacities, etc).
- Human resource (The support of an ExCo officer fully responsible for this task seems necessary to make sure that things move forward).
- Track on Planning Education in the main Congress (and its participants)

HoS Workshop Report Guidelines for the establishment of an AESOP experts pool, Lille 2009

Giancarlo Cotella

The strength and legitimacy of AESOP as a unique representative body for planning schools bringing together a wide membership, could be used in different ways for expertise, advice and promotion quality. In particular, during the Lodz HoS Meeting (March 2008) the opportunity was highlighted for AESOP to identify a number of confirmed experts ("AESOP experts pool") which could be asked to provide external view upon request. This report brings together the discussion held during the Heads of Schools Meeting in Lille on March 27th, 2009, on the above issue, and tries to summarize the different positions raised in the dedicated working group.

Issues raised, outcomes of the discussion and future steps

The working group was asked to elaborate a number of key reflections and observations for AESOP, in relation to two main groups of questions: What AESOP can do in terms of expertise provision, i.e. what could be the role of an AESOP expert pool? Who should be the people taking part to the AESOP expert pool? On what basis should this people be selected?

The role of AESOP Expert pool

Since the very first of the discussion, the different interventions focused on the potential role of AESOP experts pool. The different participants highlighted both the importance to understand :

- what sort of services AESOP would like to provide and to whom and
- what could be the advantages that AESOP member schools could benefit from the pool of experts (support, recognition, qualification etc.)

It was a shared opinion to identify the AESOP expert pool as a set of different people among which AESOP could choose in order to provide an answer to specific requests of the member schools in relation to different issues (quality assessment, expertise, consultancy, advices, help, etc.). On the other hand, when the discussion shifted on the possibility to have the expert pool performing an official "procedure of evaluation", the different opinions diverges, and the issue seemed to be perceived as less clear and more "dangerous".

The role of the expert pool was initially seen as possibly linked to evaluation procedure currently going on in many national contexts. The main opinion was that the expert pool could provide support to member schools that are subjected to evaluation. In this concern, AESOP pool of experts could constitute a group of people of trusted expertise, whose opinion could be required by member schools in order to provide their opinion in a sort of "preliminary evaluation", therefore most likely ensuring additional degree of objectiveness and transparency.

It was also stressed how, AESOP having not previous expertise on quality insurance, the experts pool should focus on the subject of spatial planning, on how the discipline is evolving, what is about etc. and, more in details, on planning education. In this terms AESOP experts pool could provide a quality assessment service that should be focused on a) education b) planning (e.g.: while RTPI assessment focuses only on planning, AESOP focus on education should constitute an added value), and it should evaluate education and planning in a joint way.

It emerged clearly that the experts pool should receive a mandate from AESOP to perform its tasks. This mandate may include also the development of a set of evaluation criteria. In this

sense, building standards and/or developing criteria are clearly highly entwined with the Dublin criteria process, and goes back to the debate on the development of AESOP core curriculum/assessment criteria (eligibility criteria Vs quality criteria).

As far as the development of common criteria for assessment was concerned, the attention shifted back on how really “quality” could be defined. It was highlighted how AESOP already “evaluate” schools when they ask for membership, while the lack of an ongoing evaluation was lamented. It was also stressed how present assessment criteria represents minimum requirements and do not really qualify “excellence” in planning education. The assembly seemed to identify the expert pool as a mean of support rather than a control body. This meaning that its activities were seen as focusing more on the provision of help in specific circumstances, rather than the official certification of member schools’ activity. In this sense, a further step could be to provide excellence quality standards, this being in line with AESOP strap-line “promoting excellence in teaching”. Aesop experts pool’s aim was individuated in supporting planning school to promote planning as a discipline.

The focus of the evaluation process of the expert pool was therefore identified as “formative” instead of “conformative” (i.e. the process of assessment should not just evaluate the conformance to pre-given criteria, but provide help for improvement). More in details, it should contribute to the enhancement of the standards of planning curriculum in Europe, achieving results through a more in depth engagement and collaboration with member schools.

A further important issue concerned the fact that AESOP experts pools should come back to AESOP with the results of its activities. In this way, it may be possible to put together a set of considerations on the level of excellence in planning teaching in Europe, as well as contributing to enhance it through the promotion of exchange good practices in research and teaching. This task should be performed through the provision of practical help to transfer/adapt good practice from one context to another (i.e. to help schools to understand what they have to do in order to achieve the good results that other schools achieving).

Eventually, the working group came out with a list of the different activities that the AESOP experts pool could offer to the group: advice, audit, validating, transfer of experience. Such activities should constitute services that Aesop provide to its members, in a systematic way. In this concern, the different member schools demanding for this services should be responsible to cover the costs of the expert (in terms of travel/accommodation), while no costs should be charged to AESOP.

The composition of AESOP experts pool

While defining the aims and the main activities of the AESOP experts pool, several opinions were expressed in relation to its potential future composition. Participants agreed on the need to give shape to a highly heterogeneous and flexible group, this being a very important issue under different perspectives:

The experts pool should include both “generalist” and “specialist”, i.e. academics whose expertise is identifiable with general aspects of planning history, theory and methods as well as persons whose activity mainly relates to certain peculiar field of planning (transportation, environment, etc.). Furthermore, the list needs to include representatives from the whole range of different type of planning schools (more design oriented, geography oriented, economy oriented, social science oriented, etc.), and include experts coming from different backgrounds.

