

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

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Abstract:

‘Unity and Diversity in Spatial Planning Across Europe’

There is a considerable variation in the understanding across the different member states in the EU of what constitutes ‘spatial planning’. Much of this variation arises from differences in legislation, administrative structures, local conditions and cultural history. There are also differences in emphasis of the original disciplines from which spatial planning emerged. For example, in certain countries spatial planning has an engineering focus whereas elsewhere the emphasis is more on urban design or on socio-economic aspects. An important contribution to the definition of what constitutes spatial planning was achieved through the adoption of the European Charter on Spatial Planning. This document, adopted by ECTP-CEU in 2013, describes a number of distinctive roles of the planner including: a leader of change, a scientist, a designer, a visionary, a political advisor, and a manager of cities. Perhaps as a consequence of this long list of characteristics and competencies a common understanding of the content of an academic qualification in spatial planning is yet to emerge. This is notwithstanding the fact that core competencies have been described by bodies such as European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU) and the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP). While the diversified nature of the profession has many positive aspects, there is also a concern that the lack of a common professional qualification may hinder mobility of planners across Europe and reduce appreciation and understanding by the general public of spatial planning as a profession in its own right. The paper will explore the need for a common understanding of the competencies of the spatial planner and the specific contribution that the spatial planner can make to the quality, resilience and equality of the city and its citizens.

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Links of interest:

[The Charter of European Planning; The European Charter on Participatory Democracy in Spatial Planning Processes;](#) [Pan-European guide on spatial planning and energy](#)