UCL BARTLETT FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
BARTLETT SCHOOL OF PLANNING

Architectural policies in Europe: an overview

João Bento

UCL

Contact:

João Bento, Honorary Researcher

The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

https://ucl.academia.edu/Joao_Bento

14 Upper Woburn Place

London WC1H 0NN

United Kingdom

j.bento@ucl.ac.uk

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of architectural policy developments in Europe, both at European and national/regional level, as well as of the policies' main institutional actors, tools, and impact. Since the beginning of the 1990s, a growing number of European countries have been developing national policies on architecture. Reflecting the wide diversity of cultures across the European Union (EU), some Member States have adopted comprehensive policies setting up a wide range of initiatives while others have approved national legislation addressed to clients and stakeholders or have created new cultural institutions. Despite their differences, all the approaches share the will to promote well-designed living environments. Sharing these concerns, the European institutions have also been developing policies and initiatives on architecture, encouraging the Member States to promote design quality as a way to achieve high-quality environments.
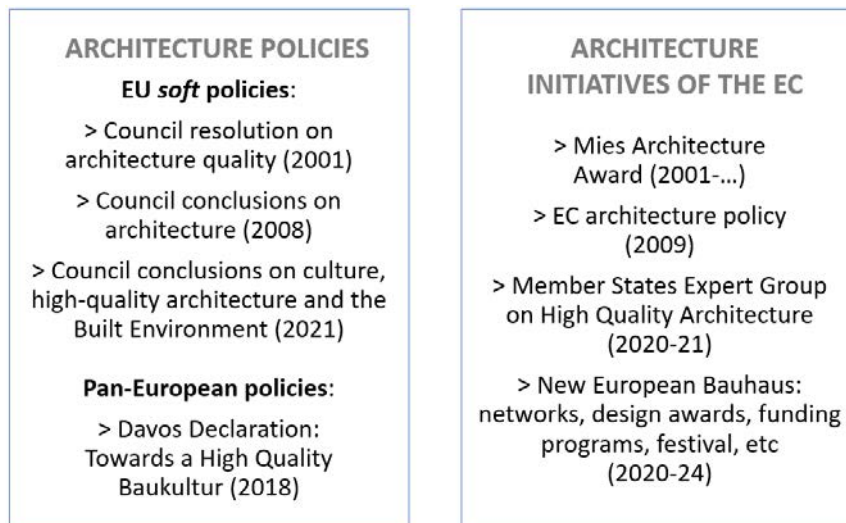
This report is divided into two parts. The first part provides a summarized overview of the development of architectural policies both at European and national levels, its main actors, tools, and impact. The second part presents the information in more detail: Section 1 describes the pan-European developments in policymaking for high-quality architecture and related policy networks; Section 2 explores the European panorama of state-level policies setting design aspirations across the continent, the main policy approaches and progress; Section 3 looks at the institutional actors responsible for policy implementation and the set of informal tools of urban design governance in use across Europe with examples; Section 4 discusses the impact of architectural policies on processes of urban design governance based on the findings of three case studies developed in a previous research. A list of references is provided at the end.

This report is based on previous research reports on the topic, available sources of information and desk research. Due to time and resource constraints, it has not been possible to present a comprehensive review of all approaches and types of policy and informal tools used across Europe, which would only be possible by a dedicated European survey. Nevertheless, the report summarizes and describes the main policy trends and tools currently used with examples to illustrate the range of approaches found.

PART A: BRIEF OVERVIEW

I. European policies

The European architectural policy was launched at the beginning of the millennium and is based on two pillars: the European Union's (EU) architectural policies and the European Commission's (EC) architectural and design initiatives (EC, 2021b).

ARCHITECTURE POLICIES	ARCHITECTURE INITIATIVES OF THE EC
EU *soft* policies:	> Mies Architecture Award (2001-...)
> Council resolution on architecture quality (2001)	> EC architecture policy (2009)
> Council conclusions on architecture (2008)	> Member States Expert Group on High Quality Architecture (2020-21)
> Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and the Built Environment (2021)	> New European Bauhaus: networks, design awards, funding programs, festival, etc (2020-24)
Pan-European policies:	
> Davos Declaration: Towards a High Quality Baukultur (2018)	

2.1 – The two strands of the European architectural policy: EU policies plus pan-European policy; and EC initiatives (source: João Bento)

In the first strand, the first policy with a holistic approach on architecture at European level was the EU *Council Resolution on Architectural Quality in Urban and Rural Environments*[1] adopted in 2001, which encouraged the Member States to 'promote architectural quality by means of exemplary public buildings policies'. This was followed by the EU *Council Conclusions on Architecture: Culture's Contribution to Sustainable Development*[2] adopted in 2008, which calls on the Member States to make allowance for architecture in all relevant policies and to raise awareness of the 'role of architecture in the creation of a high-quality living environment'.

Several other European policy developments have followed since then, namely the *Urban Agenda for the EU*[3] (2016) or the *New Leipzig Charter*[4] (2020), all reinforcing the importance of high-quality architecture and public spaces for the common good. Following these trends, the Ministers for Culture adopted a pan-European Declaration in the framework of the Davos Economic Forum in Switzerland, entitled *Towards a High-quality Baukultur for Europe*[5] (2018), in which the German term *baukultur* (building culture) was introduced in the European policymaking (see Section 3.1).

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[1] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2001:073:0006:0007:EN:PDF

[2] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:319:0013:0014:EN:PDF

[3] https://www.urban-agenda.eu/

[4] https://ectp-ceu.eu/the-new-leipzig-charter/

[5] https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/

More recently, in 2021, the EU Council adopted a third policy, *Council Conclusions on Culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative*[6], which reinforced the current momentum and the European commitment for promoting high-quality sustainable living environments. Among others, Member States are urged to:

- follow best practices for conducting architecture, landscape and spatial planning competitions;
- use available financing tools to facilitate the delivery of high-quality standards;
- contribute to creating a holistic understanding and shared culture of high-quality architecture by raising further awareness, e.g., through formal and informal education from an early age;
- enhance policy coherence and coordination for high-quality architecture and built environment;
- set up advisory expert groups such as the "State and City Architect Teams" (EU, 2021).

Although they have been adopted by the EU Council, the above-mentioned policies are considered as *soft* policies, as they are not binding on the Member States. An European survey on the impact of the EU policies concluded that "looking at the progression of national architectural policies in the European Union, and similarly to other public policies, a process of Europeanisation is underway (…) where the pan-European policies seem to be having an impact on encouraging Member States to promote architectural quality as a precondition for improving the quality of life of their citizens" (Bento 2012: 86).

In the second strand, the EC initiatives on architecture have also started in 2001 with the launch of the *EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award*. Highlighting best practice and outstanding realized works, the prize is awarded biennially to acknowledge and reward quality architectural production in Europe[7]. To set the example, the EC adopted its own architecture policy in 2009, setting high-quality aspirations for all its facilities, which should be taken into account by all stakeholders when implementing the Commission's buildings policy.

Within the European Plan for Culture 2019-22, the EC established a Working Group of Member States' Experts focusing on '*High-quality architecture and Built Environment for Everyone'*, that would be the predecessor of a new European initiative, the 'New European Bauhaus'. The report of the Working Group was published at the end of 2021 compiling prevalent trends and best practices and providing a set of six recommendations to promote high-quality places[8].

In 2020, in her first State of the Union Address, the President of the EC announced the creation of a surprisingly wide European initiative, the 'New European Bauhaus (NEB)', a cooperative cultural project, which proclaims architectural quality and design thinking among its guiding principles. NEB aims at transforming the *European Green Deal* policy and its *Renovation Wave Strategy* into a new cultural project connected to the built environment. Bringing ideas of

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[6] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14534-2021-INIT/en/pdf

[7] https://www.miesarch.com/

[8] https://op.europa.eu/pt/publication-detail/-/publication/bd7cba7e-2680-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

sustainability and innovation, it calls on all Europeans and on Member States to "imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls"[9].

With this new European initiative, the EC places innovation and design quality as a political goal that aims to create a design movement that inspires the transformation of European cities and of the built environment based on three main principles: sustainability (environmental sustainability), aesthetics (quality of experience) and inclusion (affordability and accessibility) (Ibidem).
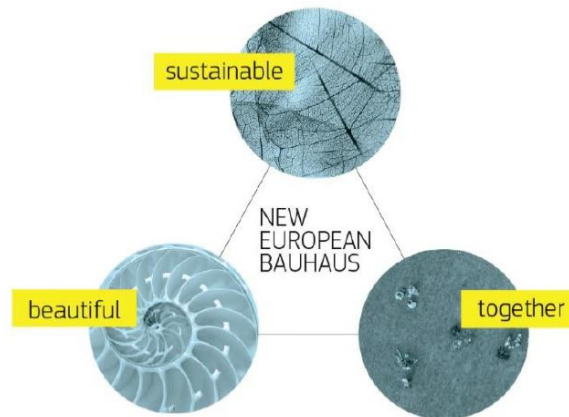
2.2 – New European Bauhaus three core inseparable values (source: EC, 2021a)

The NEB will be carried out in three phases, called "Co-Design" (2020-21), "Delivery" (2021-23) and "Dissemination" (2023-24). The first phase focused on co-designing the NEB project, where the EC conducted a broad participatory co-creation process. The latter included an European call for the NEB Prizes, now in its second year, which aims to recognize and celebrate existing beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive achievements[10]. The NEB has started its "Delivery" phase last November, which will build on and mobilise existing EU programmes to launch a first set of dedicated calls for proposals in 2021-2022 (EC, 2021a).

With an allocated budget of €85 million, the NEB will fund a wide variety of projects which contribute towards achieving its aims spread across the continent. In order to support the NEB's implementation, the EC established the *NEB Community,* a network of partners that includes NEB official partners; High-Level Round Table members; National Contact Points (one by each EU Member State); NEB prize winners and finalists; the beneficiaries of NEB calls; NEB's friends and members of the EC. In addition to the above, the EC created the *NEB Lab* that pursues a community-building strategy to embrace concrete projects (Ibidem).

Although it is still uncertain to foresee the extent of the impact of such high-level initiatives on architecture and design on the different practices at national, regional and local levels, the wide range of ongoing initiatives reveal a gradual but increasingly committed will to place design excellence at the centre of European urban governance (Carmona et al., 2023).

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[9] https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en

[10] https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/get-involved/2022-prizes_en

II. National policies

In the last 30 years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of design quality for social and cultural development, wealth creation and economic well-being. To support this goal, many European countries and regions have been developing high-level architecture and urban design policies in order to promote design excellence and raise public awareness about the importance of high-quality built environment (Bento & Carmona, 2020).

Most of these policy frameworks take a 'strategic comprehensive policy' approach in which the design of the built environment is seen as a transversal concern impacting across a wide range of sectoral remits as covered by different governmental departments. By addressing the design of the built environment in this holistic way, governments can set high aspirations for design quality – albeit aspirational rather than legally binding – in a manner in which the responsibility of all public authorities (and others) is made explicit (ibidem).

Across Europe, with very few exceptions, this move to deal with design more comprehensively as a strategic (national) policy priority is being increasingly prioritised. As the benchmarking of neighbours leads to a convergence in practices, administrations that have never previously developed a comprehensive policy framework on architecture are now doing so (Ibid.).

With a different approach, few European countries have adopted a national law on architecture. In all of them, the laws formalize the principle of public interest of architecture and, depending on the case, they may include norms to regulate the architect's profession; the obligation that building projects are subscribed by architects; design quality principles; design competitions mandatory for public buildings, creation of advisory design boards, setting of design awards, etc. Other countries/regions have adopted policies but only within a sectoral policy scope (e.g., culture).

Elsewhere in Europe, differences in political, legal, and administrative systems mean that variations in practice are still large, and without in-depth sustained studies, it is difficult to determine the superiority of one approach over others.

Currently, 28 administrations in the EU have an official architectural policy at national/regional level, plus Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. This number has been increasing since the beginning of the 1990s and is expected to continue to grow in the following years, which means that Europe will soon be largely covered by such high-level architecture policies.

Looking at the progression of architectural policies across the EU, it is possible to observe that a process of Europeanization is underway. The spread of architectural policies, together with informal policy networks on the topic, has been influential in the adoption of policy guidance on architecture by the European institutions. In the opposite direction, the EU guidance calls on Member States to promote design quality as a way to achieve better places granting political legitimacy to the countries that are developing their first policies.
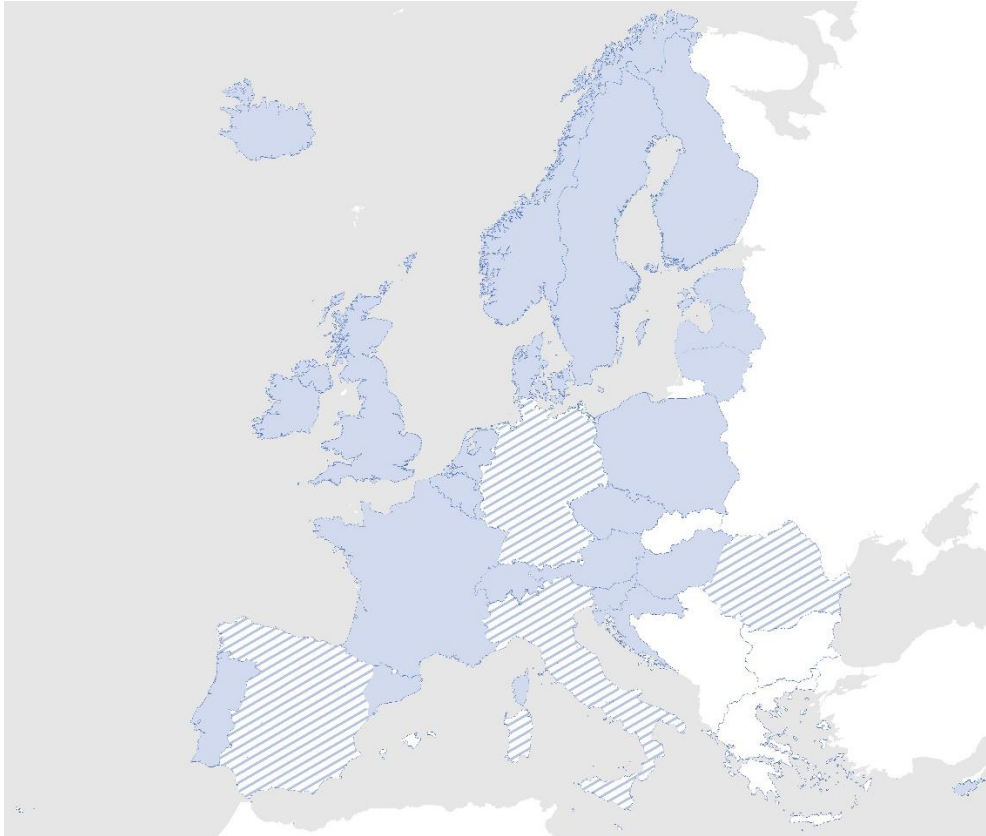
2.3 – European countries/regions with an official publication, memorandum, or policy (marked in blue), or planning to have one (marked in dashed), that outlines Government aspirations on architecture and built environment design (source: Bento & Carmona, 2020).

Architectural policies are based on the broad notion of architecture, which encompasses not only buildings but also public spaces and all built elements that form human settlements. Although the conceptual bases of the policies have been evolving over the years - initially focused on architecture design and close surroundings and later expanded to the scale of the city and territory - the central core of the policies is in fact the built environment. Aiming for integration, the policies started to include other related concepts that could better convey the inter-disciplinary nature of built environment design, such as *spatial design* in the Netherlands, *place* in the UK or *design environment* in Sweden.

With a similar approach, the Germanic countries have been promoting the notion of *Baukultur,* which can be broadly translated as 'building culture'. The latter offers a broad set of guiding principles across a wide range of disciplinary fields and making the case for design quality by recognising the economic, social, environmental, and cultural value of a high-quality built environment.

In conclusion, if the aim is to promote better designed environments and successful places, the main issue is not whether its name is comprehensive enough, but rather whether it has the capacity to build bridges and reach compromises between different design professionals and stakeholders to accomplish better outcomes.

III. Actors and tools

Following the policy commitments, several European countries have been making very significant efforts to implement a strategic comprehensive approach to the governance of design. To do so, some administrations have established dedicated departments/divisions that are responsible for monitoring the implementation of action plans and for delivering initiatives/actions that promote design quality.