The working group stressed as well the high heterogeneity of the different national environment in which member schools are located. In this concern, the expert pool will most likely have to answer a very broad range of requests, hence needing to know the different institutional environments. AESOP high multi-cultural environment should constitute one of the main assets of the experts pool, and the latter should be composed by at least one expert for each country (or group of similar countries).

Appointment of the AESOP experts pool

The attention of the participants focused as well on the possible procedure of appointment of the experts that will be part of the future AESOP experts list. In this sense, the need to establish a brief list of few specific rules was highlighted, that will help to define the eligibility requirement to be part of the pool. In general, members of the AESOP experts pool were identified as persons that have been covering managerial/organizational positions in a university, having therefore organizational management experience (e.g. head of school, head of department etc.). The list was seen as mainly composed by “senior” academics. People involved in previous accreditation/evaluation exercises were as well considered highly relevant to the task.

ESPO pool of expert could provide an important source of inspiration for the selection process. Once the eligibility requirement are individuated, AESOP should be asked to issue a Call for application. Alternative, AESOP could invite all member schools to nominate potential candidates (choosing among people that didn't teach there in the last 5 years). Specific invitation to apply should be also sent in specific cases (people that are highly suitable for the role). Once the application/nomination are received, a selection should be operated according to both eligibility of the applicants as well as the criteria of composition of the pool (multi-disciplinarity, internationality, etc.). Once the selection is completed the list of people should be further complemented in order to cover “missing figures” (i.e. to achieve the required geographical & thematic coverage). The discussion stressed as well the need to define a period of election, in order to have a continuous renovation of the experts pool.

Future Steps

In relation to the future steps to undertake, the participants stressed the need to establish a working group to perform the different tasks and to decide how to take the process forward. In order to do this, a deliberation from ExCo and CoRep is assumed to be needed. Furthermore, it has been highlighted how the activities of the working group will be highly entwined with those concerning finalization of AESOP core curriculum and quality criteria before starting with it tasks. Liverpool have been identified as a good moment to decide on the establishment of the working group on the AESOP expert pool.

Quality in Planning Education: the Vision of AESOP

Roelof Verhage⁹

The quality of planning education in Europe is a central concern of AESOP. In order to assure this quality, AESOP has developed numerous activities:

- 1990: towards a European core curriculum in planning education
- 1995: AESOP Statement on planning education
- 2004: Book “Improving planning education in Europe”
- 2007: Bologna survey (+ update)

The 1995 AESOP statement of planning education still offers an adequate description of the “core curriculum” of planning schools. Moreover, the concerns of the beginning of the 1990s are still topical: increasing internationalisation of planning practice, fear of standardisation of planning curricula if EU would work towards accreditation and getting full national recognition of the planning profession in some countries.

The 1995 statement therefore offers a good basis towards a more systematic approach to quality assessment by AESOP. A closer look into it allows the identification of a key issues to be dealt with when engaging in “European wide” quality assessment: this activity has to deal with the tension (identified in the 1995 statement) between:

- “European countries to a large extent face the same kind of planning problems”.
- “European countries are becoming more and more aware that exactly their differences ... are perhaps the most important assets of this continent”.
- As a consequence, the Core curriculum requirements should not be too detailed in order to allow for differences between planning schools. The central elements of the core curriculum of spatial planning education are the following:
- Theoretical and practical knowledge on the desirability of, legitimacy of and conditions for purposeful planning intervention;
- Theoretical and practical knowledge on the preparation and advancement of such interventions and on judging the effects thus generated;
- Technological knowledge and skills to actually engage in planning activities in real life situations

The translation of these central elements into core requirements is structured in three categories. The core curriculum develops the knowledge that the students should acquire, competencies that they should develop, and a professional attitude that they should develop. It also states that students should have the possibility to specialise in particular fields of planning. Besides these “learning outcomes”, the core curriculum contains practical requirements concerning the duration of the programme and the link with planning practice.

This core curriculum is still up to date, and could serve as a basis for further steps in the process of quality assurance by AESOP. In concomitance of the last two AESOP Head of Schools meeting specific working group have been organized focussing on the above discussion. The present contributions aim to resume the outcomes of these working groups, and to contribute to address a way forward for AESOP in the concern of promotion of quality in planning education in Europe.

Building on AESOP 1995 core curriculum: evidences from Lods HoS meeting

During the AESOP HoS meeting that took place in Lodz in 2009, the issues presented above have been discussed through by five questions: (i) Is it realistic for AESOP to prepare this type of quality assessment? (ii) If the answer is yes: where are necessities for further development? (iii) Where should we start? Can we

⁹ Institut d'Urbanisme de Lyon – Université Lumière Lyon 2.

take the 1995 document? (iv) Which shape should the AESOP core curriculum take? (v) How can we organise this?

i) The question whether there is a political will to develop assessment is important. It makes no sense to do anything when there is no need for it or when we cannot deliver. And AESOP can deliver a description of the core curriculum, it has proven it in the 1995 statement. A central question that needs to be answered though, in order to take the core curriculum further, is the required level of abstraction. A high level of abstraction is probably necessary in order to be operational in different contexts. But: how to determine the level of precision that is required in the core requirements?

