

Successful Milano meeting of Architects without borders

Architecture Sans Frontières – International (ASF-Int) held its fifth General Assembly meeting the 9th of April in Milano. Not less than 14 member organizations were represented by 35 participants from 12 countries. The meeting decided to grant membership to ASF-Greece as its 21st member, while at the same time confirming the previous decision by the Board to grant membership to ASF-Bénin and Architekten Ohne Grenzen-Austria.



In its activity report for the past year the Board noted that it has fulfilled plans with respect to increased visibility, establishment of a new website, recruitment of new members, opening an account in an ethical bank and the production of a brochure, a portfolio and a PowerPoint presentation. It concluded that ASF-Int has consolidated its position considerably compared to the situation in 2009.

Dick Urban Vestbro, secretary of the ASF-Int; Jordi Balari, chairman until the 2011 meeting, and Beatrice de Carli, host of the Milano meeting.

Jordi Balari of ASF-España stepped down as ASF-Int chairman after 4 years' of service in this important position since the founding of the organization in 2007. He was replaced by Stéphane Plisson of ASF-France, who had previously been the vice-chair of ASF-Int. New members of the ten person strong Board are Pawan Kumar Shrestha of Engineers without Borders – Nepal, Xavier Codina of ASF-España and Anna Engvall of ASF-Sweden. The representative of ARC•PEACE Dick Urban Vestbro is continuing as secretary until 2012.

Stéphane Plisson, new chairman of ASF-Int.

The meeting adopted an Activity Plan in which the major goals are to improve information activities, to increase the number of members and to achieve financial autonomy. At present almost the only incomes stem from membership fees (only Eur 100 per year), which allows merely the coverage of costs for the website and part of travel costs to GA meetings for a couple of member organizations with scarce resources. The GA meeting decided to raise membership fees to Eur 300 from 2012 and to work for external fundraising in order to cover the costs of a minimum secretariat that can handle communication with member, doing general office management and contribute to strategic planning of ASF-Int.



A most promising project is one called Development Architecture Education, for which four members of ASF-Int has received funding from the European Community's *Lifelong Learning Programme/Leonardo Agency*. The project aims to develop a training programme which will better equip built environment professionals to work in the field of international development.

The day before the GA meeting a seminar was held at the Department of Architecture of the Politecnico di Milano. The first part consisted of presentations of projects under the title *Design Activism – Architecture and Social Commitment*, while the second part had the title *Slums – Shifting Priorities*. In this part Dick Urban Vestbro gave a lecture under the title *Can Slums be Densified to Combat Urban Sprawl in African Cities*, while Pernilla Ivarsson of ASF-Sweden made a presentation on *Food Sovereignty and Urban Agriculture – an Issue for Architects?*



Coffee break during meeting with the new Board.

Dick Urban Vestbro