Others have appointed a state architect team or established dedicated institutions (e.g., arm's-length organizations) to pursue the architectural policy goals and action plans, often delivered through a range of informal tools for the governance of urban design. As with any policy arena, this concern with urban quality will only be delivered if it is properly resourced and effectively implemented. The range of tools (informal and otherwise) developed and used in different jurisdictions offers some indication of this commitment.

The recent European Urban Maestro project[11] (2021) showed that an increasing number of administrations (national to local) are developing an increasingly diverse and sophisticated set of approaches to offer clear leadership in this domain. To do this, governments across Europe are taking advantage of the informal tools of urban design governance to assist in the delivery of a better designed built environment using the soft powers of the state to encourage and cajole development actors, but in a discretionary (non-obligatory) manner.

The project Urban Maestro further revealed that informal urban design governance tools are being actively and extensively used across Europe, broadly serving two purposes: first, to develop a positive culture within which decision-making on design can occur, and second, to assist in the delivery of better-quality projects and places. The tools can be defined in two meta-categories:

- **Quality culture tools** – analysis, information, persuasion – which seek to establish a positive decision-making environment in which a consensus is gradually built around the notion that a better designed built environment delivers place value and is worth striving for;
- **Quality delivery tools** – rating, support, exploration – which steer those decision-making processes in a more focussed manner, helping to ensure that design quality is delivered on every intervention in the built environment (Carmona, 2021).

Some tools have been widely used and adopted by almost every European administration (e.g., design awards), whilst others are far more sporadic (e.g., design indicators). Some are well established in particular places (e.g., design competitions) and may not seem particularly innovative in those locations. Elsewhere they are hardly known, and their adoption would represent a significant innovation (see Section 5.2).

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[11] **https://urbanmaestro.org/**
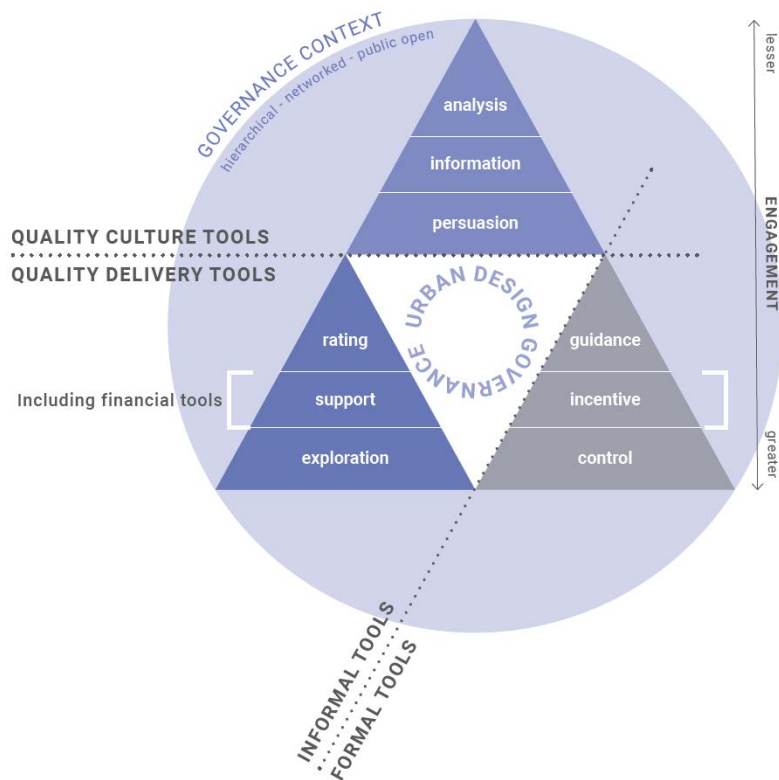
2.4 – Urban Maestro 'typology of urban design governance tools' (Source: Carmona, 2021)

Nonetheless, informal tools should be seen as important means to complement the formal side of the design governance landscape, and greatly extend the means available to state actors to influence how the built environment is shaped (Ibidem).

IV. Impact of policies

One of the main outputs of architecture policies has been the development of a new range of informal tools for urban design governance that did not exist before the policies. These are mostly *soft power* tools that aim to shape the preferences of development actors - developers, regulators, designers, or clients - influencing their choices and decisions through persuasion rather than coercion. Therefore, improving the quality of places must be seen as a long-term goal, as it involves processes of cultural change, which are difficult to achieve in the short term, since they involve influencing the system of norms, beliefs, and values of different actors. As such, it is not possible to sift this sort of 'fuzzy' assessment by using quantitative inference or exhaustive mapping of the number of initiatives and actions generated by the policy process.

Furthermore, design governance contexts across Europe are very diverse due to differences in legal and administrative systems, financial resources, cultural and social environments, etc. Although in some contexts a specific tool may be seen as an innovation, in others it will simply be impossible to use. In other words, the type of tools and initiatives adopted are the result of the specific context where they are being used, which means that contextual factors must be taken into account in any cross-national research comparison.

Based on the findings of a PhD Thesis (Bento, 2017) focused on three case studies (The Netherlands, Ireland, and Scotland), and despite the differences between them, the research concluded that strategic comprehensive architectural policies are having substantial impacts, promoting best practices, and fostering a placemaking culture. Although more in some areas than in others, their intensity varies according to the amount of resources available and to the diversity of initiatives on the ground in each specific case.

The research concluded that architectural policies will only have a positive impact and enhance the role of the state if they are effectively implemented. Otherwise, high-level policy statement on the value of good design will remain simply as well-meaning aspirations and will not be able to play a role on processes of design governance in the absence of steady coordination and enough implementation resources. This means architecture policies need to have some policy budget, even if it is a small one, or they will be prevented from enforcing any initiatives and will therefore become an ineffective policy.

One of the main limitations of the policies however is the difficulty in persuading the constellation of public managers and principals to give more priority to design quality, both horizontally and vertically, across different sectors and levels of the state. The hierarchical and complex structure of modern states makes it difficult to coordinate and ensure integration of the wide range of policies that affect the built environment. This can be done by creating interdepartmental platforms or dedicated departments that can build bridges and facilitate communication across public administration, which can take on a leading role and push for a design agenda. Nevertheless, as with all public policies, these 'change agents' need to have strong political support to effectively introduce change and stimulate better practices of procurement and development control.

Despite the limitations, all the interviewees in the three case studies were supportive of a greater involvement of the state in processes of urban design governance. Nonetheless, the question of effectiveness will always be difficult to perceive as some effects are visible artifacts or products generated by the policies, while others are of a very diffuse nature and focus on influencing the design processes and the actors' decision environment rather than on making tangible interventions at the scale of the project.

PART B: DETAILED OVERVIEW

1. EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES

The present section describes the rise of pan-European policies for high-quality architecture, its main policy outputs, and architecture related initiatives. A first part looks at the development of European architecture policy documents and its main goals. A second part focuses on initiatives promoted by European institutions fostering high-quality architecture and the built environment. A third and last part addresses informal policy networks, non-governmental organizations and social entrepreneurs operating at European scale.

1.1 European policy documents

Historically, the first European policy relating to architecture was the *Council Architects Directive* (85/384/EEC) dating from 1985. However, its scope was restricted to the mutual recognition of diplomas and other formal qualifications in architecture, in order to guarantee the freedom of movement of architects within the EU and that architects from different Member States had the same level of skills and competencies (Meijer & Visscher, 2005). Only in 2001, would a first comprehensive policy on architecture quality be adopted at European level (see below).

Council Resolution on Architecture Quality (2001)

In 2001, the EU Council of the Ministries for Culture adopted their first comprehensive policy on architecture, entitled *Council Resolution on architectural quality in urban and rural environments (*2001/C 73/04). The adoption of the *Resolution* was the political recognition of the value of architecture to improve the daily life of European citizens and as 'one of the components of cultural identity and a vector of social cohesion and citizenship' (EU, 2001).

The proclamation of the importance of architecture was an innovation which would strengthen the role of culture in the European policy development (MCC, 2002, p. 6), stating that architecture 'constitutes the heritage of tomorrow'. Due to its 'high political status', the *Resolution* reinforced the value of existing architectural policies and legitimise the development of the new architecture policies that were in the making across Europe (see next Section).

Despite its informal nature, the *Resolution* advocated for the convergence of cultural policies, town and country planning and the environment in this same quest for the improvement of everyone's living conditions and for deeper citizen involvement (Ibidem). In particular, it instigated EU Member States to "promote architecture and urban design quality by actions of promotion, dissemination and awareness of architectural and urban culture" (Ibid). In addition, it encouraged Member States to promote design quality by means of exemplary public building policies that emphasize the responsibility of states in the construction of public buildings and programs and heighten the awareness of commissioning authorities (Ibid).

Council Conclusions on Architecture (2008)

In December 2008, the EU Council of the Ministries for Culture adopted a second policy, entitled *Council Conclusions on Architecture: Culture's Contribution to Sustainable Development* (2008/C 319/05). This second policy maintained the same ideas of the *Resolution* (2001) about a holistic vision of architecture but placed a new emphasis on the contribution of culture for sustainable development, in view of 'its impact on the cultural dimension of towns and cities, as well as on the economy, social cohesion and the environment' (EU, 2008). H

The *Conclusions* text emphasised that architecture is an example of the cross-cutting nature of culture, being affected by a number of public policies and not just cultural policies. It argues that architectural policy could play an integrating and innovative role in implementing sustainable urban development by 'encouraging high-quality architectural creation as an economic stimulus and tourist attraction for towns and cities, reconciling the sometimes-differing requirements of building and landscape conservation and contemporary creation' (EU, 2008). To reach these aims, it called on the EU Member States to:

- make allowance for architecture and its specific features in all relevant policies, especially in research, economic and social cohesion, sustainable development and education;

- encourage innovation and experimentation in sustainable development in architecture, urban planning and landscaping, particularly within the framework of European policies or programs and when commissioning public works;

- raise public awareness about the role of architecture in the creation of a high-quality living environment and encourage public involvement in sustainable urban development' (Ibid).

European Commission's Architectural Policy (2009)

In response to the Council *Conclusions*[12] mentioned above, the European Commission (EC) adopted its own architectural policy, in 2009. The policy sets high-quality aspirations for all its facilities and renovation or new buildings, which should be considered by all stakeholders when implementing the Commission's buildings policy (EC, 2009). Despite the complexity of the concept of design quality and the problem of defining it, due to its subjective nature, the EC policy establishes a set of design principles to be considered by property market stakeholders when submitting building proposals to the EC. To do so, it establishes ten criteria for evaluating design quality that make known the Commission's wishes regarding architectural quality:

1. Urban integration
2. Accessibility and mobility
3. Respect for the environment and energy efficiency
4. Quality of construction and well-being

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[12] Namely when it invites the EC to 'ensure that architectural quality and the specific nature of architectural service are taken into consideration in all its policies, measures, and programmes' (Ibid.).

5. Innovation
6. Clarity of purpose and comprehensibility of buildings
7. Aesthetic aspect and image
8. Functionality, modularity, and flexibility
9. Costs
10. Cohesion

The EC policy also defined the need for 'properly defined programmes, correct monitoring of project processes and systematic use of the various mechanisms for organising competitions to obtain ideas'. Finally, it sets that architecture and urban design competitions should be organised for all major property development projects of the Commission (ibidem).

Davos Declaration on *Baukultur* (2018)

In 2018, in the framework of the Davos World Economic Forum (WEF), the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC) invited the European Ministries for Culture to a two-day international conference on 'how to achieve a high-quality building culture' (*baukultur*), with the aim of fostering high-quality environments in Europe and of promoting the concept of *baukultur* beyond German-speaking countries. *Baukultur* is a German concept that includes all aspects of the built environment, such as the spatial, infrastructure, social and economic context of towns, cities, and cultural landscapes[13]. The conference culminated with the adoption by the European Ministries for Culture and other stakeholders (e.g., Architects' Council of Europe) of the Davos Declaration, entitled, '*Towards a High-quality Baukultur for Europe'* (DAVOS, 2018).

The Davos Declaration highlighted the central role of culture in the built environment and called for an integrated quality approach to the way people shape their surroundings. It calls on the introduction of better strategies that embrace the concept of building culture and incorporate the vision of a high design culture as a primary political goal[14]. The concept of *building culture (Baukultur)* was further discussed at European level at the European Conferences on Architectural Policies (ECAP), that will be referred further ahead.

In 2021, as an output of a second international meeting on this topic held in Geneva, the FOC launched the *Davos Baukultur Quality System*, a tool aimed to better define the concept of *baukultur*, as well as to allow users to make assessments about the quality of places (Swiss Federal Office of Culture, 2021). The Davos Quality System presents eight criteria for encompassing the different dimensions of a quality baukultur [15]. This quality rating tool was referred to by the new Council Conclusions on architecture (2021) and adopted by the OMC Expert Group on '*High-quality Architecture and Built Environment for Everyone'* (see below).

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[13] The German expression *Baukultur* is a broad concept that can be translated into English as *Building Culture*, which includes all the disciplines that intervene in the built environment, such as architecture, heritage, public space, landscape, infrastructure, urban planning, engineering, etc.

[14] For more information see: https://davosdeclaration2018.ch

[15] For more information see: https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/quality-system/
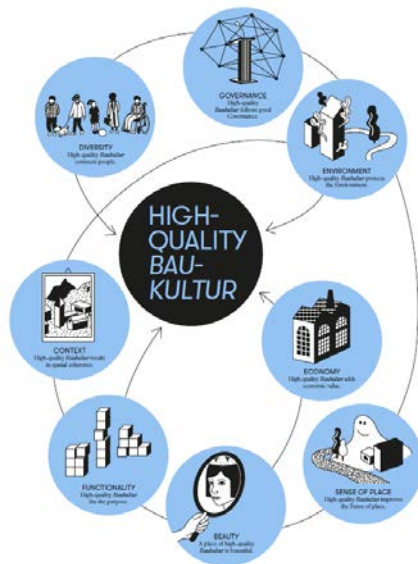
3.1 - Davos Baukultur Quality System: eight criteria for a high-quality baukultur (image Swiss Federal Office of Culture, 2021)

Council Conclusions on Culture: high-quality architecture and built environment (2021)

Following an initiative of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council, the EU Ministers for Culture adopted a new and third European policy document on architecture in December 2021, entitled '*Council Conclusions on Culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative* (2021/C 501 I/03)[16].

This new European policy reflects the momentum gained by high-quality architecture in the political agenda in recent years. Recalling the importance of ensuring that both the development of existing building stock and new buildings and spaces are of high quality, it underlies the central role of architects '*in all phases of the development of high-quality architecture and living environment and can therefore contribute in a significant manner to the public interest* (EU, 2021)*.* Among others, it calls on the Member States to:

- follow best practices for conducting architecture, landscape, and spatial planning competitions;
- use available financing tools to facilitate the delivery of high-quality standards;
- contribute to creating a holistic understanding and shared culture of high-quality architecture by raising further awareness, e.g., through formal and informal education from an early age;
- enhance policy coherence and coordination for high-quality architecture and built environment;
- set up advisory expert groups such as the "State and City Architect Teams" (EU, 2021).

The Council Conclusions also calls on various policy-makers – at both local and EU level – to mainstream the New European Bauhaus (discussed below) and the circular economy principles and approaches in the national socio-economic and territorial development strategies, and to facilitate synergies between relevant policy areas and other processes. Nevertheless, the new policy - and all the previous ones - is considered a soft policy, adopted as guidelines that are not binding on EU Member States, unlike EU Directives or Regulations.

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[16] For more information see: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14534-2021-INIT/en/pdf

1.2 European initiatives on architecture

Besides the policy documents, the European Commission has been promoting several initiatives to encourage design excellence and foster high-quality built environments. The best known is probably the *EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture*, which is funded by the European Commission (EC) and co-organized with the Fundació Mies van der Rohe since 2001. More recently, born from its Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, the EC supported an European Expert Working Group on High-quality Architecture, whose report was recently published. Finally, in 2020, the EC created the 'New European Bauhaus' initiative, which is currently being implemented.

EU Prize for Contemporary architecture (2001-…)

In early 2000, the EC lunched an international call for the creation of an EU prize for architecture and urban design. The winning proposal was the 'Mies van der Rohe Award', submitted by the Fundació Mies van der Rohe, from Barcelona[17]. Funded by the EC since then, it became one of the EU official prizes under the name: '*European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award'* (EU Mies Award).