From the point of view of Italy, turning the core curriculum into quality criteria for planning schools is not only realistic, but it is necessary. The core curriculum needs to be addressed in parallel to the issue of accreditation. For Italian schools to get accreditation, the experience of fellow schools is important. Many schools have longer traditions than the Italian schools. Now they have to reform their planning curriculum in line with the Bologna process, they need to know what other schools do.

Part of the answer here needs to be a reflection upon what we want to achieve with the core curriculum. The answer probably is multiple. The core requirements can serve:

- To define the planning profession in contexts where it has to get legitimacy.
- To do quality management (assessments, but also helping to create quality).
- To allow mobility of planning professionals.
- To assure quality of planning education in a context of increased mobility of students, between countries and between studies.

ii) The situation has changed a lot since 1995, so core curriculum needs to be revised. A very important change is the change to bachelor and master. We have to reflect upon how to introduce this into the core curriculum.

The core curriculum is very good, but there are three main developments since 1995 which make its revision necessary:

- Bologna process,
- Changes in the profile of professionals: globalisation, European integration,
- More attention for quality assessment in higher education.

The question is: how to revise the 1995 core curriculum and make it applicable to bachelors and masters. Especially the bachelors are posing problems. Public administration does not always accept bachelors as students who finished their studies. The question whether the difference between bachelor and master is only a matter of "going deeper into the material" or whether there is a structural difference between bachelor and masters is very important. The answer is probably that the difference goes further than only going deeper into the material, because bachelors students come from another background than masters students.

The RTPi answer to the question is a focus on learning outcomes. These are the same for bachelors and masters. Also: professional accreditation (becoming a chartered member of RTI) is only possible after a masters' degree.

Other differences which could exist between bachelors and masters: there is a difference in the degree of independency. That is a learning outcome, and we could define a level for that in a certain way.

In this respect, a core curriculum requirement could also concern input requirements: what do students need to know to start a masters degree. This can be based on the diploma supplement of the bachelor they fulfilled, compared to the core requirements.

Another reflection upon the bachelors masters question: what do we think about the duration of a planning degree? Three years could be too short to deliver professionals. In relation to this, if ever we want to have core requirements, than we should make sure that these are minimum requirements.

iii) The 1995 statement seems to be a good starting point to take the issue of quality assurance further. But it is important to find the right level of precision in the definition of the criteria. A "concretisation" of the general criteria of the core curriculum is required.

iv) Some elements to take into account concerning the shape of the AESOP core curriculum:

- We have to be aware that the profile of the bachelor is formulation towards professional employment and towards further study.
- We have to build into the professional environment knowledge about the limits of the professional standards, and of the ways certain conditions can be acquired by professional experience.
- The core curriculum should combine minimum standards and the possibility of developing high quality. AESOP should show what the optimum could be and help the schools in attaining this. But the two need to be addressed in a separate (but combined) way. This is important because of the different functions of the AESOP curriculum requirements: assessing quality (labelling) and stimulating excellence, helping planning schools to develop, etc. Both activities require different procedures.
- The definition of what we do is necessary, because it is the basis for what we want to teach. We might need to distinguish between spatial planning and spatially relevant plannings.
- We have to decide whether we want to formulate the core requirements in terms of inputs (evaluation the contents of the curriculum) or formulate it in terms of outcomes (evaluation of learning outcomes). That means that the ultimate test for the curriculum is the works of the students.

v) An AESOP working group should take this issue further. This can be presented as a follow up of the bologna working group. This working group should at the same time work at the “quality management system” that AESOP is providing. The core requirements are one of the elements of the AESOP quality management system. In fact, the reflection upon the AESOP quality management system is the central thing to do. And that reflection should start with a reflection upon what exactly we want to achieve by this system. At the same time, we have to be aware that a lot of things exist in quality assurance. We should only develop things where AESOP has a real value added (to existing accreditation systems).

In order to proceed in this direction, the following were seen as potential elements of AESOP way forward:

1. Adaptation of the contents of the core requirements
 - « operationnalise » the core requirements: towards a checklist
 - Distinction Bachelor and Masters level: other requirements or same requirements but different degree of understanding?
 - Create sensitivity to national situations: propose different models, use « best practice »
2. Develop the practical modalities
 - Offer assistance in (national) procedures of quality assurance
 - Develop a procedure for quality assessment by AESOP
 - Create and offer expertise in evaluation of planning curricula

In the following section, a working document on the evolution of AESOP admission criteria for new member schools is presented. The document constituted the main focus of discussion of one of the working group of AESOP HoS meeting that took place in 2009 in Lille, whose outcomes are also included in this issue right after this contribution.

