

Report of the FABSR Presidency by OAR

Istanbul, 16th of June 2011

The Presidency term of FABSR was a new period in the Forum activity, characterised by some new ideas and steps forward. Three major meetings are marking this period: Tulcea, Romania, November 2010, Varna, Bulgaria, May 2011 and this one in Istanbul, Turkey, June 2011.

The Forum organized as the statutes in the country which held the Presidency, respectively in Romania brought the Declaration from Tulcea with some new ideas for the future of the organization. It was proposed to be studied the opportunity to develop a Black Sea Architectural Policy. The subject is on the Istanbul meeting agenda and also may be consolidated by the conclusions of the Balkan Architecture Conference of tomorrow, the 17th of June. Other important ideas were related to the necessity of a more efficient communication among the Forum members. If we consider the participation of the Istanbul FABSR meeting this is obvious improved, but as a remark, the communication between meetings is still suffering. Nevertheless one of the good achievements under the auspices of the Forum is several bilateral memorandums of agreement between professional organizations of architects, concerning mainly cultural exchanges and cooperation in the professional field. CAT and OAR have signed a memorandum in Tulcea, UAB and OAR have signed in Varna and at the initiative of UAB other collaborations were officialised.

The meeting in Varna will be presented by UAB in their report under agenda item no. 4.

We appreciate that the dialogue between the FABSR members has been intensified and we hope that under the next Bulgarian Presidency it will continue to improve.

Unfortunately not all members of FABSR are yet implicated in the organization and this is in our opinion one of the main goals to solve in the coming period. Anyway we appreciate that the meeting and conference in Istanbul is a proof of the improvement in this field. We consider that the idea of a Balkan Architecture Conference is beneficial and this has contributed for bringing more representatives and participants together. We must pass from formal meetings to practical results, but we realize that this is not an easy process so we have to consider any improvement. FABSR is still in a period of need for justification of its existence and missions.

It will be very interesting and important to acknowledge from members what are the consequences, if any and how FABSR is perceived in their organizations and countries. We suggest such a consultation to gather the expectations of the members in order to fine tune the policy of the Forum. For OAR and Romania we have to report that the Balkan region and extended to the East European region is more intensively the preoccupation of Architectural theorists and critics. Just to mention the Balkanology, an exhibition and conference in Bucharest in 2010, the Urban Report #1, an international research that will be presented in the Conference tomorrow and the planned international Architectural Festival for September 2011, Fluencies in Timisoara, Romania.

At the end of this term we understood that it is a big need to understand the differences between cultures and the social phenomenon which is reflected into the built environment. The current period is for sure one of understanding, extension of knowledge, discovery of common or complementary interests, before reaching a very practical horizon. We are still at the level of declarations but we certainly need to get to the next level. Professional, cultural and academic connections may contribute to a network of collaboration FABSR may facilitate. As an example we indicate the ICR (Cultural Institute of Romania) Istanbul, of which mission, an anthropologist and urban researcher, Alexandru Balasescu, based in Istanbul is a representative of the Romanian Ministry of Culture supporting the research in Balkan Architecture and urban development phenomenon.

Our conclusion is that we as architects may progress in studying the Balkan region if we take on board other professions such as sociologists, anthropologists, culture researchers.

As conclusions we mention that the progress of this term was not the one expected, but we appreciate the trend. More contribution of the members is important to validate the FABSR.

We have 3 proposals as tools, beside the discussion on the Black Sea Architectural Policy:

1. The black Sea Laboratory Tour. An international research trip around the Black Sea, on water, with essential stops and meetings with local communities of architects investigating together the condition of architecture on the spot, the common problems, differences and aspirations. The sea is our common denominator so it is by the sea to travel, land and discover. At the end the Laboratory may gather its research and generate the next Balkan Architecture Conference.
2. Reiterate the Black Sea Architectural competition. We have proposed in Tulcea FABSR meeting a competition we didn't manage to generate yet. Now we see it as a network competition eventually on a similar model to the well known European, but with a different specific. It is certainly an effort to generate it meant to increase collaboration and responsibility of the organizers and to bring to the participants the choice among locations, at least one per each member country, selected on similar criteria.
3. Least but not last we bring again the discussion for new members, also mentioned in Tulcea FABSR meeting with reference specifically to Republic of Moldova. As information we had preliminary discussions in Chisinau in January 2011 to prepare an eventual participation, but this has to be discussed in the Forum and if acceptance, an invitation letter to Moldavian architectural organization should be issued by the FABSR secretariat and sent.

Looking forward for FABSR achievements and development, for the success of the Balkan Architectural Conference, wishing good luck to the Bulgarian Presidency,

On behalf of OAR,

Serban Sturdza, FABSR President, OAR Vice-president

Serban Tiganas, OAR President