



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

Architects' Council of Europe
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PRESS RELEASE

The Architects' Council of Europe congratulates the European Commission on its Guide to the Commission's architectural policy

Brussels, 15 October 2009: the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE¹) welcomes the European Commission's Guide on architectural policy for its own buildings. This Guide, adopted on 23 September, marks a major step as it gives a clear indication that the Commission intends to significantly improve the quality of its buildings, a measure the ACE has been pressing for over many years.

The European Commission occupies a high proportion of buildings in Brussels 'European Quarter' and in Luxemburg. In the past, most of these were either leased or rented, but in the early 2000s the Commission took the decision to buy most of its own office buildings and to be actively involved in their management. This autumn it took the further step of issuing its 'Communication to the Commission's architectural policy'².

For a number of years the European Commission has been involved in informal consultations with the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) about improving the quality of its buildings in order to provide a good working environment and enhance the overall quality and sustainability of the built environment. In September 2007, the Commission issued a Communication on its policy for its buildings (COM(2007) 501) and committed itself to deliver an architectural policy.

Since then the ACE has maintained a dialogue with the Commission to ensure this commitment was realised, so it congratulates the Commission and in particular, Commission Vice President Siim Kallas, who was responsible for the adoption of this Guide. It also notes the Guide's very positive commitment to apply the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) to all Commission buildings.

Among the Guide's 'ten reference elements' for good practice, e.g. energy efficiency, it says that to "guarantee good architectural quality" the Commission is committed to organising "architectural or similar competitions" for all new buildings and large-scale renovations to existing buildings.

ACE welcomes this move as it has long argued that architectural design competitions are the most effective means of ensuring the best quality for buildings, and that public authorities and bodies should organise competitions for their own buildings. As the European Commission has now shown a willingness to lead by example, the ACE hopes other public authorities at European and national levels will follow suit.

The ACE also notes that the Guide refers to the recent Council Conclusions on architecture's significant contribution to sustainable development, and hopes that other EU institutions will take note of this. The ACE hopes that these steps taken by the Commission imply that all future EU policies that affect the built environment will reflect the need for architectural quality.

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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.

² C(2009) 7032 final



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