Towards AESOP admission criteria for new member schools

“AESOP and especially its individual members will try to ensure that planning education in European member states follows the core curriculum”

“AESOP will develop and maintain a directory of planning schools that adhere to the curriculum”

“AESOP will look for any opportunity to advance the requirements of the core curriculum to become the European Standard”

(1995 AESOP Statement on planning education)

In order to take further steps in the direction announced in the 1995 AESOP statement on planning education, AESOP has started a process towards a clearer definition of the required qualities of planning schools¹⁰. This has been discussed at the AESOP Heads of Schools meetings in Leuven in 2007 and Lodz

¹⁰ See Geppert and Verhage (2008), Towards a European recognition for the planning profession, *Planning education*, n° 1 and minutes of the 2008 Lodz HoS meeting.

in 2008. A next step in the process is the “operationalisation” of the AESOP core curriculum, as laid down in the 1995 statement, in the form of a check list for planning schools. This checklist could be used for the admission of new member schools, making this process more transparent and contributing to the AESOP core curriculum becoming the European standards for planning education. This document presents a first draft of such a checklist, for discussion at the 2009 HoS meeting in Lille.

Generalities

The curriculum of AESOP member schools is articulated around three core issues:

- Theoretical and practical knowledge on the desirability of, legitimacy of and conditions for purposeful spatial planning intervention;
- Theoretical and practical knowledge on the preparation and advancement of such interventions and on judging the effects thus generated;
- Technological knowledge and skills to actually engage in spatial planning activities in real life situations.

An interdisciplinary approach is a requirement in order to address these issues adequately.

Education - learning outcomes

Difference Bachelors / Masters Degree

The issues that are being addressed in a Bachelors and a Masters degree of spatial planning, and the knowledge, competencies and attitudes that are transmitted are basically the same. However, the degree to which knowledge, competencies and attitudes are internalised by the students vary.

- Graduates of a Bachelors degree in spatial planning are able:
 - to enter into a programme delivering a masters degree in spatial planning;
 - to actively participate in the identification, analysis and solution of spatial planning issues and problems in a professional context.
- Graduates of a Masters degree in spatial planning are capable of independently dealing with spatial planning issues, at any stage of the process from the identification of planning problems and issues to the implementation of solutions.

The differences between Bachelors and Masters Degrees have consequences for the respective curricula at two levels:

- Teaching modalities: at the Masters level, a heavier emphasis is put on the confrontation of students with real life planning problems than at the Bachelors level. An individual dissertation is a requirement at the Masters level.
- Complexity of taught material: Graduates at the Bachelors level should have a comprehension of the mechanisms underlying spatial planning issues. In the course modules, this sometimes requires an analytical approach focussing on parts of spatial planning issues at a time. Graduates of the Masters level should be able to deal with the complexity of spatial planning issues. This requires a more global and synthetic approach in the course modules.

Students entering a Masters degree should have successfully completed a Bachelors degree, but not necessarily in the field of spatial planning.

Core curriculum requirements

Knowledge:

- General (disciplinary) knowledge applied to spatial planning (minimum 25% of credits in Bachelors, 15% of credits in Masters degree)
 - Disciplinary (geographical, economical, sociological, historical, ...) approaches to the object of spatial planning: the natural and man-made environment.

- Developments in the natural and man-made (economic and social) environment and knowledge of men's exploitation, i.e. possibilities for sustainable development
- Specific knowledge of spatial planning (minimum 25% of credits in Bachelors, 15% of credits in Masters degree)
 - The nature, purposes, theory and methods of spatial planning;
 - The history of spatial planning as an institution and a profession;
 - The cultural differences of spatial planning on a European and an international level
 - The political, legal and institutional context of spatial planning practice
 - The instruments and performance of instruments for implementing planning policies
 - Specialised fields in spatial planning and the relationships across and between these fields
 - Competencies:
- Professional skills specific to spatial planning (minimum 15% of credits in Bachelor, 25% of credits in Masters degree)
 - Methods for problem definition and collaborative problem solving in interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary settings
 - Thinking in terms of concepts, instruments and measures and management of knowledge for practical application
 - Valuing and managing the built and natural environment
 - Anticipating future needs of society, including the appreciation of new trends and emerging issues in planning
 - Integrating aesthetic and design dimensions in spatial planning proposals
 - Devising plans, programmes and measures and guiding implementation policies
- Tools used in the professional field of spatial planning (minimum 10% of credits in Bachelors, 15% of credits in Masters degree)
 - Techniques for data collection and for data analyses and synthesizing
 - Techniques and tools for the graphic representation of spatial planning proposals
 - Methods for generating strategic spatial planning proposals and the advancement of implementation

Professional attitude

Based on an awareness of:

- Spatial planning to be basically oriented towards solving the needs of society within the framework of sustainable development
- The cultural embeddedness of the man-made environment;
- The value dimension of planning;
- The ethical implications of planning

No minimum of credits is attached to this category of learning outcomes, as they are addressed to a large extent throughout courses in the first two categories.

The remaining 25% (Bachelors degree) or 30% (Masters degree) of credits are to be used according to the particularities of each school.

Practical requirements

In order for the above mentioned learning outcomes to be assured, a number of practical requirements concerning the organisation of the degree, the teaching modalities and the composition of the teaching staff should be fulfilled.

Duration

- A Bachelors degree in spatial planning requires a duration of minimum three academic years or 180 ECTS.

- A Masters degree in spatial planning requires a duration of minimum one calendar year or 90 ECTS, to be realised after the successful completion of a Bachelors degree.