3.2 – Winner of the 'EU Mies Award' 2019'. Transformation of 530 homes – Grand Parc Bordeaux by Architects Lacaton & Vassal, Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin (© Philippe Ruault)

The EU Mies Award is a biennial prize focused on high-quality architectural works built across Europe. It includes an Advisory Committee composed of 16 institutions from different countries, where all the major decisions are made, such as the jury composition, selection of experts and

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[17] The Mies van de Rohe Award was created in 1987, one year after the reconstruction of the Pavilion with the same name by the Mayor of Barcelona and a European Commissioner. The first biennial edition was held in 1988 as the 'Mies van der Rohe Award for European Architecture'.

any necessary changes to improve its efficiency[18]. Furthermore, it includes the collaboration of the 45 member organizations of the *Architects' Council of Europe* (ACE), who submit national entries for each edition, together with a group of independent experts and the Advisor Committee.

After receiving the submissions, the jury members of the EU Mies Award meet to evaluate all the submitted works and draw up a shortlist and subsequently choose the finalist. Before making their decisions on the winner, the jury members visit the finalist works, where they meet with those who use the spaces. Finally, an award ceremony is held. A catalogue and an international travelling exhibition are produced to present the nominated, shortlisted and awarded projects for each prize. All the works nominated are available for consultation on the EU Mies Award online database, which showcases exemplary projects developed across Europe[19].

OMC Expert group on 'High-quality Architecture and Built Environment' (2019)

In 2018, the EC published its European Plan for Culture 2019-22[20], which, among other initiatives, established the creation of an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' Experts focusing on '*High-quality architecture and Built Environment for Everyone'*[21]. The Member States' experts were designated to exchange best practices with respect to "multi-disciplinary and participatory governance models contributing to social inclusion and sustainable development", putting focus on "architecture as a discipline that encompasses the right balance between cultural, social, economic, environmental and technical aspects for the common good" (EC, 2021b).

Coordinated by the EC, the EU Expert Group started to meet in early 2020 and in September 2021 a report entitled '*Towards a shared culture of architecture. Investing in a high-quality living environment for everyone'* was published. The report emphasises how architectural quality and design thinking are key factors that can foster a positive change of the built environment across Europe. The main message is that quality architecture and spatial design should become part of the multidisciplinary response to social and policy demands (Ibidem). The final Report of the Expert Group made six key recommendations :

• *High-quality procedures and solutions become best-practice models*: adopting best-practice principles as defined by the Davos quality criteria (see above) so that decision-making enhances and never reduces the quality of the built environment;

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[18] The 'European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award' Advisory Committee consists of: Architekturzentrum Wien, Vienna; Danish Architecture Centre, Copenhagen; DESSA Gallery, Ljubljana; German Architecture Museum, Frankfurt; Fundació Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona; Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre, Budapest; Institut français d'architecture, Paris; Museum of Architecture, Wroclaw; Museum of Estonian Architecture, Tallinn; Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki; Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana; National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo; RIBA, London; The Berlage, Delft; and Triennale di Milano, Milan.

[19] For more information see: https://www.miesarch.com/

[20] For more info, see: Council Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022

[21] The OMC group included 39 experts from 23 EU Member States, plus Switzerland and Norway.

- *Everyone has access to knowledge about quality*: democratising knowledge on place quality through education about the qualities and challenges relating to the built environment and spreading knowledge through awards and other initiatives;
- *Decision-makers subscribe to quality*: enhancing skills and knowledge in administration so that all decisions on the design and use of space with long-term impact on the living environment benefit from the latest expertise and competences;
- *Co-creation with quality in mind*: co-creation with quality in mind with regard to decisions on funding, location, design briefs, construction and so on, so that all people and organizations affected by decisions have an opportunity to contribute;
- *Consistent planning to achieve quality*: injecting a quality dimension into planning across all departmental and administrative levels, from strategic planning decisions to architectural decisions relating to the life cycle, regeneration, and recycling of buildings;
- *Regulations, standards, and guidelines help to achieve quality*: ensuring that all formal regulatory, public procurement and related funding mechanisms fully reflect quality principles both in their preparation and throughout their subsequent use.

EC New European Bauhaus (2020-2024)

In 2020, in her State of the Union address, the European Commissioner, Ursula von der Leyen, announced the creation of a 'New European Bauhaus (NEB)', a cooperative cultural project, which proclaims architectural quality and design thinking among its guiding principles. NEB aims at transforming the *European Green Deal* policy and its *Renovation Wave Strategy* - mainly focused on improving the energy performance of buildings - into a new cultural project connected to the built environment[22]. Bringing ideas of sustainability, innovation, and inclusion, it calls on all Europeans and EU Member States to "imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls" (EC, 2021a).

With this surprising initiative, the EC places design quality as a political goal that aims to create a design movement that inspires the transformation of European cities and of the built environment based in three main principles: sustainability (environmental sustainability), aesthetics (quality of experience) and inclusion (affordability and accessibility) (Ibidem)[23]. This creative and interdisciplinary endeavour aims to go beyond the strict technological and economical dimensions of the projects in order to accelerate the green transition in the different sectors of the European economy and to promote wellbeing for society at large.

In practical terms, according to the EC website, the NEB will be, at the same time: a forum for discussion; a space for art, culture, and technology; an experimentation laboratory; an accelerator for new solutions; a "hub" for global networks of experts, among others. The initiative is supported

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[22] Within the scope of its "Renovation Wave Strategy" (2020), the European Commission intends to double the rate of renovation of buildings in the next ten years and to ensure that renovations lead to greater efficiency in the use of energy.

[23] For more information see: https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en

by an advisory board of external experts, which includes scientists, architects, designers, artists, engineers, and other elements of civil society. The NEB will be developed in three phases, called "Co-Design" (2020-21), "Delivery" (2021-23) and "Dissemination" (2023-24).

The first phase focused on co-designing how the NEB project would take place and which new ideas would shape it. In this context, the EC conducted a broad participatory co-creation process, with the aim of launching public tenders ("Calls") for proposals in relevant programs in the next Multiannual Financial Framework. This included a European call for the NEB Prizes to recognize and celebrate existing beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive achievements.

Since last September, NEB started its "Delivery" phase, which will build on and mobilise existing EU programmes to launch a first set of dedicated calls for proposals in 2021-2022 (EC, 2021a). With a dedicated budget of €85 million, NEB will fund a wide range of contributory projects spread across Europe to achieve its aims. In order to support NEB's implementation, the EC established the *NEB Community*, a network of partners that includes NEB official partners; High-Level Round Table members; National Contact Points (one by each EU Member State); NEB prize winners and finalists; the beneficiaries of NEB calls (which are a combination of several EU financing instruments); NEB's friends and members of the EC.

Besides the above, the EC has created the *NEB Lab* that pursues a community-building strategy to embrace concrete projects. These projects should have sustainability concerns, combined with art and culture, each adapted to local conditions and with a specific focus, such as, for example, the use of natural building materials, energy efficiency, demography, oriented mobility for the future or resource-efficient digital innovation, etc. Whether backed by EU funding or by other initiatives, the purpose is to bring them together for mutual support and learning[24] (EC, 2021a).

A wide diversity of open calls have been launched to support innovative initiatives that may deliver and spread the NEB aims and principles across Europe. For example, an open call on 'Co-creation of public space through citizen engagement', that provides financial support for citizens, cities, and towns to implement local projects; or an open call for technical assistance to small and medium-sized municipalities, which will benefit from tailored support on the ground provided by interdisciplinary experts (methodological, technical, regulatory, financial, and socio-economic expertise). Adding to this, the EC is promoting a *NEB Festival*, which will take place over three days in June 2022. To foster wider engagement, the NEB Festival includes three calls for expressions of interest for organizing side events, project exhibitions and/or artistic activities[25].

Finally, throughout 2023, the 'Dissemination' phase of the Bauhaus projects and networks will take place across Europe. The creation of platforms and creative spaces as well as of a knowledge hub where interested partners and citizens can get involved have been announced.

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[24] As an example, the project '*New European Bauhaus goes South*' connects six south European counties which join forces to improve education through architecture. For more info: https://www.up.pt/neb-goes-south/

[25] For more information: https://new-european-bauhaus-festival.eu

1.3 European policy networks and related initiatives

Like other public policy arenas, architectural policies and initiatives are informed and developed within a community of experts and policy networks, involving governmental, NGOs and private actors. The present section looks at the different European architectural policy networks that have been set up across the continent, some more formal than others, as well as at some European design competitions and awards, which are raising the profile of design quality at international level facilitating the Europeanization process of architecture as public policy.

European Conferences on Architectural Policies (ECAP)

The first international meeting on architecture policies was held in Rotterdam, in 1997. Held under the Dutch Presidency of the EU Council, the event had the particular feature of gathering governmental agencies, cultural institutions, and professional bodies across Europe. Based on this first encounter, a second meeting took place during the Finnish presidency of the EU Council, in 1999, with the objective of creating a network organization at European level likely to lead to the creation of the *European Forum for Architectural Policies* (EFAP).

Since then, the EFAP network meets every six months under the country that holds the EU presidency. As a result of its activities, the EFAP regularly issues policy declarations, conclusions texts, and less often, policy manifests on design-related issues. The EFAP network allowed for policy exchange among Member States and led to the publication of a 'Survey on Architectural Policies in Europe', in 2012[26], which concluded that the European policies were having a positive impact in the adoption of national architecture policies across the continent (Bento, 2012).

In 2013, the EFAP meeting under the Irish Presidency of the EU Council took stock of the implementation of the Council Conclusions on Architecture (2008) and summarized the results in their report (EFAP, 2013). It pointed out two key issues as being central to the future development of architectural policies across Europe, which had also emerged from the EFAP survey:

1. Public awareness and political commitment are vital for the successful fostering of good design and spatial quality. There is an urgent need to take the interest of architecture beyond the sphere of the profession. It is also a challenge for NGOs and policymakers to act jointly and create demand for a well-designed living environment by all EU citizens.

2. Research and design initiatives should be strengthened and supported via eligible funding.

An international non-profit association, based in Brussels, was established to support the EFAP network activities. However, due to financial constraints, this association was formally dissolved in 2016. Nevertheless, an informal policy network still exists, and the meetings continue to be held, now under the title: *European Conferences on Architectural Policies* (ECAP).

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[26] For more information: http://www.efap-fepa.org/

The latest ECAP meeting was held in October 2021 in a three-day cross border event in Graz (Austria) and Maribor (Slovenia), gathering around 300 people from 22 European countries, under the topic: "Building Europe. Towards a Culture of High-Quality Architecture and Built Environment". The next ECAP event is scheduled for October 2022, in Prague, Czech Republic.

3.3 – ECAP meeting held in Graz (Austria) and Maribor (Slovenia), October 2021 (© HBO)

EU Meetings of Directors of Architecture (2017-…)

In 2017, as a follow-up of the EFAP meetings, the French Ministry for Culture promoted a first European Meeting of Directors of Architecture from the EU Member States to exchange views on the developments and initiatives of architecture policies. This meeting gathered only public officials and representatives of governmental departments responsible for architecture and was repeated in Vienna (2018), Geneva (2019), Brussels (2020), Maribor (2021) and Paris (2022).

Architects' Council of Europe

The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) is composed of 43 Member Organizations from 31 European countries: the national regulatory and professional representative bodies of architecture in the EU Member States, Serbia, Switzerland, and Norway[27]. ACE receives financial support from the EC *Creative Europe Program* as a European Network for Architecture activities (2022-2024), which aims to reinforce the profession's capacity to face current and forthcoming challenges: cross-border and transnational mobility, increased competition from outside the EU, adaptation to digital technologies, acquisition of new skills and competences.

Europan competition

Europan is a biennial competition of ideas open to young professionals under 40 years of age with a university degree in architecture, urban design, and related fields, recognised by the EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. It was first set up in 1988

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[27] For more info: https://www.ace-cae.eu/

and reached its 15th edition in 2019, each with its own, different overarching theme. Europan is organised by a federation with the same name, consisting of national structures in participating countries and aided by cross-national scientific and technical committees[28].

3.4 – Winner of the Europan 15 in Uddevalla, Jälla (Sweden) (© s2studio)

The Europan competition is simultaneously launched for all the sites in different European cities, with identical rules and judging methods for all. After completing their registration on the European website, competitors are free to choose any of the available sites to obtain more information and digitally submit a proposal. A national jury of experts preselects the most innovative projects per site. A central Scientific Council then compares and analyses these projects at European level and organises forums for debate between the site representatives and the jury members. National juries have the final say in decisions. The Europan organisers further assist the winning teams in obtaining commissions for the projects that are to be implemented (following the suitable revision processes) by bringing together the designers, city representatives, and juries.

Placemaking Europe

Following a similar initiative that emerged in the USA, Placemaking Europe is a non-profit network for placemaking in Europe that connects practitioners, academics, community leaders, market actors and policy makers throughout Europe in the field of placemaking, public space, social life, human scale, and the city at eye level. The aim of the network is to empower European communities to use Placemaking strategies in their built environment. The leaders and members of the network share best practices, publications, and tools. The best-known activity is the ´Placemaking Week', an annual event lasting several days held in a European city[29].

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[28] For more info: https://www.europan-europe.eu/

[29] For more info: https://placemaking-europe.eu/

European Prize for Urban Public Space

The European Prize for Urban Public Space is a biennial award established in 2000 to recognise the best works transforming the public space in Europe. The Prize upholds an open, compact city of universal access, guaranteeing harmonious coexistence of citizens, mixed uses, sustainable mobility, preserving the historical memory of places, and favouring the participation of citizens in the design of its shared spaces. The prize is organised by the CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona), in collaboration with five other European institutions[30].

Aside from its partners, the prize is also supported by a team of experts consisting of public space specialists from around Europe, which guarantees a broad geographic scope and ensures the quality of the works eligible for the prize. Entries are open to works that have created, recovered, or improved public space and were carried out in the two years following the previous edition. The Prize is jointly presented to the authors (e.g., designers) of the projects and to the city, branch of public authority or other institution that sponsored/promoted it.

3.5 – Joint prize winner 2014. Marseille Vieux Port (© Foster and Partners)

While the prize does not rule out large-scale interventions, it encourages particularly smaller, more low-key, and targeted works that nevertheless play a large role in improving the life of local citizens, with the prize's distinctive European focus being another key element. However, mostly by explicitly recognising both the designer(s) and the responsible local authority, the prize moves away from a purely design-based view towards the importance of effective partnerships and, indirectly, of the underlying governance processes that are essential to developing and creating successful places[31].

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[30] The Architecture Foundation (London), the Architekturzentrum Wien (Vienna), the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (Paris), the Deutsches Architekturmuseum (Frankfurt) and the Museum of Architecture and Design (Ljubljana).

[31] For more info: https://www.publicspace.org/en//the-prize

2. NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES

Since the early 1990s, several European countries began to adopt national policies on architecture and urban design. This innovation was followed by several others and today almost all the EU Members States have some form of high policy statement on architecture. In this context, this Section is four-folded. A first part examines the emergence of architectural policies and its developments, namely between 1991 and 2001. A second part summarizes the results of two European surveys that confirmed the spread of architectural policies across the continent. A third part looks at the different policies approaches and its main features. Finally, the fourth and last part examines the progression of policies and those that are still in the making.

2.1 The rise of governmental policies on architecture

In the European panorama, France was the first country to adopt a national policy on architecture with the parliamentary approval of the Architecture Law, in 1977. The French Law placed architectural promotion at the head of cultural policy by proclaiming architecture as an expression of culture and a matter of public interest (Champy, 2001). The Law organised the profession of architects and established a new intervention framework as well as the basis for the Councils for Architecture, Urbanism, and the Environment (see next part). However, probably due to its legislative nature, the French model was not followed by any other European country.

It was not until 1991 that the Dutch government, despite a long tradition in land-use planning and urban design[32], adopted a ground-breaking policy at national level that set high aspirations on architecture and urban design, entitled *'Space for Architecture'*. Signed by two ministries, the Dutch initiative was a pioneering policy by adopting a comprehensive approach on architecture and urban design aiming to raise the design quality of public buildings and the built environment bridging culture and building policy (Netherlands, 1991).

Following a strategic policy approach, the Dutch architecture policy established two main objectives: to promote good practices among public authorities and to create a favourable climate for architecture and urban design (Dings, 2009, p. 133). The former intended to set the example for society at large and for development actors in particular by developing high-quality public buildings and urban projects (Netherlands, 1991, p. 13), whereas the latter intended to improve the architectural climate and promote a culture of design. For this purpose, a set of design institutions and a wide range of measures was put in place, supported by an inter-ministerial financial envelope of several millions of Euros for a four-year period (Bento, 2017).

