



To all EAAE Members
To all Attendants of the 2012 ENHSA Heads of
Schools meeting
To the Heads of all European Architecture Schools

Graz, October 1st 2012

Introducing the new President

Dear Colleagues

This is my first communication to you since taking office as President of the EAAE at our recent General Assembly in Chania, Crete. I am proud to take on what I see as an important role for the discipline of architecture in a time of challenges for the academy as well as for practice. In this letter I want to introduce myself to you and to tell you about the plans I have for the Association.

The EAAE promotes Architectural Education and Research. It counts close to 150 member schools and represents thousands of faculty members devoted to Architectural Education throughout Europe. The leadership of such a vast Association is a daunting task. I feel comfortable taking it on, because I know that I am supported by the EAAE family: the many active members that participate in our events and activities, the Project Leaders that donate their time and energy to make these events and activities possible and the Council Members with whom I share the responsibility of coordinating our actions. A non-profit association, the EAAE depends vitally on the idealism and enthusiasm of its members. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all your past, present and future contributions. It is a great privilege to be part of this Association and I look forward to working with you as President.

For those that do not know me: I trained as an architect at ETH Zurich where I also worked as lecturer and researcher in the field of Design Computing, alongside my practice. Subsequently I became Assistant professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and returned to Europe in 2002 when I was offered a full professorship at TU Graz. I have been at TU Graz since, directing the institute of Architecture and Media and serving as Dean of the Architecture faculty now for the ninth year. I have always been active in research, establishing research infrastructure, getting research funding and forging links with local industry – experiences I want to bring to bear in my work for the EAAE.

I am ambitious for this Association. I want us to improve our service to the world of architectural education. We will soon publish the first number of a new scientific journal promoting writing on architecture, architecture teaching and research, providing a new platform for discourse for European architectural schools. I would like the EAAE to start organizing a large scientific conference every year, allowing academic staff and post docs to present work and meet others in their field, in addition to our smaller events and ENHSA events including the meeting of Heads of Schools that takes place every year in Chania. The THEMATIC NETWORKS already reflect many of the most important areas of education: Urbanism, Theory, Construction, Conservation... There is ongoing discussion about new topics and in 2012 the new EAAE RURALITY network, led by Pieter Versteegh (Fribourg) came into existence.

We always welcome suggestions for new topics; the EAAE is a platform that enables Schools and staff to meet and talk about subjects that are important to them. It is a support network for teaching staff and researchers. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information to do with teaching and research practices. It organizes scientific conferences, a Writings prize and a Student competition. The EAAE is conducting surveys on European Architectural Education at all levels, mapping schools, mapping Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral programs and making this information available to members via the EAAE on-line guide. As many of you know, because so many of you have contributed to it, our Research Committee established the EAAE Charter for Architectural Research and continues to work on vital issues to do with architectural research - including advocacy at national and EU level.

As this listing illustrates, the EAAE is an active network. The EAAE has been moving steadily forward over the past decade as past presidents continued the work of earlier ones. Membership is growing and we want better and more regular contact with our membership. We have a group of almost 20 Project Leaders who meet the Council six times a year. My aim as President is to continue the good work underway, to reach out to junior staff in our schools, to increase the number of scientific and networking events and thus improve intra-member communication, to deliver a better service to schools and to improve communication, rigor and transparency in all dealings with the membership. My aim is also to improve our finances - because this will allow us to further improve our services.

Any member who would like to meet the Council during the year is welcome to do so at any one of our meetings. They are not closed – interested members can attend the Project Leader meetings on simple demand and may contact the President at any time. We welcome your ideas and need your help to make this voluntary association work. There are already several ways that you can help: (1) by checking and completing your pages in the Online Guide. Please contact me if you don't know how! (2) by checking and completing information concerning architectural publications that we hold in our database, again, please contact us if you don't know how (3) by assisting Johan Verbeke in collecting information to do with National research policies (4) by ensuring that your membership fees are paid early in the year.

In the General Assembly the possibility of reviewing our Statutes was discussed. It turns out that we are required by law to do so and that we also need clear, written internal regulations. The Council will decide how best to proceed in this matter. Most likely a Commission will be installed to prepare proposals for approval at the next General Assembly – again, if you'd like to be involved please let me know. Anyway, you'll be informed of progress on the EAAE website and by Newsletter. As you may also know, a change in the EAAE secretariat will happen during my time in office as Lou Schol, our secretary of many years, is nearing retirement. It is hard to imagine the EAAE without Lou, but we're considering the best ways of replacing her. Lou's tasks include EAAE member management and communications, book-keeping, accounting, secretarial services for the President and assistance in organizing ENSHA events. All this on a 20% post! With the association growing in size and stature, along with financial and legal responsibilities, the Council feels that the current arrangement is no longer practical. At the General Assembly we presented our plan to appoint a Secretary General to take on day to day management. Our ambition is to make the EAAE more operational in its daily business – and less reliant on the goodwill of time-pressed volunteers.

Both the Statutes and the Secretariat have a bearing on the life of the Association. Issues were raised at the General Assembly that made it clear that members want to be better informed about changes in both. I want to continue discussion with members over the coming months and make sure that those that care about the Association are heard. As we progress on both the Statutes and the Secretariat, we'll keep members informed. We may need to hold an extraordinary meeting to do this properly and I have suggested to Council that we arrange an open forum around one of our upcoming meetings, possibly in Paris in November.

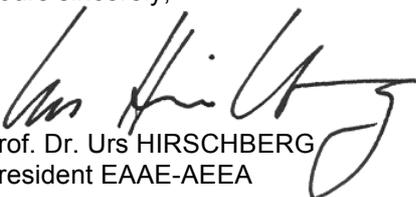
Communication is one of my priorities. One of our main tools is the EAAE website. We are planning an overhaul of our website to improve visibility and communication about the Association. At the same time we need a new web-master, as Ramon Sastre, who has kindly looked after the EAAE website on a voluntary basis for many years, stepped down this year. The EAAE needs a new website designer and manager. From now on an annual budget is to be allocated for this task and we expect to complete the redesign by the New Year.

In these matters, as in all matters to do with the Association, I welcome your questions, feedback and suggestions. The EAAE is a team sport. We are in this because we love our profession, because we know that architecture matters, and because we know we can make a difference when we join forces.

I look forward to being of service to the EAAE.

With my best wishes for the development of the Association

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Urs HIRSCHBERG
President EAAE-AEEA