Teaching modalities

- Planning schools propose a variety of teaching methods, in order for the students to obtain a variety of skills (lectures, applied work, seminars, workshops, internships, study trips, individual and collective dissertations, ...)
- During both the Bachelor and the masters degree, regular exposure to and interaction with planning practice is required. The exposure of students to real life planning problems can take the shape of study trips, intervention of planning professional in course modules, interviews with professionals, training periods, professional workshops, ...
- A “European dimension” is present in the curriculum. This can take various forms (student and teaching staff exchanges; field trips; course modules on planning in other countries).
- Students have the possibility to specialise in particular fields of planning, by choosing optional courses, training periods, dissertations, ...
- At the Masters level, the individual realisation of an individual dissertation on a spatial planning issue is required of all graduates.

Teaching staff

- The composition of the teaching staff reflects the interdisciplinary character of planning education: various disciplinary backgrounds or specialisations should be represented (policy science, geography, architecture, law, economics, ...)
- Professionals working in the field of planning are involved in various teaching modules (especially at the masters level) in order to assure the connexion with planning practice.

Students

- The recruitment of students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (geography, economy, sociology, law, policy sciences, architecture, engineers, ...) is encouraged, or at least students from various disciplinary backgrounds have the possibility to enter into degrees in spatial planning.

Research

The planning school – through the intermediary of its staff members – is not only involved in transferring knowledge (teaching), but also in producing knowledge (research), and has a concern for linking research to teaching. In order to do this effectively:

- Members of (teaching) staff are involved in research projects and programmes concerning spatial planning or related issues.
- Members of (teaching) staff direct PhD theses and actively involve PhD students in teaching activities.
- Members of (teaching) staff are active in the dissemination of research findings to a wide audience, including students.

Hos Workshop report Admission Criteria, Lille 2009

Roelof Verhage & Beata Banachowicz

Between “checklist” and “best-practice”

The idea of reinforcing the admission criteria of AESOP, for instance by formalizing them in a checklist, should be handled with care for two reasons:

- Because of different national situations, the diversity of planning schools applying for membership to AESOP is such that it will be very difficult to formalize criteria which apply to all.
- AESOP does not have the capacity to organize a follow-up: if AESOP pretends that all its member schools respond to its quality criteria, it should check regularly whether this actually is the case. With over a hundred full members, that requires a logistics and an organization which AESOP cannot afford.

As a consequence, instead of working towards a checklist with admission criteria, the idea should rather be to work towards an “identity document”. This document, for which the core curriculum of 1995 poses the foundations, should aim at three things:

- Found a common identity for all AESOP member schools;
- Provide guidelines which can help member schools to improve their curricula in planning;
- Create an “AESOP-label”, to which member schools can adhere.

The elaboration of an AESOP “identity document”

As said before, the 1995 core curriculum is a good basis in order to work towards such an “identity document”. In order to take it further, several things have to be done.

- The formulation of the issues put forward in the document should be “stimulating”: as the document does not serve as a “checklist” for admission but rather as a “vademecum” for the improvement of planning curricula, the issues should not be presented as criteria. Instead, they should be formulated as objectives, making explicit what AESOP, and hence its member schools, want to achieve.
- The issues that are addressed should be prioritized. A distinction between essential elements and optional (but recommendable from AESOP’s point of view) elements of planning curricula should be made explicit.
- An effort should be made to formulate the elements of planning curricula in terms of learning outcomes: what should a person who has obtained a bachelors or a master’s degree in planning be able to do? The distinction between knowledge, skills and attitude which is made in the 1995 core curriculum can be maintained to describe these learning outcomes.

A number of precise issues that are not addressed in the core curriculum but which are of importance in the current context have been mentioned in the workshop:

- There is a general agreement that a close link between research and education is an important element of quality education in planning, this should be made explicit.
- A similar observation can be made for the link between planning education and planning

practice.

- A reflection on the distinction between the Bachelors, the Masters and the Doctoral level in terms of learning outcomes is necessary.
- The issue of “life long learning” and the way in which it influences planning curricula needs to be worked out.

It is important to take these issues into account when working on an AESOP identity document.

Towards an “AESOP label”?

The existence of an AESOP identity document is important because it shows what AESOP stands for, both to members of AESOP and to the outside world. It helps to enforce the common core of planning curricula throughout Europe, and can contribute to increasing the quality of planning education. But an AESOP checklist for the admission of member schools is considered to restrictive and not realistic in terms of the organization involved in assuring that the AESOP members actually comply with the criteria.

An interesting use of the “identity document” would be the creation of an AESOP label, based on self declaration of schools. Planning schools who feel that their activities are in line with the objectives of AESOP could obtain the AESOP label. This can then be used in communication or in negotiations with other bodies. The application for the label could be reiterated every so many years. The creation of such a voluntary AESOP label might be a more realistic way towards quality assessment than a checklist of admission criteria for all member schools.

Making Use of the Dublin Descriptors of Academic Quality

*Anna Geppert*¹¹

Introduction: the Dublin descriptors of academic quality in the context of the Bologna process

In June 1999, at their meeting in Bologna, European ministers of higher education and research set an agenda for the process of building a European Higher Education Area, which has been officially launched at the Budapest-Vienna meeting of 12 March, 2010 (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010). The three overarching objectives of the Bologna process have been the introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), recognition of qualifications and periods of study throughout Europe and quality assurance. Regarding the latter, the Bologna declaration has endorsed the objective of “promoting European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies” (Bologna declaration, 2007, p.4).