As with most innovations, this pioneering policy did not start from scratch. Ten years prior, a bottom-up movement of local initiatives started to develop, giving impetus to an overall

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[32] For a historical overview see: Dings (2009), 'Historic perspective 1900-2010', in 'Design and politics', edit by Henk Ovink & Elien Wierenga, O10 publishers. Rotterdam.

improvement of the architectural climate in the Netherlands (Ibidem). At the same time, debates were being held regarding the location of the new Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi)[33] (Ulzen, 2007, p. 171). Officially established in 1988, the NAi was the result of a merger between three existing architectural bodies that used to work in parallel to promote architectural initiatives with different publics and decided to merge to share resources and infrastructures (4.2)[34].

4.1 – The new building of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), opened in 1993

This architectural grassroots movement that occurred throughout the 1980s was also a reflection of the dissatisfaction with the quality of buildings and urban spaces developed in the preceding decades. A huge amount of low-quality housing had been developed during the 1970s, influenced by post-war housing models in which design was not valued by the market (Figueiredo, 2010b). This discontent reinforced the idea that design quality needed to be promoted, both socially and in market terms. Another important factor was the national restructuring of the Dutch cultural policy at the end of the 1980s, which led the then Minister for Culture and the Minister for Housing, Planning and Environment to work together on a joint architectural policy, adopted in 1991[35].

Since then, the Dutch government has renewed its architectural policy every four years to approve its multi-year policy budget, introducing new themes and updating its action plan. Its second policy, entitled '*Architecture of Space*', was adopted in 1996, widely expanding its policy scope, introducing the broader concept of 'spatial design' and focusing on the goal of promoting 'spatial quality' cross-cutting different disciplinary areas, such as architecture, urban planning, landscape and infrastructural design (Netherlands, 1996). One of its measures was to organize a European meeting on architecture policies, which was held one year later in Rotterdam under the Dutch EU Presidency and would lead to the EFAP network (see previous Section).

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[33] After a design competition and construction, the new building of the NAI would open its doors in 1993.

[34] Architecture Museum Foundation, Netherlands Centre for Architecture Documentation and Foundation "Housing/Living" (Stichting Wonen) (Figueiredo, 2010a).

[35] In 1989, Hedy d'Ancona (Minister of Culture) and J.G.M. Alders (Minister for Housing, Planning and Environment) followed up the idea of developing a joint Architectural policy that could politically frame 'The Netherlands Architecture Institute' (NAi) and bring building and culture policy closer by establishing a policy platform between the two ministries.

Following the Dutch example, several other European countries started to develop their own national architecture policy, namely Ireland (1996), Finland (1996), Sweden (1998), England (1999), Flanders (1999) and Scotland (2000). In Ireland, the idea of developing a policy originated from an conference held in Amsterdam in 1992, where board members of the Royal Institute of Architects first took note of the new Dutch policy. Back home, a small team was set up to persuade the Irish government to adopt an architecture policy (Bento, 2017, p. 173). In 1996, a consultation document was finally published that resulted in the adoption of a national policy on architecture, which recognized the importance of design quality for the Irish citizens (Ireland, 1996, p. 69)[36].

In Finland, also inspired by the Dutch policy, the policy process began with the appointment of a committee to prepare the first Finnish architectural policy in 1996. After an extensive round of comments on a draft version, the policy was officially adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1998. At the time, the Finnish policy was considered a reference document – being translated in several languages – because of its focus on young generations and on the importance of education for the creation of cultural values for the Finnish society (Finland, 1998). In a different approach, the Swedish parliament approved a Bill on architecture, entitled '*Forms for the Future - An action plan for Architecture and Design'*, in 1998 (see next section).
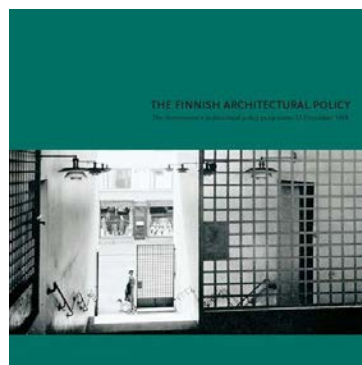
4.2 – Finnish Architectural policy (1998)

In England, following the work of the Urban Task Force, chaired by Richard Rogers, to devise a strategy to promote the urban revival of English cities and its concluding report '*Towards an Urban Renaissance'* (UTF, 1999), the government decided to set up the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in 1999, a new arm's length organization dedicated to championing, promoting, and advocating for design quality across government and beyond.

In 1999, inspired by the Dutch Chief Government Architect, the Flemish government (Belgium) decided to appoint a State Architect (Bouwmeester) as an independent expert to support public clients and champion design quality across regional and local governments, operating in conjunction with the Architecture Institute of Flanders (Bento, 2021)[37].

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[36] It was not until 2000 that an interdepartmental working group was established to define policy proposals and actions and, in 2002, Ireland's new policy on architecture was adopted under the title of *Action on Architecture 2002-2005*.

[37] For more information see: https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/

Finally, the development of the Scottish policy started in 1997 with the devolution process, where the first Government Programme included the specific initiative: *"to develop the first ever national policy on architecture'* (Scotland, 1999)[38]. In 1999, four months after the Scottish elections, the new Executive published a framework document for public consultation (Scotland, 1999). Under the coordination of the Chief Architect's Office, a series of public meetings was held across Scotland leading to the approval of the first Scottish architecture policy, in 2001.

Looking at the ten-year period since the first Dutch policy (1991), it is possible to note that the first two Dutch policies were highly influential in inspiring other European countries to develop their own national/regional architectural policies. The emergence of architecture as a new policy domain would pass from a national to a supranational concern with the holding of European meetings on the topic that led to the adoption of the EU *Council Resolution on Architectural Quality* in 2001 (see previous Section).

2.2 The dissemination of architecture policies across Europe

After the first wave of architectural policies and the adoption of the EU *Councill Resolution* in 2001, the number of EU Member States with national policies increased significantly. In the ten years between 2000 and 2010, Estonia (2002), Wales (2002), Luxembourg (2004), Lithuania (2005), Northern Ireland (2006), Denmark (2007), Norway (2009) and Latvia (2009) all adopted a policy. Following these trends, the EU Council adopted a second policy, the EU *Council Conclusion on Architecture* in 2008, that was referred to previously.

To take stock of the impact of the two pan-European policies on the progress of national/regional policies, the EFAP promoted a Survey on Architectural Policies in Europe, in 2011[39]. At the time of the survey, 18 administrations (including Iceland and Norway) had an official document on architectural policy, while 14 additional administrations were at different stages in producing one or were actively considering producing one. Analysing the different policy documents, the survey also identified different policy approaches that will be discussed in the next section.

The survey concluded that, "Looking at the progression of national architectural policies in the EU, like other public policies a process of Europeanization is occurring, where, through benchmarking, each country learns from the other and makes possible for greater convergence between the policies. Nevertheless, the nature and content of the policies cannot be divorced from the constitutional, administrative, and political framework in which the policy was developed". As such, the European resolutions seemed to be having an impact on encouraging states to promote design quality for improving their citizens quality of life (Bento 2012: 86).

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[38] The idea of a design policy in Scotland was in part influenced by several major events: the new Parliament building; the Glasgow year of architecture and the establishment of a national centre for architecture and design, The Lighthouse.

[39] The survey was published in book format with the support of the Swedish Museum of Architecture in 2012.

In the years that followed, several others European countries and regions also adopted their own architectural policies, namely: Croatia (2013), Hungary (2015), Czech Republic (2015), Portugal (2015), Austria (2017) and Catalonia (2017). In addition, several countries and regions that already had a policy in this domain, reviewed and adopted second or third generation policy documents (Denmark, Ireland, France, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Scotland, Sweden).

In 2019, a similar European Survey on Informal design governance tools was conducted under the Urban Maestro (UM) research project, that also covered high policies on architecture and built environment design (Bento & Carmona, 2020)[40]. The UM Survey confirmed the continuing spread and consolidation of architectural policies across Europe, identifying 28 administrations with an architectural policy while 6 referred that they were planning to develop one. The Survey concluded that the recent additions and those soon to be delivered meant that Europe is largely covered by such high-level architecture policies (4.3).
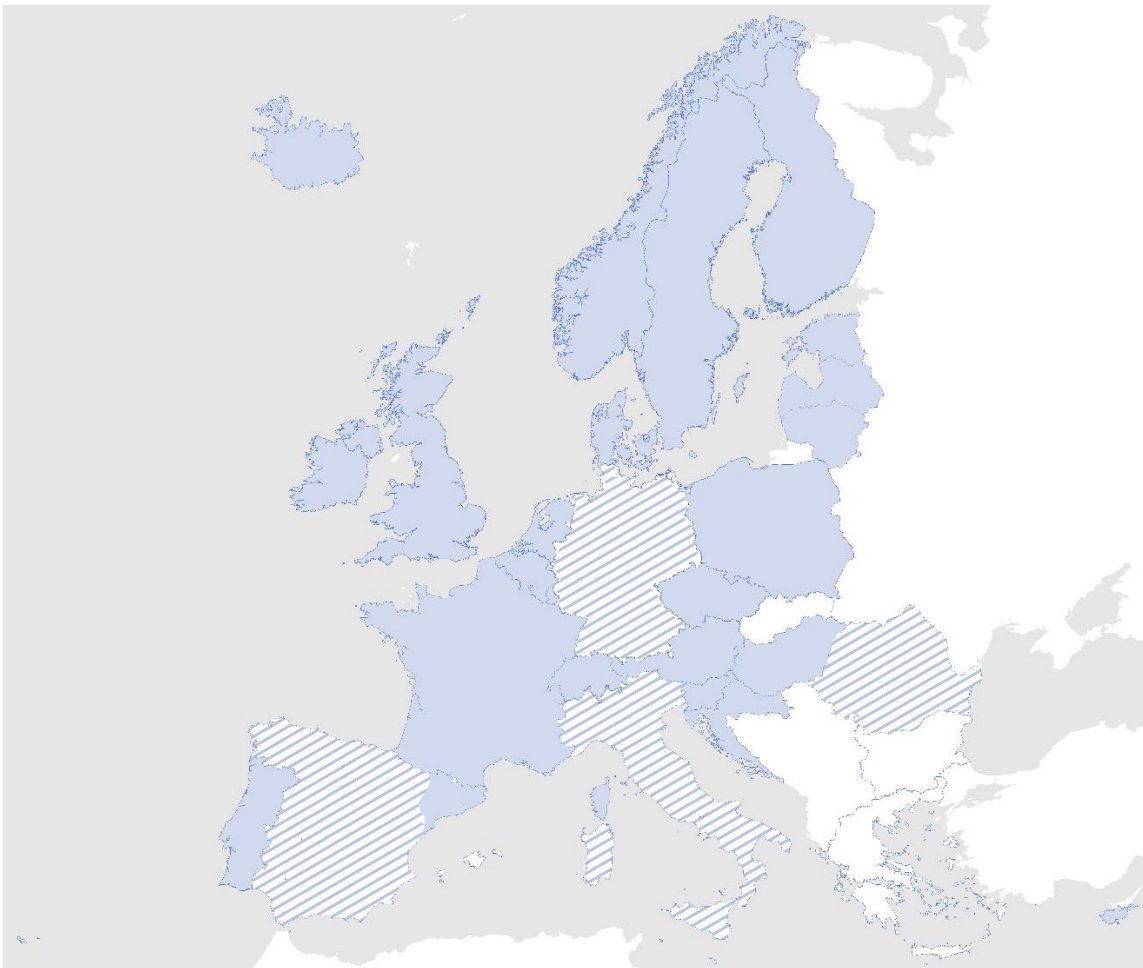
4.3 – European countries/regions with an official publication, memorandum, or policy (marked in blue), or planning to have one (marked in dashed), that outlines Government aspirations on architecture and built environment design (updated from: Bento & Carmona, 2020).

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[40] See Survey report at: https://urbanmaestro.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/um_survey-report.pdf

2.3 Policy approaches

After analysing and comparing the policy documents collected, the UM Survey divided the documents into three types, according to the nature of the documents (comprehensive, sectoral and institution-specific), which deliberately excluded policies in form of *legislation* because the study was focused on informal policies and tools. For the present report, to provide a more holistic panorama of architectural polices in Europe, merging the information collected by the EFAP survey and the UM Survey complemented by desktop research, the national/regional architectural policy documents can be classified in four main types:

a. *Legislation* (France, Lithuania, Catalonia, Sweden);

b. *Strategic comprehensive policy* (Austria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Hungary; Ireland; Latvia; Luxembourg; The Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Slovenia; Switzerland, Scotland / UK; Northern Ireland / UK; Iceland and Norway);

c. *Sectoral policy* (Cyprus; Malta; England / UK; Wales / UK; Wallonia/BE);

d. *Institution-specific* (Brussels-Capital/BE, Flanders/BE, Wallonia/BE, Poland).

The first type includes architectural policy documents of a *legislative nature*, which have a binding force and impose a set of principles on government and public administration. In all of these, the policies formalize the principle of public interest of architecture and, depending on the case, they may include norms to regulate the architect's profession; obligation for the building projects to be subscribed by architects; design quality principles; design competitions mandatory for public buildings, creation of advisory design boards, setting design awards, etc (see below).

The second type includes architectural policies of a *strategic nature with a comprehensive scope* that were adopted by the majority of countries with a formal policy on architecture, crossing a wide range of departments and involving a wide range of public and private actors in its implementation. Although this type of policies does not have binding force they establish high policy statements on design quality, define several objectives and establish a wide set of policy initiatives aimed at fostering spatial quality by improving the processes of design governance.

The third type includes policies with a sectoral approach that consists of official documents outlining governmental policy on architecture and urban design with a sectoral dimension (e.g., cultural, or urban planning). Finally, the fourth and last type includes policy documents that only cover the institution that developed them (e.g., chief government architect, arm's length organization, or architecture museum).

The distribution of European countries/regions in the four types mentioned above is based on their main policy approach. This means that most countries have adopted only one of the approaches, while others such as France, Lithuania or Ireland have gone for a mix of two or more types (see below).

Legislation

Only four states in Europe have adopted a national law on architecture. Due to its specificities, this section looks into each and identifies their main legislative features..

France

As mentioned earlier, France was the first European country to adopt a national policy on architecture with the approval of the Architectural Law in 1977. Besides proclaiming the public interest of Architecture, it established a new intervention framework and the modes to practice it. Although the architect's title was already protected by the creation of the Order of Architects in 1940, the intervention of the architect was not mandatory and the use of architectural services by clients and promoters was very limited (Brandão, 2004). The new Law made it mandatory for the architectural project to be signed by an architect for all building permits, with the exception of minor works and small buildings (with less than 170 square meters).

In addition, the French Law also set the different ways to practise the profession, according to which only registered architects can use the Title. The Law also obliges architectural societies to register in order to engage in the activities required by the profession. Additionally, it defines the organizational structure of the Order of Architects, responsible for the registration and the protection of the Title. Moreover, the Law established a Code of professional conduct and a chamber of discipline.

Finally, the 1977 Law established the basis for the Councils of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Environment (CAUE), that are non-profit organizations that provide design advice, develop didactic materials/publications, and promote public awareness and participation in the field of architecture, urban planning, and the environment. Operating at departmental level, the CAUE offer free design advice to local citizens and public officials, among other tasks, which indirectly contributes to the quality of the built environment. Currently, there are 93 CAUEs spread across all French departments[41].

Besides the above, the 1977 Law led to the creation of several institutions. Two of them play an important role in the French design governance system: the *Inter-Ministry Mission for Quality in Public Construction* (MIQCP) and the *Institut Français d'Architecture* (IFA). The MIQCP is a government architectural agency responsible for raising the general standard of all public architecture through the education and training of those who commission buildings. Another output of the Law was the creation of the IFA, in 1980, which is responsible for the dissemination of architectural knowledge to the wider public. In 2004, IFA merged with two other entities creating a new enlarged architectural centre: the *Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine[42]*.

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[41] In French, *Conseils d'Architecture, d'Urbanisme et Environment*. For more info see: http://www.fncaue.com/

[42] For more info see: https://www.citedelarchitecture.fr/fr

A second legislative policy with a strong impact on the design quality of public buildings in France was the MOP Act (the acronym MOP comes from the French expression '*Maitrise d'Ouvrage Public'*), published in 1985, which establishes the relations between public clients and private project consultants. Besides establishing public client responsibilities, the MOP Law established the extent of the mission of project consultants, which includes all preliminary studies, the different design phases during construction works (France, 1985). The MOP law defined that all architectural missions assigned by public bodies had to be complete assignments (Brandão, 2004). The MOP law applied to all contracts signed with public clients for carrying out new buildings, rehabilitation, or reuse works (Biau, 2002a).

