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Civil Society Organisations' Bulletin



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SHADOWS OVER EUROPE:
Reflecting on two Years of war

REFLECTIONS

Climate challenges, Baukultur and safety: we need strong solutions at European level



Daniel Fügenschuh © Katharina Schiffl

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The work of the Austrian Federal Chamber of Architects and Engineering Consultants (BKZT) aims to ensure the best possible quality of built environments for the benefit of society. Modern **European societies transcend national borders in various ways, and thus we will not succeed without strong cooperation at European level.** Only European solutions can address the challenges that we face today.

High-quality built environments must become sustainable. The building industry is currently one of the most resource-intensive sectors in Europe. It is also one of the most waste-producing and CO₂-emitting industries. It therefore constitutes a major lever for the green transition. Activating this potential will be a major task for the EU in the upcoming years. What European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has started with the Green Deal³ and deepened with the [New European Bauhaus \(NEB\)](#)⁴ initiative must be continued after the 2024 elections. The NEB is a strong driving force for implementing the circular econoclusive and beautiful future,

and for promoting Baukultur.

The quality of architectural and engineering services is also imperative for the safety and reliability of our cities, infrastructures and buildings, and for many other aspects of our everyday lives. It is the base for the intelligent use of resources and for ensuring that technology advances in a creative and ethical manner. **A lack of quality in architectural and engineering services leads to unsatisfied consumers and, in the long term, a higher cost.** Quality assurance in public procurement, such as architectural design competitions, is essential for ensuring that the best and most cost-effective solutions are chosen. The BKZT fosters cross-border competitions in several ways. It is the lead partner in the **EU-funded Creative Europe project ARCH-E**⁵, together with 15 other European cooperation partners.

In the face of the destruction of large parts of the built environment in **Ukraine** following Russia's invasion, we are cooperating with Ukrainian and other European partners in the U-RE-HERIT project⁶ to coordinate a **reconstruction that is led by the idea of**



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sustainability and participation through architectural design competitions.

Four months from now, Europeans will elect a new Parliament. There is a lot at stake – and not only for architects and engineers. The transformation of our society and our economy and the current geopolitical conflicts concern us all.

The outcome of the elections will be crucial for getting the green transition off the ground. The **Austrian Federal Chamber of Architects and Engineering Consultants will keep its members informed on the election process and the candidates' policies regarding issues pertinent to our profession.** As a civil society organisation, we think it is our duty to position ourselves as strong pro-Europeans in the face of today's crises and future challenges.

1. BKZT, Austrian Federal Chamber of Architects and Engineering Consultants, <https://www.arching.at/home.html>

2. ACE, Architects' Council of Europe, <https://www.ace-cae.eu/architects-in-europe/austria/>

3. European Commission, EU Green Deal, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

4. European Union, New European Bauhaus (NEB), <https://europa.eu/IWTtbX>

5. ARCH-E, <https://www.arch-e.eu/>

6. Ro3kvit, U-RE-HERIT project, Architects for heritage in Ukraine, <https://ro3kvit.com/>

NEWS FROM THE GROUP

Open letter #EUCivilDialogueNow: European Institutions must recognise, involve and support Civil Society as part of a structured Civil Dialogue

On 24 January, European civil society sent an **open letter** to the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Parliament, and the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union. The signatories of the letter urge the three main institutions of the European Union (EU) involved in EU decision-making to take **concrete measures to implement an open, transparent and regular dialogue with**

civil society organisations in all policy areas.

The open letter was initiated by the Civil Society Organisations' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and [Civil Society Europe](#) and includes specific proposals for implementation. The letter gained the support of a total of 156 signatories from 26 Member States. The signatories

include 39 European networks, 85 national organisations and 60 Members of the EESC's Civil Society Organisations' Group¹.

The Open Letter is available in 24 languages at: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/eu-civil-dialogue-now/open-letter>

Read the open letter in English on the next page.

1. When calculating the number of signatories (156), the EESC Members who also signed on behalf of their organisation are counted as single signatories.

Publication Source : https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-02/23_442_csos_bulletin_feb24.pdf