As Higher Education is not a competence of the European Union, the choice of these methodologies and criteria remains national. However, national Quality assessment agencies collaborate within international networks, such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA) which has, with the support of DG Education and Culture, produced two initiatives endorsed by the ministerial meeting in London (London communiqué, 2007, p.4). The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) establish a shared methodological background to the development of quality assurance. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which aims to provide information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies operating in Europe.

In 2009, the ministerial meeting in Benelux enhanced student-centred learning which comes with “the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes” (Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009, p.3). With this respect, in 2004, an informal network for quality assurance and accreditation of bachelor and master programmes in Europe, the Joint Quality Initiative, has proposed a shared set of descriptors of academic quality for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards, referred to as the “Dublin descriptors”.

The Dublin descriptors of academic quality should be understood as complementary with the Bologna instruments aiming to facilitate student mobility (ECTS system). Also, they contribute to “elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile.” (Berlin communiqué, 2003, p.4). Also, they should be consistent with the instruments expressing this overarching framework of qualifications in The European Higher Education Area (Diploma Supplement, Europass curriculum vitae).

The aim of this paper is not to give the opinion of the author regarding the Dublin criteria, but to introduce this set of “Dublin descriptors” to the Planning community. Also, this contribution is limited to gathering information and providing materials which may be used to open a discussion regarding the appropriateness and adaptability of this nomenclature for our disciplinary field. We will proceed in three steps. Part 1 exposes the Dublin descriptors and provides an example of implementation of this nomenclature in a Master in Planning. Part 2 shows how the learning cycles are differentiated in this nomenclature. The conclusion reflects upon the possible actions that AESOP, which has the mission of promoting excellence in Planning Education and Research, may undertake with respect to this European evolution in the field of Quality assessment.

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A typology focusing on learning outcomes

The “Dublin criteria” proposed by focus on learning outcomes, divided into five “families” :

- Knowledge and understanding
- Applying knowledge and understanding
- Making judgements
- Communication
- Learning skills

These learning outcomes may be general (transversal) or specific (disciplinary). In 2007-2008, the author has participated to a joint diploma in spatial planning of the University of Reims (France) and the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava. In this trans-national context, the Dublin descriptors appeared useful for the analysis of the goals of the Master programme. The final typology produced (Fig. 7) provides an information complementary to the description of teaching units in the program (Fig. 8). In no case is this example proposed as a “universal” solution – planning programs vary in their scope, teaching methods, and develop various professional skills – but as an illustration of how learning outcomes and program courses may interact.

Figure 7 : Acquired competencies and learning outcomes according to the Dublin criteria

<p>K - Knowledge and understanding with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial planning and policy-making in different institutional contexts; • Theoretical foundations of planning concepts, methods and styles in a comparative international perspective; • The processes that determine urban and regional development as well as their interconnectedness with the three dimensions of sustainability (economical, societal, environmental) ; • Robust knowledge reflecting the current state of the art within the 2 specialisations chosen in the program's offer : Territorial policies of the European Union – Planning cities and regions for competitiveness – Planning the transition towards the knowledge society – Regeneration of wide distressed urban areas – Project management – Innovative tools for planning)
<p>T- Technical skills: ability to apply the knowledge to the professional practise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out advanced studies on current problems, opportunities and future needs in the field of planning at the local, national and international level and for this purpose: • Use quantitative and qualitative tools for spatial analysis • Analyse the game of the stakeholders • Relate a planning question to its social, economical, environmental, political context • Propose a comprehensive strategy to cope with a planning issue and for this purpose: • Develop inter-sectoral and multi-scalar approaches • Evaluate the institutional and financial implications of a planning project and/or policy • Carry out an environmental assessment of of planning project/policy
<p>O- Overall ability to judge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the merits of various theoretical and policy-based analyses of planning • Detect the implicit assumptions in theoretical and societal views on planning problems • Contextualise planning objectives and policies in different timely, cultural and institutional backgrounds • Develop their own opinion on the nature and manner of dealing with new planning problems
<p>C- Communicative skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effective and oral an written presentations of complex tasks in urban planning and regional development • Use of the modern communication techniques and tools • Lead and work in international, multi-disciplinary contexts • Negotiate with institutional and non-institutional stakeholders
<p>L- Learning abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independently track developments within the discipline • Define his needs and make good use of life-long professional learning opportunities • Adapt to the evolutions of a career and when relevant develop/transform his profile • Study at post-mater level, including PhD

Figure 8 : The parallel approach in terms of teaching programme, Joint diploma of “Master in Spatial Planning of the University of Reims (France) and the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava (Slovak Republic).