A major innovation in the French Public procurement, besides the full architectural assignment, was the obligation to conduct architectural design competitions (Punter, 1999). In fact, design competitions have become mandatory for all new public buildings above a predefined threshold since 1980. Because of this rule, design competitions have spread out all over the country, and more than 1000 competitions are held each year, promoted by the national government department to the smallest municipality (Biau, 2002a). As mentioned above, the implementation of French public design competitions is overseen by MIQCP.

More recently, the French Government decided to develop a national comprehensive policy on architecture, which was formally adopted in 2015, establishing a strategic plan for architecture and setting several goals, complementing the Law, which is still in force (see next section).

Sweden

As referred earlier, the Swedish parliament approved a Bill on architecture, entitled *Forms for the Future - An action plan for Architecture and Design*, in 1998. The Act puts forward a number of goals to improve the quality of architecture and introduces aesthetic clauses in the planning and building act, Roads and Highways Act and the Railway Construction Act. One of the instruments predicted in the Swedish Act is that all state agencies involved in the construction and maintenance of buildings have to develop and report their own measures to improve quality of the built environment in their respective fields of responsibility (Sweden, 1998).

The approval of the Swedish architecture policy coincided with the opening of the new building of the Swedish Museum on Architecture, which was founded in the 1950s. In 2009, the government decided to broaden its scope to include other fields of spatial design, such as urbanism, architecture, landscape design, product design and digital media. In 2013, the government changed its name to '*Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design'* (ArkDes), with the mission of promoting the value of architecture and design to improve citizens' quality of life to positively raise design quality in Sweden by fostering a culture of design. This is done through exhibitions, events and debates, educational programmes, collection, and library, etc[43].

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[43] For more info: https://arkdes.se/

In 2017, almost twenty years later, the Council of Ministers adopted a new Bill for architecture and design, entitled "Policy for Designed Living Environment". Although adopted in the form of legislation, the Swedish policy tends to be very similar to a comprehensive architecture policy, focused on improving the quality of the built and non-built environment by promoting a culture of design excellence (Sweden, 2018). The new bill takes an integrated approach of the notion of architecture perceived as *'designed living environment'*, including architecture, form, design, art, and cultural heritage. It sets high ambitions and promotes the value of design quality "to create a sustainable, equitable and less segregated society with carefully designed living environments" (ibidem). The following six objectives were established:

- sustainability and quality are not made subservient to short-term financial considerations;

- knowledge in the fields of architecture and design is developed and disseminated;

- the public sector acts as a role model;

- aesthetic, artistic, and cultural assets are preserved and developed;

- environments are designed to be accessible for all; and

- cooperation and collaboration are developed both nationally and internationally (Ibid.).

Within this framework, the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) was given overall responsibility for the policy coordination, implementation monitoring, provision of competence support and promotion of initiatives to public actors at national, regional and local levels in matters of architecture and designed living environment. In 2019, Boverket established within its structure the position of a National State Architect to help implementing and supervising the policy, to provide design leadership and promote design excellence throughout public administration[44]. This will be reviewed in the next section.

Lithuania

Although Lithuania had already adopted a comprehensive architectural policy from 2005, the Lithuanian Ministry for Culture adopted a revised policy, entitled 'Guidelines for the Development of Architecture and Design', in 2015. The policy set the main governmental objectives, the role and importance of architecture in a social, educational, economic and cultural context[45]. One of the outputs of this policy was the development of the *Law on Architecture*, approved in 2017[46]. The purpose of the Architecture Law is to define and regulate the design governance process in the field of architecture in order to promote high-quality environments.

The Architecture Law is broadly divided into four main areas. The first part sets the requirements, conditions, and procedures for the training of architects and their qualifications. It also includes the rights and obligations of architects and the quality requirements applicable to their activity and

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[44] For example: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/national-architect-of-sweden/

[45] There was a previous policy from 2005, approved by Resolution No. 554.

[46] Reference: 2017 June 8 No. XIII-425

its results[47]. Within this block, it also defines the qualification requirements and competence (duties and functions) of Chief municipal architects operating in municipalities (article 10).

A second part of the Law establishes a set of design quality requirements to achieve well design buildings and spaces. First, that design proposals and urban development concepts must be signed by a certified architect. Second, the obligation of design competitions for the planning or design of buildings of architectural, urban, state, or public interest (article 13). Although a list of what is considered to be of public interest is provided, the specific works and buildings that must enter a design competition need to be adopted by each local authority. The Law also defines ten criteria to be used as reference when assessing design quality (article 11):

1. urban integrity;

2. compliance with the principle of sustainable development;

3. quality of construction and created environment (ergonomics), durability;

4. innovation (use of new technologies, materials, architectural, urban solutions);

5. preservation of immovable cultural heritage;

6. adaptation of the environment to citizens - application of the principles of design for all (universal design), ensuring the mobility of human flows and the accessibility of the projected objects;

7. architectural idea;

8. development of a functional building structure;

9. aesthetics;

10. rationality of decisions, considering the optimality of the ratio of the design price of the building and the project realization price.

A third part sets the architectural competences of the government, the municipalities, and the Chamber of Architects. It also establishes the Regional Councils of Architecture (RCA) to 'examine the areas of architecture, spatial planning, architectural and urban heritage and other issues related to architecture, to provide recommendations and proposals to state and municipal institutions by making decisions relating to architecture, and to assess the quality of architecture' (article 18). Like design advisory boards that exist elsewhere, RCA operate at regional level and are composed of at least 13 members appointed for a three-year period by different institutions.

The Chamber of Architects plays has a relevant role in the governance of the Law. The regulations and composition of the RCA shall be approved by the Chamber of Architects in coordination with the Ministries for Environment and Culture. In addition, the Chamber of Architects should define the harmonization of the rules and procedures of architectural competitions in coordination with the Ministry for Environment (article 13). Finally, it should represent and protect the public interest of architecture in court lawsuits, when necessary.

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[47] In 2006, the Lithuanian government approved a Law on Architects' Chamber that regulates the establishment, functions, activities, and management of the Architects' Chamber of Lithuania.

Catalonia (Spain)

In June 2017, inspired by the French Law described above, the Catalonia Parliament approved its Law on Architecture - the first of this kind in Spain - that proclaims architecture as an activity of general interest and the foundation for well-being and social cohesion. It sets that the government and public administrations should establish actions to foster and promote architectural and urban design quality and implement measures to promote the proper framework for action in public procurement and also as a benchmark for activities in the private sector (Catalonia, 2017)[48].

Although in the form of legislation[49], the document tends to be similar to a comprehensive policy as it sets out principles and goals – determining the public interest in architecture – as well as measures of dissemination, awareness, and knowledge of architecture. The Law firstly establishes the values inherent to architecture that should be used as reference when assessing design quality (Beirak, 2019)[50].

The first part of the Catalonia Law establishes several measures for the dissemination of knowledge and awareness raising initiatives to promote architecture quality, such as research and debate, publications, dissemination initiatives, teaching, etc. The second part focuses on the promotion of design quality in urban planning policy by furthering municipal ordinances that lay down concrete measures to improve and preserve architectural quality. In addition, it promotes the creation of awards and distinctions for good practices by stakeholders involved in the design process, establishing the 'Award for Architecture and Built Heritage'.

Finally, it introduces complementary regulations for procurement, establishing as a general principle that in tender processes quality criteria shall prevail over price. It defines that design public tenders should be in the two-round design competition and makes mandatory the establishment of juries in design tender processes to ensure that the best bid is chosen, as well as the transparency and obligatory disclosure of jury minutes and of the bids presented. (Ibidem).

As governance model, the Law creates the *Council of Architectural and Urban Quality of Catalonia*, an advisory and consultative body of the Catalonia administration on design quality. Among other tasks, the Council should propose the criteria and technical content in terms of design quality that must be taken into account by the competent bodies in the management and contracting of architectural works. In addition, it should carry out annual evaluation reports of the results of the Architectural law. It also establishes the possibility for municipalities to create similar consultative bodies for architectural and urban quality (Ibid.).

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[48] Catalonia is one of the 17 Spanish autonomous communities. See: https://web.gencat.cat/

[49] Adopted in the form of Law with the Catalan reference: Ley 12/2017 de la Arquitectura de Cataluña.

[50] This include the following: a) The suitability and technical quality of the constructions; b) Improving people's quality of life, ensuring their well-being and comfort; c) The contribution to social cohesion and citizens relationship with artistic and cultural dimension; d) Adaptation to the environment and landscape of urban settlements or open spaces; e) Sustainability in the environmental, economic and social aspects, energy efficiency, etc; f) Beauty and artistic interest.

Strategic comprehensive policies

The second and most common type across Europe is the *strategic comprehensive policy* on architecture (see 4.4). While the legislative approach was only adopted by a reduced number of countries, the *strategic comprehensive policy* was adopted by most of the countries probably due to its strategic and informal nature (not binding).

Year	Country	Policy document
1991	Netherlands	Space for Architecture
1996	Denmark	Architecture 1996
1997	Netherlands	The Architecture of Space
1997	Norway	Aesthetics in Government Building and Constructions
1998	Finland	The Finish Architectural Policy
2001	Netherlands	Shaping the Netherlands
2001	Scotland	A Policy on Architecture for Scotland
2002	Estonia	The Architectural Policy of Estonia
2002	Ireland	Action on Architecture: 2002 – 2005
2004	Luxembourg	Pour une Politique architecturale
2005	Lithuania	Architectural Policy Trends in the Republic of Lithuania
2005	Netherlands	Architecture and Belvedere Policy
2006	Northern Ireland	Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland
2007	Denmark	Nation of Architecture
2007	Iceland	Icelandic Government Policy on Architecture
2007	Scotland	Building our Legacy. Statement on Scotland's Architectural policy
2009	Netherlands	Culture of Design. 2009-2012
2009	Ireland	Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality in the Built Environment
2009	Latvia	Architectural policy Guidelines 2009 – 2015
2009	Norway	Architecture.now
2013	Croatia	Architectural Policies of the Republic of Croatia. 2013–2020.
2013	Netherlands	Building on the Strength of Design 2013-2016
2013	Scotland	Creating Places – A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland
2014	Denmark	Danish Architectural Policy. Putting people first
2015	France	Stratégie Nationale pour l'Architecture
2015	Hungary	National Architectural Policy
2015	Portugal	Política Nacional de Arquitectura e Paisagem
2015	Lithuania	Guidelines for the Development of Architecture and Design
2017	Netherlands	Working together on design strength 2017-2020
2017	Austria	Federal guidelines on Baukultur
2020	Switzerland	Strategie Baukultur
2021	Netherlands	Spatial Design Action Program 2021-2024
2022	Finland	Sustainable Architecture

4.4 – List of strategic comprehensive architectural policies in Europe (updated from Bento, 2012)

Although each policy has its own characteristics, a comprehensive architectural policy can be described as an official policy of high-level strategic orientation dealing with the design of the built environment in a holistic or cross-sectorial manner, where the government defines the main goals and objectives to promote design quality in architecture, urban design and cultural heritage which are then implemented by public authorities within their jurisdiction (Bento, 2017).

If one compares the different policy documents, it becomes clear that policies are based on a broad notion of architecture, which encompasses not only buildings but also public spaces and all built elements that compose human settlements. Architecture is a polysemic term and can have very different interpretations according to the context in which it is used. This semantic divide is exacerbated in contexts with a strong professional divide. Traditionally, architecture was mainly seen as building design. When considering a broad definition, architecture constitutes a vital part of public policies, like housing and building, urban policy, environmental and landscape policy.

Looking across the different policy documents, it is possible to observe that the policy scope has been expanding. Over the years, the policies started to include other related concepts that could better convey the inter-disciplinary nature of built environment, such as spatial design in the Netherlands, place in Anglo-Saxon countries and *baukultur* in the Germanic states, now widely used with the Davos Declaration on Baukultur (see previous Section).

| Country	Initial scope		New concepts
Netherlands	Architecture and urban design	+	Spatial design
England	Architecture and the built environment	»	Place-making
Scotland	Architecture	+	Place
Germany	Architecture and building culture	=	Baukultur
Sweden	Architecture and design	»	Designed environment
Portugal	Architecture and the built environment	»	Architecture and landscape

+ more   » expanded to   = equivalente

4.5 – Expansion of the scope of comprehensive architectural policies (Source: João Bento)

All policies present a common discourse that proclaims the value of architecture for the quality of life of citizens and claims that the government has the responsibility for promoting high-quality places. Adding to this, some polices refer that a good living environment is a constitutional right of all citizens while others defend that developing an architectural policy will provide better coherence between sectoral policies. To this extent, it is possible to identify four main arguments to adapt an architectural policy: a) architecture is a matter of public interest; b) government responsibility; c) right to a good living environment; and d) better policy efficiency.

A third issue that is similar across the documents is that all policies aim to improve the quality of the built environment. However, design quality as an issue of public concern can be considered a complex social problem, as it is rooted in a wide range of causes involving both private and public actors (Cousins, 2009). As such, all policies emphasize the importance of creating a favourable climate for good design through the implementation of a diversified policy agenda.

The specific way in which architectural polices intend to achieve their aims is influenced by the context in which they are produced, such as legal and administrative traditions, cultural background of the people involved and a particular period in time. Although the range of the policy target areas differ for each policy, it is possible to identify six main policy dimensions: 1) leading by example; 2) internationalization of architecture; 3) urban planning; 4); awareness and knowledge 5) architectural heritage; 6) sustainability and resilience (Bento, 2017).
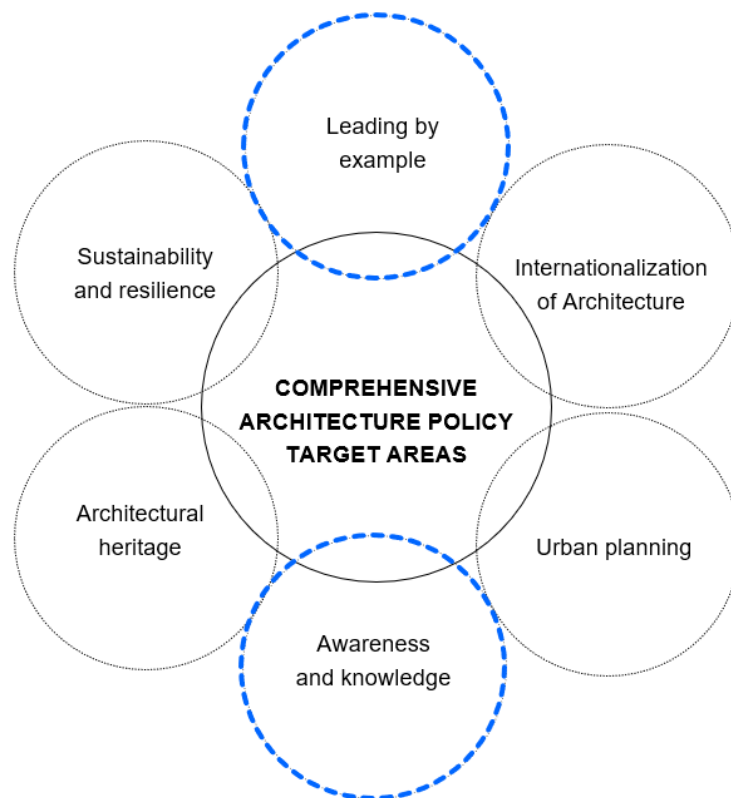
4.6 – Architectural policies main areas of intervention (source: João Bento)

In general terms, the first and the fourth target areas have been the backbone of almost all architectural policies, whereas the remaining four areas have been present at different degrees according to the time period in which they were created. For example, in Finland, information and education on architecture is part of the educational programme. Another example is the inclusion of sustainability and resilience objectives as a reaction to climate change issues. In some policies, reuse and vacancy have become the dominant concern, replacing more traditional themes relating to cultural heritage.

Sectoral policies

The third type consists of official documents outlining governmental policy on architecture and urban design with a sectoral dimension. Although other countries may also have official design policies with a sectoral dimension, only five administrations made explicit reference to them in the UM survey: Cyprus, Malta, England (UK), Wales (UK) and Wallonia (Belgium).

Cyprus

In Cyprus, design policies are included in all statutory spatial development plans that are prepared under the Town and Country Planning Law, which include Local Plans, Area Schemes, and the Policy Statement for the Countryside. All of these instruments contain policies on architectural quality and include an Annex with *Principles and Guidelines for the Aesthetic Improvement and Upgrading of the Quality of the Built Environment*. Most of these were introduced in the 1990s and significantly developed in the decade after 2010. In addition, a separate national policy on architectural competitions for public buildings has been adopted.

