



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

Architects' Council of Europe
Rue Paul Emile Janson, 29 B-1050 Bruxelles
Tel: (32) 2 543 11 40 Fax: (32) 2 543 11 41
E-mail: info@ace-cae.eu Website: www.ace-cae.eu

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PRESS RELEASE

ACE Survey : Is Public Sector Abandoning Architects?

Brussels: 18 January 2010: The Architects' Council of Europe's (ACE¹) quarterly Survey on the impact of the economic crisis on Europe's architectural profession, shows that the profession is being let down by the public sector. The Survey, carried out in December 2009, shows that despite commitments made at European and national level to invest in the construction sector, expenditure by the public sector in buildings is expected to fall significantly.

According to the ACE's Survey, architects are now more pessimistic about an upturn in work from the Public Sector than at any other time during 2009. This indicates that public authorities do not seem to be abiding by their commitments to increase spending in the renovation and/or construction of buildings in order to help the European economy out of the current economic crisis. In fact only 16% of architects expect to see an increase in work from the public sector down from 26% in September 2009. Notably this is in contradiction with the European Economic Recovery Plan adopted at the end of 2008. Moreover it is also not coherent with the affirmed priority given to emphasis in this sector in the fight against Climate Change.

The recent Survey, the fourth carried out by the ACE during 2009, shows that, as feared in October 2009, the architectural profession may yet have to face its darkest hour.

Overall the latest Survey reveals that 41% of architects' offices have shed staff since September 2008, and that 17% expect to make further redundancies in the coming three months. The picture remains pessimistic in relation to anticipated workload for the first quarter of 2010, as only 22% of architects' offices are optimistic about taking on more work – down from 24% in September 2009. The level of expectation that workload will decrease over the same period is stable at 33%.

In private housing which accounts for 45% of their workload, 16% of architects feel optimistic about the future (the same figure as in September 2009) and 47% feel pessimism about future work – up from 44% in September. The changes in levels of pessimism in the field of commercial work are up to 58% from 53% and changes in optimism down from 12% to 10%. Commercial work accounts for 23% of architects' workload.

ACE is carrying out these quarterly online surveys to assess the impact of the economic crisis on Europe's architectural profession, and will continue to do so as they help predict the end of the crisis by detecting an increase in optimism and in expectations for an increase in the workload. This latest survey is, perhaps, the most worrying to date as the profession had been placing faith in the commitments made in relation to the expenditure of public funds and in the various recovery plans so widely publicised during 2009. These commitments do not seem to be materialising.

The results of the most recent survey from December 2009 have been compiled for publication, and 'weighted' to ensure statistical reliability, although the survey takes the form of an opinion poll.

For full information on the survey please contact Adrian Joyce, Director:
adrian.joyce@ace-cae.eu

To download a presentation of the results of the survey go to:
http://www.ace-cae.org/docs/aceinfo/overview/Fourth_Econ_Survey_Dec_09.pdf

¹ The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) is the European organisation representing the architectural profession at European level. Its headquarters and Secretariat are located in Brussels. Its growing membership consists of Member Organisations, which are the nationally representative regulatory and professional bodies of all European Union (EU) Member States, Accession States, Switzerland and Norway. Through them, it represents the interests of about 480,000 architects. The principal function of the ACE is to monitor developments at EU level, seeking to influence those areas of EU Policy and legislation that have an impact on architectural practice and on the overall quality and sustainability of the built environment.