	STUBA – Bratislava	University of Reims
S1	<p>Fundamentals I</p> <p>1. Courses (20EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial planning and regional development • Territorial management and marketing • Transport and technical infrastructure • Spatial Planning studio 1 <p>2. Introduction to mobility (5EC)</p> <p>3. Advanced English or Slovak for beginners (5EC)</p> <p>Tuition language options: English, Slovak</p>	<p>Fundamentals I</p> <p>1. Courses (20EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning law and policies • Economy and society • Environmental issues • Planning history & theory <p>2. Introduction to mobility (5EC)</p> <p>3. Advanced English (5EC)</p> <p>Tuition language : French</p>
S2	<p>Fundamentals II</p> <p>1. Courses (20EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social communication and psychology • Applied theory of systems and synergetics • Applied informatics, GIS, CAD • Spatial Planning studio 2 <p>2. Introduction to mobility (5EC)</p> <p>3. English for planners / Slovak for beginners (5EC)</p> <p>Tuition language options: English, Slovak</p>	<p>Fundamentals II</p> <p>1. Courses (20EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban planning • Public finance • Environmental management • Project management <p>2. Introduction to mobility (5EC)</p> <p>3. English for planners (5EC)</p> <p>Tuition language : French</p>
S3	<p>Planning for the transition towards knowledge based society (R)</p> <p>1. Courses (15EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and society • New typology of spatial structures • Social ecology and social work <p>2. Research thesis (15 EC) on transition towards knowledge-based society</p> <p>3. Slovak (5EC, optional)</p> <p>Tuition : English</p>	<p>Planning for cohesion at the European scale (R)</p> <p>1. Courses (15EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial fragmentation and spatial recompositions in the European Union • Cohesion policies of the European Union • Spatial development perspective and Territorial agenda of the European Union <p>2. Research thesis (15 EC) on European cohesion issues and policies</p> <p>3. French (5 EC, optional)</p> <p>Tuition : English</p>
S4	<p>Regeneration of large distressed urban areas (P)</p> <p>1. Courses (15EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning aspects of urban regeneration • Typology of urban distressed areas • Methodology of regeneration processes • Best practice and transfer of know-how <p>2. Studio work + prof. report (15 EC) on Urban regeneration – model areas</p> <p>3. Slovak (5EC, optional)</p> <p>Tuition : English</p>	<p>Project management in complex situations (P)</p> <p>1. Courses (15EC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. communication • Methodology for analysis of stakeholders games • Governance and territorial engineering <p>2. Workshop + prof. report (15 EC) on project management in complex situations</p> <p>3. French (5EC, optional)</p> <p>Tuition : English</p>

Differentiating Bachelors and Masters

As a result of the Bologna process, the implementation of the three-cycle structure has widely spread in Europe and has become a dominant standard, with the exception of some specific study fields related to regulated professions. However, the interpretations of the Bachelor/Master structure vary and different models exist in different countries (Eurydice, 2010):

- 180+120 credit (3+2 academic years)
- 240+60 credits (4+1 academic years)
- 240+90 credits (4+1.5 academic years)
- 240+120 credits (4+2 academic years)

In the field of Planning as well, a common approach to Bachelors and Masters has not reached consensus so far, neither between governments, nor in the academic community. This has been confirmed by two surveys lead with the support of AESOP in 2006 (Davoudi and Elison, 2006) and in 2008 (Ache, Jarenko, 2010). In 1995, within AESOP, a working group has proposed a “Core curriculum” for the field of planning which has been endorsed by our Association but doesn't specify further the differentiation between the cycles (Geppert and Verhage, 2008, pp. 23-25). Given the evolutions within the European Higher Education Area, it would appear important for European planning schools to develop further the 1995 Core curriculum taking on board the issue of cycle differentiation (Verhage, 2010) .

Between 2002 and 2004, the Joint Quality Initiative has been elaborating on the question of the differentiation between the cycles with regard to the qualifications (Fig. 9) and the Dublin descriptors (Fig. 10). This typology is being used in some countries, like the Netherlands, and not in others. It is reported here not as an standard or ideal to reach, but as an element which might be of use if AESOP wishes to build further on the differentiation between cycles in its field of Planning.

Figure 9: Qualifications that signify completion of each cycle (working paper JQI meeting in Dublin on 18 October 2004, pp. 2-4)

<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle (Bachelor) are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; • Can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; • Have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; • Can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; • Have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.
<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle (Master) are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context; • Can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study; • Have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements; • Can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously; • Have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.
<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle (Doctor) are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; • Have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; • Have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication; • Are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas; • Can communicate with their peers, the larger scholar community and with society in general about their areas of expertise; • Can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.

Figure 10: Differentiation between cycles with regard to the Dublin descriptors

Knowledge and understanding	
1 Bachelor	[Is] supported by advanced text books [with] some aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study ..
2 Master	provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas often in a research* context ..
3 Doctor	[includes] a systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of the methods of research* associated with that field..
Applying knowledge and understanding	
1 Bachelor	[through] devising and sustaining arguments
2 Master	[through] problem solving abilities [applied] in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts ..
3 Doctor	[is demonstrated by the] ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research* with scholarly integrity .. [is in the context of] a contribution that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work some of which merits national or international refereed publication
Making judgements	
1 Bachelor	[involves] gathering and interpreting relevant data.
2 Master	[demonstrates] the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete data ..
3 Doctor	[requires being] capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas..
Communication	
1 Bachelor	[of] information, ideas, problems and solutions ..
2 Master	[of] their conclusions and the underpinning knowledge and rationale (restricted scope) to specialist and non-specialist audiences (monologue) ..
3 Doctor	with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general (dialogue) about their areas of expertise (broad scope)..
Learning skills	
1 Bachelor	have developed those skills needed to study further with a high level of autonomy ..
2 Master	study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous..
3 Doctor	expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement .

Sources : working paper JQI meeting in Dublin on 18 October 2004, pp. 2-4

Concluding remarks: a necessary implication of AESOP in defining criteria of academic quality in the field of Planning

Whereas the precedent sections were voluntarily neutral and informative, the following remarks reflect the opinion of the author about the necessity for AESOP to engage in the definition of criteria of academic quality for the field of Planning. The goal is not easy to reach. On the one hand, the diversity of situations of Planning education and practice in European countries calls for a sensible approach, avoiding over-normative definitions and based on respect for the diversity of our schools strongly linked to our planning systems and cultures. On the other hand, Planning is being challenged by European integration and by the strong, sometimes hegemonic positions of neighbour disciplines more ancient and often more structured at national and international levels. Also, we believe that it is a necessity for the Planning discipline to better define its identity at the European level and that a common engagement towards the further definition of criteria of academic quality is part of such endeavour.

With this respect, focusing on learning outcomes and professional qualifications appears a timely approach, coherent with the priority of developing “student-centred learning” on the 2020 Agenda of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009). The Dublin criteria may provide a good start for a reflection about our field. Yet, their appropriateness should not be taken for granted and the question of their adaptability cannot be solved without a consistent work and a participative debate within our community.

The timing is good. AESOP is developing a quality agenda with initiatives that point in the same direction, such as the creation of a working group on quality issues and of an “expert pool” available on demand for our member schools. In 2009, representatives gathered at the 4th Heads of Schools meeting in Lille (France) have expressed the demand for collecting and disseminating information about descriptors of academic quality for the use of all (see the report of the Workshop following this paper). Rise to the challenge is possible.

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- European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) : www.eqar.eu
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**Hos Workshop report
AESOP Quality agenda in Progress:
Dealing with Dublin Descriptors, Lille 2009**

Andrea Frank¹

The Dublin descriptors offer a common framework to provide comparable information on learning outcomes for all Higher Education degrees regardless of the subject field.

The descriptors classify learning into 5 categories or families, namely Knowledge and understanding, Applying knowledge and understanding, Making judgements, Communication and Learning skills.

For each of the categories (families) subject specific or generic learning can and should be specified. These descriptors were developed by the EU Joint Quality Initiative working group. There is at present no obligation for Higher Education Institutions to use these descriptors in any particular way to describe their educational provision (education is the sovereign domain of EU member states), but the participants at the meeting noted that various EU member states have started to use the Dublin descriptors at the national level in a variety of contexts such as programme accreditation and evaluation. The group agreed that more and more member states may adopt the descriptors and demand their application for a range of purposes. This means many of those in charge of planning programmes and courses may soon be asked to translate the learning outcomes of their programmes in the language of the Dublin descriptors.

In fact, approximately one third of the workshop participants had had recently experience of some kind with using the Dublin descriptors in their institutional contexts. The group felt that AESOP member schools and their academic staff would benefit from a briefing note and info toolkit providing a quick introduction to the Dublin descriptors and sharing of experiences in their usage. In particular, a two-staged approach was proposed

Short-term – the AESOP secretariat will : develop a basic briefing guide to Dublin descriptors and post it on the AESOP website; develop a basic briefing guide to Dublin descriptors and post it on the AESOP website; solicit examples and/or case studies from those members that have already some kind of experience in using these descriptors in their own institution, set up a discussion forum or platform to exchange experiences (good, bad) and issues with writing and working with the Dublin descriptors (preferably in a way that it is open to members only)

Mid-to-longer term – AESOP will: seek to analyse the examples and case studies collected from member schools to potentially feed back into other AESOP debates; endeavour to put together a list of experts on Dublin descriptors who could be called upon for advise by other schools having to use them in their HEIs and use the results from the analysis and information derived from the discussion forum to feed back evidence of use (and report on issues) to the JQI and potentially influence the usage and future development of the Dublin descriptors and thus become an entity that will be recognised as useful and valuable in policy development in future.

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Planning Education addresses contemporary issues and challenges for learning and training in the field of Planning in Europe.

The landscape of higher education is in evolution due to the implementation of the Bologna reform but also to the important changes occurring in planning practice. The journal enlightens these changes and presents AESOP initiatives regarding accreditation and quality assessment of our diplomas and professional recognition of our diplomas. It also provides a forum for ideas and debates about contents, methods and ethics in planning education.

This second issue is based upon the outcomes of the Third and Fourth meeting of AESOP Heads of Schools, which took place in Lodz in April 2008 and in Lille in April 2009 respectively. It is dedicated to the AESOP considerations on Quality Issues in a Changing European Higher Education Area. It also presents a series of reflections of the issue of Interdisciplinarity in Planning, whose implications are crucial for AESOP goal of promoting excellence in planning education and research.

AESOP is the only representation body which brings together the Planning Schools of Europe. Given this unique position, AESOP will strengthen its profile as a professional body. AESOP will mobilize its resources taking a leading role and entering its expertise into ongoing debates and initiatives regarding planning education and planning qualification of future professionals. AESOP will promote its agenda with politicians and all other key stakeholders in place development and management across Europe.