England (UK)

Although government guidance on design in England goes back to at least 1966 (for history of aesthetic control in England, see: Punter, 1986) one of the first attempts to define a national design policy in England was launched in 1994 by John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, with the title *Quality in Town and Country*. The initiative intended to raise awareness and promote understanding of the importance of good design and quality in buildings and in the built environment as a whole (England, 1994). One of its main initiatives was the *Urban Design Campaign*, launched in June 1995 to encourage a wider debate, particularly at the local level, about urban design and its contribution to enhancing the built environment and promoting the exchange of ideas, proposals and local experience and thereby drawing attention to urban design considerations at an early stage of the development process.

In 1999, the government established the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), a national body devoted to championing design quality (Macmillan, 2004). Over its 11 years of operation, CABE has made a huge effort to raise the standards of design quality in the built environment, championing and advocating design quality and researching and producing evidence on the value of good design (Carmona et al., 2017). However, in 2011, the Government of the time removed CABE's funding to reduce public spending. As a reaction, several institutions and individuals have come together as the *Place Alliance* to promote better places and quality environments and press for political action from the government. This is a loose network of interested parties with a mission to campaign for place quality in England, largely through the production and dissemination of research evidence[51].

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[51] For more information: http://placealliance.org.uk/

In 2018, the English government planning policies established a framework setting out national expectations on design. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that design quality matters and that planning authorities should drive up standards across all forms of development, providing associated national guidance, which includes a *National Design Guide* (2020) and a *National Model Design Code* (2021), to support the use of design codes in the planning system[52]. In 2021, amongst other initiatives, the English Government set up a new *Office for Place* to lead and foster a larger culture change on design.

<u>Wales (UK)</u>

In 2002, the Welsh government reinforced architectural and design concerns in the *Technical Advice Note 12: Design,* aimed at providing advice on how to promote 'sustainability through good design' as part of the planning process[53]. Since its adoption, TAN 12 has undergone several revisions, the latest of which in March 2016.

4.7 – Welsh *Technical Advice Note 12: Design* (versions 2009 and 2016)

Also in 2002, the Welsh Government established a *Design Commission for Wales* (DCFW) to champion high standards in architecture and urban design to enhance the built environment in Wales. In order to do so, it provides design advice to the public and private sectors and promotes and campaigns for the benefits of good design across the country. In the former, DCFW provides design support for commissioned clients by helping and guiding them during the early stages of the brief's development as well as assistance in securing the right design team and national design review services for early consultation on plans and projects, plus access to independent multi-disciplinary experts. DCFW also offers specialized training for local authorities, professionals, and practitioners (e.g., accreditation for Building for Life 12 Wales)[54]. For the latter, it organizes and promotes several events and networks to raise awareness, stimulate wider debate and communicate the benefits of good design. In addition, it produces a wide range of publications and online case studies about design and the design process.

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[52] For more information: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design

[53] For more information: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan12/?lang=en

[54] For more information: https://dcfw.org/

<u>Wallonia (Brussels)</u>

In 2007, the Wallonia government (French-speaking community in Belgium) established the 'Architecture Unit" (Cellule architecture). Although it does not have the same mission and competences of the Flemish State Architect (see below), the Architecture Unit aims to promote architectural quality articulated through three main objectives:

1. *Guarantee architectural quality in buildings and spaces accessible to the public*. To achieve this, the Architecture Unit has developed a series of standard documents in the form of a practical guide to facilitate the work of local operators (choice of procedure, terms of reference, timeline, organization of the jury, pre-analysis framework for the files, attribution, etc.). It also provides a support service to public clients for the designer designation contracts (assistance with the drafting of programs, identification of constraints, establishment of favourable conditions for the smooth running of teams' competition, communication, etc.).

2. *Support and develop the integration of works of art in public buildings*; for which we will not go into detail here, and finally,

3. *Promote architecture as a cultural discipline* through a policy of implementation and support for both public and private initiatives involved in the identification, promotion and enhancement of architecture and associated disciplines.

In this framework, the Ministry for Culture adopted a Wallonia cultural policy in 2017 under the title "Cultural entrepreneurship and methods of financing culture", establishing the financial framework for the different cultural sectors including the role of architecture as a cultural discipline[55].

Institution-specific policies

The fourth and last type includes policies that highlight the importance of design quality but committing only the public institution that developed it. This is the case of State Architect offices or dedicated design institutions that produce their own policy documents, such as a policy vision for their mandate to renew their budget, policy guidance or political manifestos (see below).

<u>Flanders (Belgium)</u>

In 1999, the Flemish Government appointed the Government Architect (Bouwmeester) to provide long-term support to the regional government in preparing and implementing an architectural policy that promotes high-quality environments in Flanders (Schreurs, 2000: 63). Within this remit, every four years, the Flemish Government Architect presents a policy document to be approved by the government. The latest policy document is entitled: 'Ambition memorandum of the Flemish Government Architect 2020-2025: *Creating opportunities for meeting'*.

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[55] Ministère de la Culture de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles entitled: "Bouger la lignes, Coupole - Entrepreneuriat culturel et modes de financement de la culture", 2017.
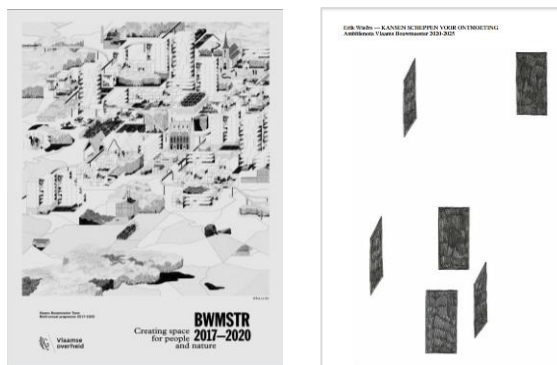
4.8 – The latest two policies of the Flemish Government Architect (2017-20 / 2020-2025)

Brussels-Capital (Belgium)

Similar to the case of Flanders, the Brussels-Capital Government created the position of Chief Architect (Bouwmeester Maître Architecte – BMA) in 2009. The mission of Chief Architect and his team is to ensure the quality of urban space, both architecturally and in terms of urban planning and public space design in the Brussels-Capital Region, thus driving forward Brussels' ambitions in urban development. The Chief Architect is an independent position, whereas his team is employed by the region planning authorities. He is also responsible for assisting, advising, and encouraging public and private clients, using a variety of tools (see next Section)[56].

The Chief Architect also issues a policy document that must be submitted to the government. The latest is entitled, "*Note d'orientation*", and establishes the key principles for its mandate 2020-24.
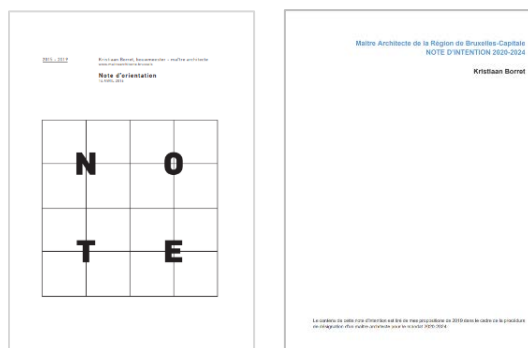
4.9 – The two latest policies of the Chief Architect of Brussels-Capital (2015-19 / 2020-24)

Ireland

Despite the existence of a National Policy on Architecture (see previous section), under the responsibility of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Arts Council decided to adopt its own architectural policy. After a two-stage consultation process, the Arts Council of Ireland adopted an architecture policy, entitled *Championing Architecture*, in 2021. The policy lays out a vision for Ireland and sets a strategic action plan to champion architecture culture and promote the benefits of high-quality architecture.

[56] For more information: http://bma.brussels/

4.10 – The Architectural Policy of the Arts Council of Ireland (2021-25)

The Irish Arts Council has been delivering a funding programme since 2010, under the title '*Engaging with Architecture Scheme*'. The objective of the scheme is to support innovative and high-quality initiatives that specifically aim to enhance and extend the public's experience of and engagement with architecture. The scheme finances cultural projects and initiatives, and is open to individuals, local authorities, and organizations[57].

Poland

In 2016, the Polish Government established the *National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning* (NAU), to disseminate and popularize knowledge on architecture and urban planning across the country. Acting as a state-owned cultural institution, NAU promotes campaigns, exhibitions, educational and editorial activities, with the aim of raising awareness and promoting a culture of design quality. In 2020, NAU published a manifesto on the importance of an architectural policy, gathering several critical analysis and contributions to the definition and implementation of a national policy on architecture in Poland (Chwaliboga, 2020).
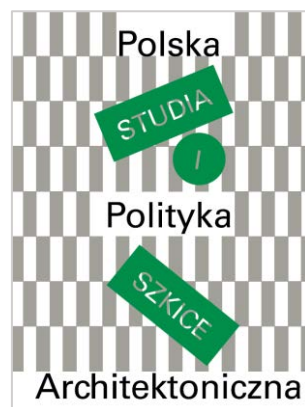

4.11 – Cover of the NAU's manifesto on architecture policy (2020)

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[57] For more info: https://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/engaging-with-architecture-scheme/

2.4 Implementation progress of policies

Looking at the empirical data, it is relevant to emphasize that in the last 30 years there has been a remarkable growth in the number of countries that have developed a formal policy on architecture at national and regional level. This number has been increasing since the early 1990s and is expected to continue to grow in the following years. Despite the differences in approaches, Europe will soon be covered with national/regional policies on architecture.
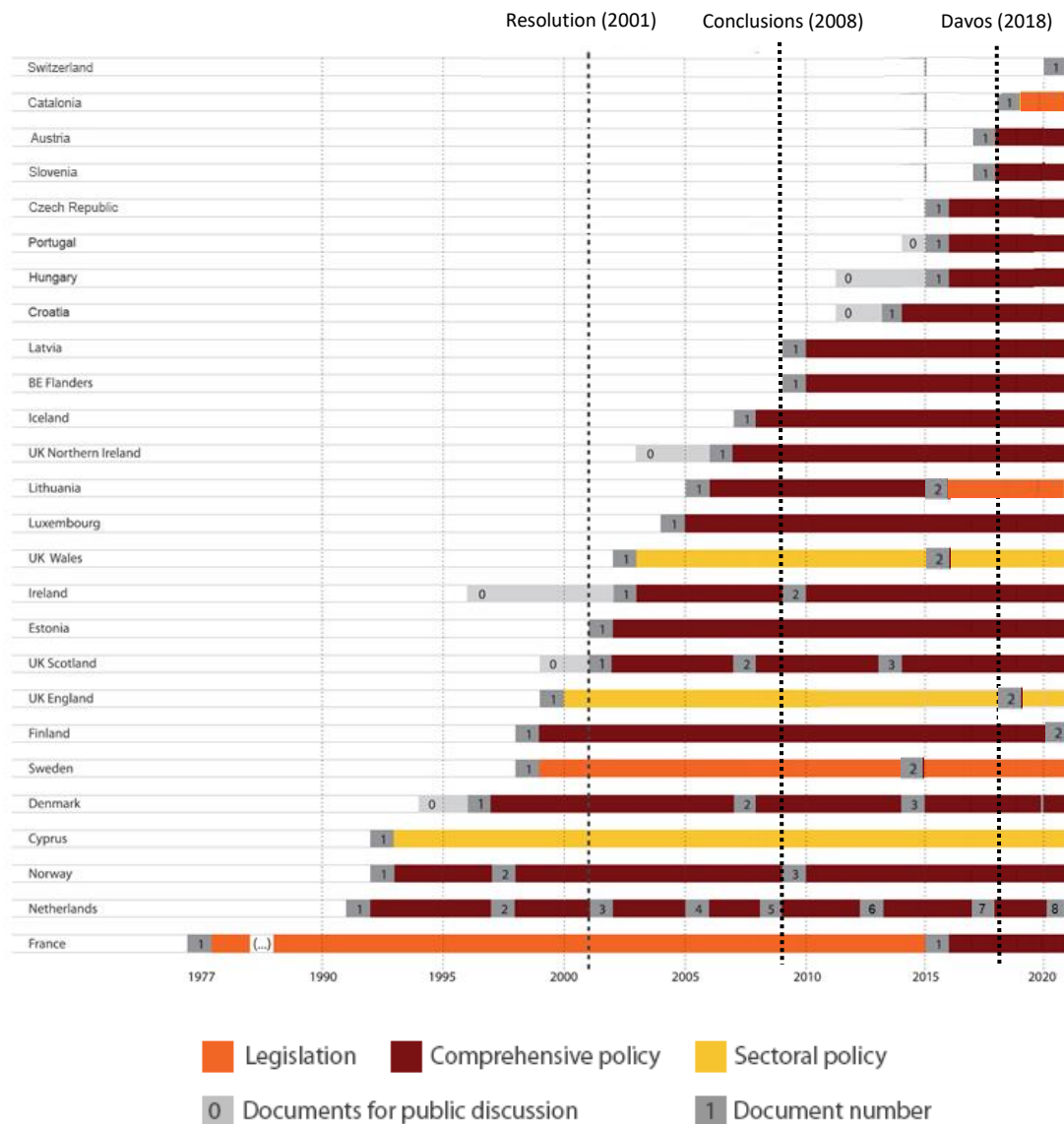
4.12 – Progression of architectural policy documents in Europe (adapted from Bento, 2012)

The past Survey (2012:86) concluded that "Looking at the progression of national architectural policies in the EU, like other public policies a process of Europeanization is occurring, where, through benchmarking, each country learns from the other and makes a greater convergence between the policies possible. Nevertheless, the nature and content of the policies cannot be divorced from the constitutional and political framework in which the policy was developed".

As such, the pan-European soft policy discussed in the previous Section – Resolution (2001), Conclusions (2008) and Davos Declaration (2018) – seemed to be having a positive impact on encouraging states to promote architectural quality as a precondition for improving the quality of life of their citizens, through architectural policies and a diversified mix of policy tools.

Although there is no space in this report to provide a systematic analysis about the policy making process and the main differences among the policies, the following findings can be highlighted:

- Despite having a national Law on Architecture since 1977, after a long preparation and several reports (Castelo Branco, 2021), the French government adopted a *National Strategy for Architecture* for the first time in 2015. The policy document establishes six objectives, most of them similar to comprehensive policies of other countries, including an aspiration of raising awareness and developing knowledge on architecture among the general public and all public and private urban stakeholders. This breaks down into 30 more concrete measures.
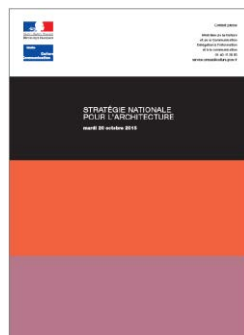

4.13 – Cover of the French National Strategy of Architecture (2015)

- In the case of Lithuania, although it had a comprehensive policy from 2005, the government adopted a *National Law on Architecture* in 2017 (see section 4.2);

- After a long period of preparation, Portugal also adopted its first policy in 2015. In the European context, the Portuguese national policy is exceptional in combining architecture and landscape policy, aiming at protecting the ecological function of the landscape, improving the quality features of built-up areas, and promoting the identity of place (Portugal, 2015) [58].

- More recently, countries that had not yet adopted an architectural policy due to its federal governmental system have also joined the group. In 2017, the Austrian Council of Ministers adopted its first national *Federal Guidelines on Building Culture* to comprehensively "promote building culture and create a broader societal awareness of its principles, especially among leaders in politics, business, and administration" (Austria, 2017). To achieve this, it is argued

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[58] In the same year, Czech Republic (2015) and Hungary (2015) also approved their policies.

that a comprehensive strategy is needed at federal level that will anchor building culture across all departments and disciplines at federal, provincial, and local levels.
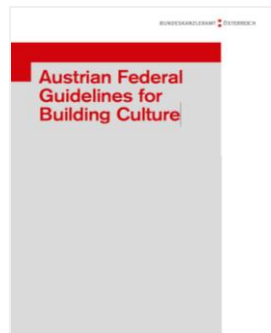
4.14 – Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture (2017)

- Outside the EU, three countries have adopted architectural policies (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). In 2020, the Swiss Federal Council formally adopted its first '*Interdepartmental strategy for the promotion of building culture*". Arguing that to achieve a high-quality building culture (Baukultur) the federal government should set the example, the policy connects all design related operations of the different federal offices, defining seven strategic goals and 41 measures, with aspects of public engagement, capacity-building, and cooperation[59].

- 13 administrations are still in the first generation of their architectural policies;

- Several countries have reviewed their architectural policies: The Netherlands have reviewed their architectural policies every 5 years; Denmark, Ireland, England (UK), Wales (UK). Scotland (UK), Sweden and Norway have reviewed their policy documents but with different time schedules. For example, after more than twenty years, Finland adopted in 2022 a second and revised policy, focused on sustainability concerns.

4.15 – Cover of the Finnish Architectural policy (2022)

- Before the adoption of the Council Resolution on Architectural Quality in 2001, only 8 states had adopted an official architectural policy; after the Resolution and until the Conclusions on Architecture (2008), another 8 states have adopted an official document;

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[59] For more information: https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/de/home/kulturerbe/zeitgenoessische-baukultur.html

- After the adoption of the Council Conclusions on Architecture (2008), until the Davos Declaration (2018), 8 states have adopted an official document on architectural policy. After the Davos Declaration (2018) another two states have also joined the group.

Administrations planning to develop a policy

In the group of administrations that do not have an official policy document on architecture and design of the built environment, four administrations have mentioned that they are planning to adopt one in the near future: Germany, Italy, Romania, and Spain. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it will be a consensual or speedy process. As with all public policies, busy governmental agendas, different perspectives of what the policy objectives should be, electoral cycles, and economic cycles, can all delay the policy process (Bento, 2017). In this group of administrations, Germany is pursuing a building culture (Baukultur) approach, similar to Austria, as Italy and Spain are pursuing a legislative approach, similar to France and Lithuania.

Germany

Since 2000, Germany has been very active in promoting discussions, debates and publications on architecture and building culture under the concept of building culture (b*aukultur)*[60]. In 2000, the German Federal Building Ministry launched *The Architecture and Baukultur Initiative* to stimulate and focus public discussion of the quality of planning and building in Germany. The initiative promoted a series of workshops and events addressing Baukultur in Germany. Two reports were published, the first in 2001, entitled, *Status Report on Building Culture in Germany. Initial Situation and Recommendations*; and the second in 2005, entitled *2nd Status Report on Building Culture in Germany – Information, arguments, and concepts*[61].

In 2006, the German Federal government approved an Act establishing the Federal Foundation for Baukultur[62]. The Foundation is based in Potsdam and works as an independent and active platform for all issues relating to architecture and Baukultur (see Section 4.2.3). During the meeting of the European Forum for Architectural Policies held in Hamburg in April 2007, the federal government promoted a third publication, entitled *Baukultur! – Planning and Building in Germany*. In 2015, the Foundation published its first biennial report (2014-15), repeating this status reports every two years, the latest of which was published in 2020.

In 2019, the German federal government announced its intention to develop a national policy document on *baukultur* to be submitted for public consultation. The process is still being prepared and there is no official policy yet. Nonetheless, the Federal Government supports several initiatives related to it, such as the *International Building Exhibitions* (IBA)[63].

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[60] The German expression *Baukultur* is a broad concept that can be translated into English as *Building Culture*, which includes all aspects of the built environment, such as the spatial, infrastructure, social and economic context of towns, cities, and cultural landscapes. Therefore, the concept integrates architecture, civil engineering, urban and regional planning, heritage conservation interests, landscape architecture, interior design, and art for public buildings.

[61] GERMANY, Status Report on Building Culture in Germany. Initial Situation and Recommendations; German Ministry for Transport, Building and Housing, Berlin, 2001.

[62] For more information: http://www.bundesstiftung-baukultur.de/

[63] For more information: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/international-building-exhibition-iba/

4.16 – *Baukultur* reports in Germany (2014, 2016 and 2020).

Italy

Following a legislative approach, the Italian Council of Ministers approved a Bill on Architectural Quality (Legge-Quadro Sulla Qualità Architettonica) in 2008. The Bill was sent to the Italian Senate but did not receive approval[64]. In 2018, following other initiatives, the Congress of the National Council of Architects approved a manifesto asking for a Law on Architecture. This was followed by a civil movement lead by the MAXXI National Museum of 21st Century Arts that promotes the establishment of an Italian Law for Architecture[65]. More recently, in December 2020, the Higher Council for Public Works (CSLP) approved the *draft Guidelines for the Quality of Architecture (Linee guida per la qualità dell'Architettura)* prepared by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage. It is expected that the Guidelines will be formally adopted soon.

Spain

In 2020, inspired by the Regional Catalan Law described in section 4.2, the Spanish Ministry for Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda launched a public consultation to inform the legislative development of a future Law on Architecture Quality[66]. In January 2022, the draft Law on Architecture Quality (Ley de Calidad de la Arquitectura) has been approved by the Council of Ministers and sent to the National Parliament. The draft law establishes the public interest of architecture and introduces a few changes to the legal framework to enhance the architectural quality of public buildings and the built environment. Among other measures, it defines the creation of two new bodies, the 'House of Architecture' and the 'Architecture Quality Council'.

Romania

In June 2019, the Romanian Order of Architects (OAR) and the Ministry for Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP) signed a joint statement for a national architecture policy in Romania aimed at developing a framework for an open decision-making process, based on principles and providing tools that help raise the quality of the built environment in Romania.

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[64] The 2008 Italian Bill on Architecture established instruments for the promotion of architectural quality, such as competitions, prizes to young professionals, the obligation for the government to allocate 2% of spending on new buildings for the addition of works of art, a three-year plan for architectural quality in public buildings, etc.

[65] For more information: http://www.versounaleggeperlarchitettura.it/

[66] For more information: https://leyarquitectura.mitma.es/

3. ACTORS AND POLICY TOOLS

Following the review of the European and national policies on architecture, this section is twofold: the first part identifies the institutional actors responsible for policy implementation as well as the main types of dedicated design institutions in Europe; the second part explores the different informal policy tools at their disposal, based on a typology of urban design governance tools.

3.1 Institutional actors

The search for better designed environments has long been a legitimate concern of the state (Carmona, 2016). In general terms, this concern has been materialized in planning policies and development control mechanisms through which the public sector exerts an important influence on the built environment and on the development process, much of which is exercised at local level. As such, the built environment is affected by a huge number of policies of the different sectors and levels of the administration, each affecting the quality of architecture in its own specific mode.

In this context, one of the main issues that architectural policies have to face with respect to their implementation strategies is how to influence different state departments and improve the co-ordination of the wide range of policies that affect the built environment. To do so, some countries / regions have a specific department / division to push for and monitor the policy implementation, sometimes involving inter-departmental commissions. Others have appointed a State Architect team to lead a design agenda, while others delegate part of its policy to non-governmental / arm's-length organizations, to deliver a wide set of cultural initiatives on design.

Departments responsible for architectural policy

One of the first goals of the EFAP Survey (2012) was to identify the public departments responsible for the government's policy on architecture in each Member State, and as a result, to clarify if architectural policy was the responsibility of a single department of if it was a shared responsibility between several departments. Looking at the findings of the Survey (2012), it was possible to verify that in the 37 states surveyed, 16 administrations had a specific department responsible for the architectural policy whereas in the remaining 21 the architectural policy was a responsibility shared by several departments (5.1).

	Austria	BE Wallonie-Brussels	BE Flanders	Bulgaria	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	UK England	UK Scotland	UK Northern Ireland	UK Wales	Croatia	Iceland	FYROM	Turkey	Norway	Switzerland
Yes		●					●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●									●	●	●	●	●						●	
No	●		●	●	●	●						●				●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●						●	●	●	●	●		●

5.1 – Does a specific department/division in charge of architectural policy exist? (Source: Bento, 2012)

Considering the location of the departments inside the administrative structures, it is possible to verify that in the countries that have a specific department, the majority of the departments are located within the scope of the Ministries for Culture / Arts. Nonetheless, in Germany and in Lithuania the competent bodies operate within the scope of the Ministries for the Environment / Urban Development; in Hungary architecture falls within the sphere of activity of the Ministry for the Interior. In the 21 administrations in which architectural policy is a responsibility shared by two or more departments, the policy responsibility in most cases is divided between the Ministry for Culture / Arts and the Ministry for the Environment / Urban Development[67] (5.2).

	Austria	BE Wallonie-Brussels	BE Flanders	Bulgaria	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	UK England	UK Scotland	UK Northern Ireland	UK Wales	Croatia	Iceland	FYROM	Turkey	Norway	Switzerland
Culture (a)	●		●			●	●	●	●	●				●	●			●		●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●					●	
Environment (b)						●					●						●	●	●		●				●	●						●			●	●	
Public Works (c)					●																	●			●										●	●	
Interior						●							●																								
Other	●	●	●														●	●														●					
No information				○								○								○												○	○				○

(a) Also designated as Ministry for Culture, Education and/or Arts.

(b) Also designated as Ministry for Environment and Urban Development and / or Regional Development.

(c) Also designated as Ministry for Infrastructures and/or Building / Housing.

NOTE: The present table is a generalization. In some cases, it does not correspond exactly to the name of the Ministry.

5.2 – Ministry responsible for the architectural policy (Source: Bento, 2012)

Only in Luxembourg is the responsibility divided between three Ministries: Culture / Arts, Environment / Urban Development and Interior. In countries with a federal system, the national government does not have exclusive powers on architectural policy, which means that the federal government will have an indirect influence - through legislation, guidelines, and subsidies - on federal provinces due to their large autonomy on these matters (Switzerland, Germany and Austria).

In the cases where the responsibility for the architectural policy lies with a specific department (16 administrations), it is possible to observe that the scope and configuration of the departments is diverse and includes other duties besides architectural policy. Nonetheless, some countries, such as France, Hungary, or Wallonia (Belgium) have a specific division solely dedicated to architecture policy. The majority of these specific departments (11 administrations) fall under the scope of Cultural Ministries, generally associated with cultural heritage or arts policy. In some instances, the responsibility rests with other Ministries such as the Ministry for the Environment (5.3).

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[67] In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and in Turkey, the responsibility is shared by the Ministry for Public Works and the Ministry for the Environment / Urban Development.

Country / Region	Name
Belgium / Wallonie-Brussels	Architectural Cell
Denmark	Art and Education
Estonia	Department of Arts
Finland	Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy
France	General Direction of Heritage
Germany	Unit Baukultur, Protection of the Architectural Urban Heritage
Hungary	National Chief Architect's Office
Ireland	The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Italy	Landscape, Fine Arts, Contemporary Architecture and Art
Lithuania	Territorial Planning, Urban Development and Architecture
Spain	General Direction for Architecture and Housing
Sweden	Division for Cultural Heritage
United Kingdom / England	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
United Kingdom / Scotland	Architecture and Place Division
United Kingdom / Northern Ireland	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Norway	Deparments for the Arts

5.3 – Name of specific departments in charge of architectural policy (Source: Bento, 2012)

Although the Ministries for Culture have important competences in promoting architectural quality, protecting architectural heritage, and supporting the arts and creativity, namely through the direct patronage of bodies and institutions, they present some limitations with regard to their capacity to influence the policy of other relevant departments, such as spatial planning, public works, or transports. As Michael O'Doherty (EFAP 2005) notes:

> 'the limited influence of many Cultural Ministers was noted in terms of ensuring that architectural quality and the specific nature of architectural services as a cultural activity are taken into consideration in national policies and particularly in development programmes (…) and to make contracting authorities more aware of and better trained in the appreciation of architectural, urban and landscape culture'.

This is particularly relevant in the building policy, in which Ministries for Culture responsible for the architectural policy are not directly engaged in the procurement processes. As such, their sphere of influence in procurement operational areas of other departments can be limited or non-existent, particularly when cross-sectoral communication mechanisms are not yet operational or are not fully developed (Ibidem). In the case of urban planning, the same difficulties also apply, as their operationalization occurs mostly at local level, within local authorities.

Some countries established a dedicated institution to promote design quality across the public administration, This is the case of the French Inter-ministerial Mission for the Quality of Public Buildings (MIQCP), created in 1977. MIQCP aims to promote quality in the public construction sector, which is supposed to include any new or maintenance work on buildings, infrastructures, and open spaces under the responsibility of the State or local authorities, mainly by bringing together different actors involved in built environment projects[68].

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[68] For more information see: http://www.miqcp.gouv.fr/index.php?lang=en

Some countries have created inter-departmental committees / platforms to ensure good cooperation / coordination between the different administrative sectors. It is the case of the Netherlands and Ireland, which have created inter-ministerial architectural policy platforms (see 5.4). For example, in 2017, Portugal created an Architecture and Landscape Monitoring Committee, encompassing stakeholders from two Ministries – Environment and Culture – and two professional bodies – the Order of Architects and the Portuguese Association of Landscape Architects — which is in charge of setting the policy action plan, monitoring its execution, developing annual progress and evaluation reports and issuing recommendations as requested.
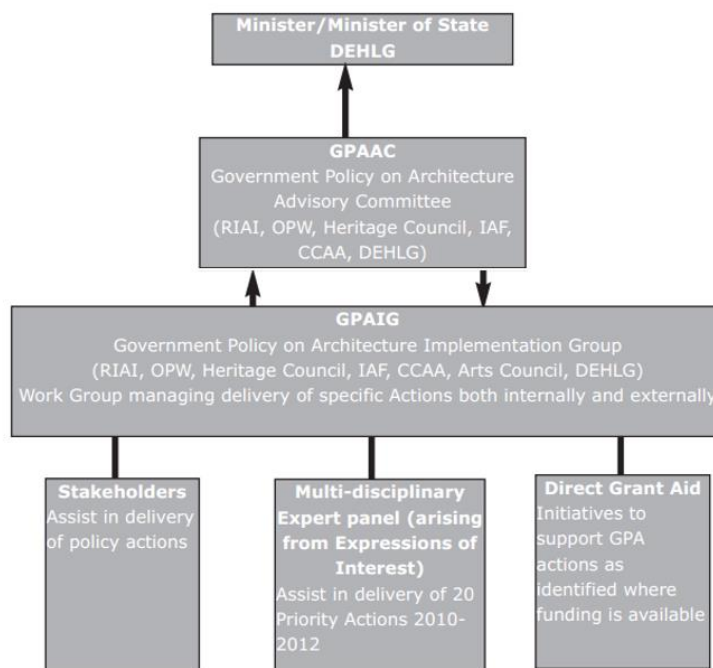
5.4 – Implementation diagram of the Irish architectural policy, involving an advisor committee, an implementation group and three lines of actions (Source: Ireland, 2009)

State Architects (Chief Government Architects)

Following the policy ambitions and commitments, several European countries and regions have appointed a 'State Architect' or 'Chief Government Architect' (from now on, only referred as State Architect) team within their administrations to provide design leadership and strategic advice to government to improve the design of public buildings, promote spatial quality and foster a placemaking culture. Although in some countries and states around the world State Architects have long been established, in several others, it is a relatively recent position within public administration. In addition, this is still the exception in the European landscape, and is for the most part a northern European phenomenon.

The Netherlands have had a Chief Architect since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Netherlands, 2006). Nowadays, the Dutch Chief Architect is assisted by a Board of Government

Advisors (CRa) and a small staff team[69]. Among other tasks, the Chief Architect promotes and monitors the urban integration and design quality of public buildings, harmonizing architecture with urban and rural planning, monument preservation and the use of art works.

5.5 – In 2018, the Board of Government Advisors launched the campaign ''Panorama Nederland' that facilitated a debate on the future of spatial planning in the Netherlands (Source: *College van Rijksadviseurs*)

The Dutch Chief Architect served as an influence for regions of Belgium, starting with Flanders in 1999, in the creation of their own version of the position under the designation of 'Bouwmeester'. Then in 2009, as referred previously, the position was also introduced in the Brussels-Capital region, followed soon after by Charleroi and by Ghent in 2017. The Irish policy established the position of State Architect in 2009, as an upgrade of the previous position of 'principal architect' within a specific department. More recently, in 2018, Sweden´s government has appointed its first national architect.

In general terms, the State Architect is often supported by a small team composed of a group of officials and administrative staff, whose size and structure varies according to its specific competences (Bento, 2012). The State Architect and its team usually form an organizational unit with the same name as the State Architect (e.g., the Office of the State Architect, or similar), notably Ireland's State Architect, whilst elsewhere the roles are more diffuse, for example the Scottish Chief Architect only has a small team in the Government with delivery of programmes largely taking place through the auspices of the arm's length Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS)[70].

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[69] For more info: https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/

[70] For more information see: https://www.ads.org.uk/

Although the specific competences and areas of responsibility of a State Architect vary according to the national/state context, they normally involve responsibility for the promotion of design quality of public constructions and buildings. However, the need for proper facilities to perform state activities is shared across the administration, involving almost all state policies, such as education, health, justice, defence, etc. In many countries, each sectoral area has its own small public works department responsible for the management of its sectoral building stock, while in other countries this is centralized in major building and property agencies[71].

Regardless of the size and distribution of the architecture pie slices, most of these state departments do not have the capacity to prepare the designs and specifications for larger public (as in state-owned) building projects. To this extent, the State Architect helps in the process of selecting and overseeing the work of architectural firms contracted by the state. Following this phase, in some cases it also helps reviewing and approving designs prepared by private-sector architects. For example, the Flemish Government Architect provides a free service for the organization of design competitions for public clients ("Open Call")[72].

Bento and Laopoulou (2019) examined the role, the instruments, and the impact of State Architect teams and of similar institutions in fostering spatial quality and a place-making culture across five European states (Denmark, Ireland, Flanders, Scotland, and Vienna). Based on a series of in-depth interviews to main stakeholders, they have concluded that:

- dedicated institutions such as state architects create the institutional conditions for improved public action on spatial quality, improving coordination and interaction between different stakeholders;
- such positions provide leadership and strategic advice to government cutting across the wide range of sectorial departments that are involved in design;
- responsibilities vary from the design and construction of public buildings to the establishment of cross-sector policy frameworks and related advice, to supporting cultural activities on design;
- through these means, state architect teams have had a positive impact on design governance processes. The underlying belief being "that, by improving the design process that leads to the public construction, we can also, in turn, improve the overall quality of the built outcome" (Bento & Laopoulou, 2019, p. 90).

As with any policy arena, this concern with urban quality will only be delivered if properly resourced and effectively implemented, otherwise high-level policy statements on the value of good design will simply remain as well-meaning aspirations. Although the range of tools at the disposal of State Architects varies, the organisational arrangements put in place for their delivery offer a tangible demonstration of this commitment on design quality (Carmona, et al, 2022).

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[71] Danish Building and Property Agency. See: https://en.bygst.dk/

[72] For more information see: https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/en/instruments/open-call

Non-governmental / arm's length organizations

One of the outputs of the architectural policies has been the establishment of dedicated design institutions. This includes those organizations that are funded by the public sector, which can be integrated within the public administration apparatus (e.g., museum)[73] or may have an independent status of some sort (e.g., arm's length organization), such as the *Design Commission for Wales* (DCFW) or the Scottish *Architecture and Design Scotland* (A+DS). Since then, a growing number of new design institutions have been established all over Europe, both at the national and local level, promoting the cultural importance of architecture and of the built environment (e.g., the Netherlands Architecture Institute, in 1989).

Although most of these organizations have an independent status, they are government-subsidised bodies, and like others in similar positions, have to navigate the balance of retaining their independence and maintaining a functional link with the administration. Entrusted with a set of public assignments, they usually have to submit to the relevant minister or governmental department their annual activity plans and financial report to renew their funding.

All of these design organizations are delivering an agenda of activities that promote awareness raising and contribute to a culture of design, but it would be difficult for them to fulfil their roles without the direct patronage of the central administrations and local authorities. For example, the funding of the *Estonian Museum of Architecture* comes mainly from the state (from the Ministry for culture), other sources including earned income (tickets, services) and project-based financing mainly from the Cultural Endowment (an independent state fund). The ratio is roughly: 85% state support (for rent, salaries, other expenses), 8% earned income and 7% from projects (exhibitions, publications, public programmes).

Most non-governmental organizations draw their funding from various sources, including private sponsorship, state subsidies, as well as contributions and donations from partners. In some countries, governments have established multi-stakeholder partnership agreements to finance organizations to deliver a design quality cultural agenda (see section 5.2.5).

An interesting example is the *Danish Architecture Centre* (DAK), that was founded in 1985 thanks to a collaboration between the Danish Ministry for Culture, the Ministry for Economic and Business Affairs and the private *Realdania* foundation. Since then, DAC's core funding is ensured by a public-private partnership between *Realdania* and the Danish state[74]. Based on this pact, the Danish government defines that DAC 'works as principal operator in the co-ordination and implementation of the new inter-ministerial architectural policy' (Denmark, 2007, p. 52).

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[73] One of the first museums solely dedicated to safeguard and exhibit design collections in Europe was the *Museum of Finnish Architecture* in 1954. For more information: http://www.mfa.fi/

[74] DAC used to be installed in an old harbour building called the Gammel Dok, in Copenhagen. Currently it is installed in a major new building design by OMA architects, which comprises several cultural institutions.

5.6 – Danish Architecture Centre (DAK) is located in the cultural hub the BLOX
(Copenhagen, Denmark) (Source: Rasmus Hjortshøj, Designer: OMA 2018)

DAC's main goal is to facilitate a wider interest in architecture and urban design, to clear the way for new ideas traversing traditional boundaries and to show how design creates cultural and economic assets for people, the industry and society. To do so, it offers a wide range of professional and cultural activities, including exhibitions, seminars, guided city tours, and so forth. Through Danish and international exhibitions, DAC presents relevant themes and trends in architecture, construction, and urban development. The exhibitions are often a result of long-term development and co-operation projects[75].

In this context, DAC promotes architecture and urban design from the creative process, through planning and urban development to the construction and finished space. DAC is also a platform for developing the entire construction industry, namely for a Building Lab DK, which is a unit of DAC. The latter carry out projects in close co-operation with leading Danish and international stakeholders in the construction industry. It advises companies about innovative processes and projects from the early idea through to the finished solution.

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[75] For more info: https://dac.dk/en/

3.2 Informal policy tools

The European research project Urban Maestro (UM), that ran from 2019 to 2021, mapped and identified innovative informal tools of urban design governance across Europe and beyond. The project's starting point was the notion of *urban design governance*, which can be defined as: "intervention in the means and processes of designing and managing the built environment in order to shape both processes and outcomes in a defined public interest. It achieves this by intervening in the decision-making environment of development stakeholders (whether public or private) in order that their decisions have a clear place-based quality dimension" (Carmona, 2021).

Based on this conceptual framework, the UM project defined an 'European typology of tools for urban design governance' (https://urbanmaestro.org/). The first point is that the typology distinguishes the tools by whether they are 'informal' or 'formal' in nature. In other words, the *informal tools* are discretionary and therefore optional, drawing on the state's soft powers, whereas the *formal tools* are legally defined as 'required' roles, using the hard powers of the state. (5.7).
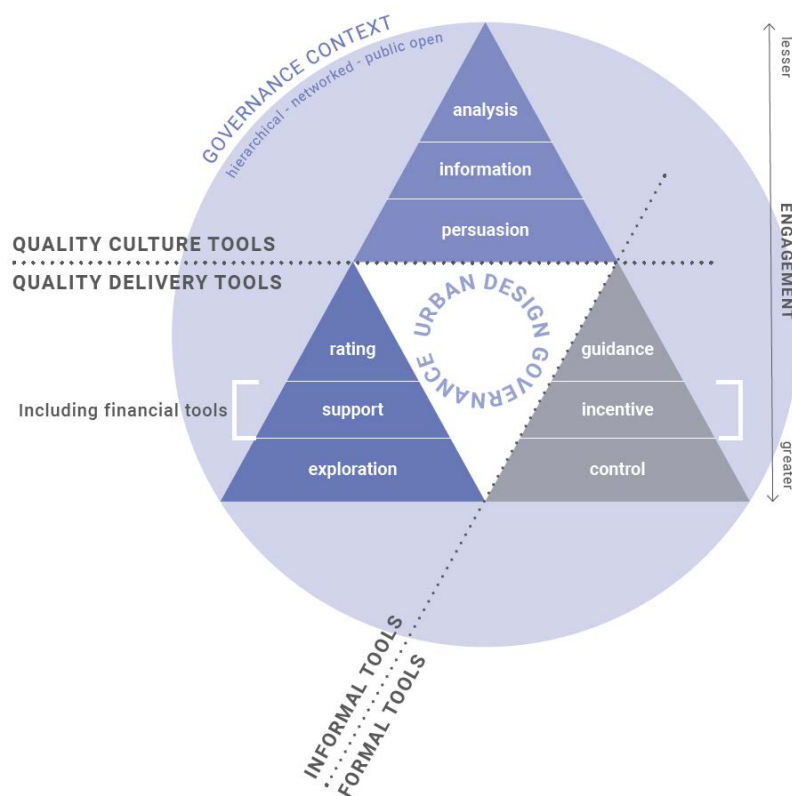
5.7 – Urban Maestro 'typology of urban design governance tools' (Source: Carmona, 2021)

Informal tools can also be divided into *Delivery* tools and *Culture* tools. *Culture* tools seek to establish a positive decision-making environment to prioritise design quality; *Delivery* Tools steer decision-making processes in a more focused and directive manner. This section will use this framework to illustrate the range of informal tools used across Europe.

3.2.1 Quality culture tools

Analysis tools

Analysis is the first type of 'culture quality tools'. These tools provide us with evidence to better understand how the built environment is shaped, through which processes and with what consequences, such as research or audits of the state of the built environment. Most public departments across Europe conduct or commission research on design related themes by central or local administrations or by other external agencies (e.g., universities). This research often focuses on understanding the effectiveness of different policy tools or the state of a given territory (Bento & Carmona, 2020).

To provide an example. At national level, the German Biennial Baukultur reports began in 2014 and they correspond to official status reports on planning and construction in Germany[76]. The reports are coordinated by the *Federal Foundation of Baukultur* on behalf of the German federal government. The preparation process includes Baukultur workshops, expert discussions, statistical data, municipal survey on planning practices and a population survey on housing and the living environment. The collected findings lead to practical recommendations for action for all actors involved in planning and construction (5.8).
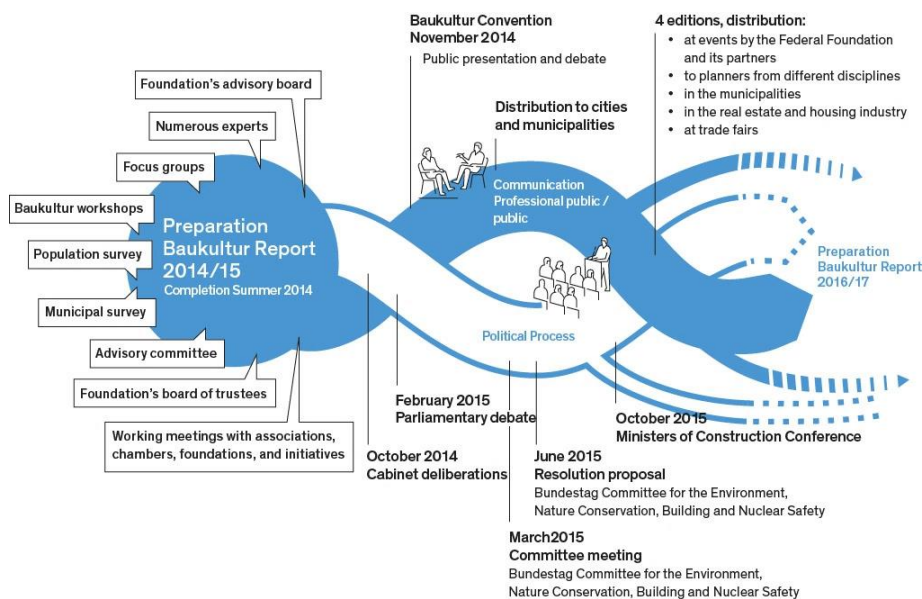
5.8 – The overall process of the preparation of the Baukultur report 2014/15
(Source: Federal Foundation of Baukultur 2016)

As a local example, developed every four years, the 'State of the Territory Report' of Zagreb presents a comprehensive picture of the state of the territory and suggests possible directions for development[77]. The Report also provides an analysis of the current situation, outlines problems and spatial development alternatives which result in proposals and recommendations for action.

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[76] For more info: www.bundesstiftung-baukultur.de/

[77] For more info: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/state-of-the-territory-report/

Information tools

The second type of the informal 'culture quality tools' is information, which acts to disseminate knowledge about the nature of good (or poor) design practices and processes, as well as related development practices, and why they matter. They help to raise awareness and understanding amongst stakeholders on best practices and processes. This might include detached and passive learning tools, such as publications and practical guides (e.g., how to conduct a design competition) to the compilation of best practice case studies libraries; or hands-on and active training tools involving the direct engagement of participants (Ibidem).

According to the UM Survey (2019), about half of the governmental departments publish case studies of successful examples to inspire, challenge and encourage decision makers. In contrast, few governmental departments offer basic and/or specialist training activities covering the design of the built environment, but this is a major activity amongst allied pseudo-governmental organizations or non-governmental bodies (e.g., professional organizations). To provide an example, in 2014, the Welsh Government (UK) commissioned to the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) a practice guidance on sustainable buildings and the importance of integrating these design principles early in the development process (5.9)[78].
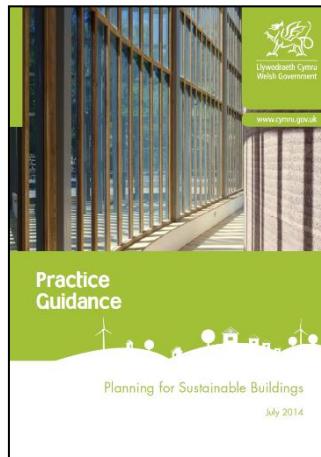
5.9 – Practice guidance 'Planning for Sustainable Buildings, 2014
(Source: Welsh Government, UK)

At local level, municipalities also publishes documents and manuals on a regular basis. For example, the "Public Space Design Manual" from the Prague Institute of Planning and Development, which is one of the tools for fulfilling the city's strategy in designing and managing quality public spaces[79]. Collectively, information tools are perhaps the most widely used informal tools and are increasingly being delivered by more sophisticated online and interactive means.

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[78] For more info: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/planning-sustainable-buildings.pdf

[79] https://urbanmaestro.org/example/prague-public-space-design-manual/

Information tools also comprise active training tools, such as educational activities offering basic and / or specialist training around aspects of the design of the built environment and its importance to design professionals, contracting authorities, regulators, and others. The specialist training tools are focused on improving the capacity of professional stakeholders to deliver better-designed buildings and spaces, from technical training (e.g., designing cycling facilities), to process issues (e.g., dealing with the planning system), to forward looking trends such as how to achieve greener design. The more basic training encompasses educational programmes focused on laypersons or young people so that they become active and participant citizens in city decision-making processes.

5.10 – Basic educational training activity 'Be Like an Architect', 2019
National Institute of Architecture and Town Planning (NIAU), Poland (Source: NIAU)

Persuasion tools

Persuasion is the third type of the informal 'culture quality tools'. Persuasion tools actively make the case for particular design responses in a proactive manner. Instead of waiting for organizations and individuals to seek out knowledge (for example in research or guidance), these tools take the knowledge to them physically or through the media; seeking to package key messages in a manner that engages attention and persuades (Carmona, 2021).

Although approaches vary across the continent, the majority of governmental institutions and pseudo/non-governmental organizations often use persuasion tools to promote good design and build up a cultural climate that values design quality. These tools aim to promote design by delivering a series of awareness raising initiatives focused on particular audiences and direct advocacy to influence legislation and policy. Looking at the information collected by the Urban Maestro project, two main types of persuasion tools were identified:

- Awareness raising initiatives such as design awards schemes, events and festivals or structured campaigns focused on changing perceptions and practices in key areas;

- Influencing tools through direct advocacy or alliance building to shape policies and programmes and partnership working across key actor groups.

The first category covers all different types of design awards to exemplary projects, buildings and procurement processes promoted across Europe, from high profile international prizes to local awards. Design awards are focused on rewarding excellence and best practices on design and completed schemes given by third parties detached from the commissioning process, which contrast with design competitions (Biddulph et al., 2006). Through public recognition of excellent design, institutions hope to raise design quality by creating new benchmarks for practice. Although the headline goal of design awards is always to reward good practice, awards have a second more important goal, to raise the profile of the sectors and/or organizations that create them and to stimulate better practices (Carmona, et al 2017:178).

There is a wide range of institutions using this type of persuasion tools, including state, regional and local governments, non/pseudo-governmental organizations as well as private companies, which leads to a great diversity of design awards across Europe. Within the proliferation of prizes, governmental awards tend to promote best practice within particular policy fields, such as urban renewal, social housing, sustainable construction, etc. Some governments created design awards recognizing good practices in procurement processes of public developments, such as the 'Public Procurement Award' in Wallonia (5.11).

Prix de la Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Publique 2020.   Prix de la Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Publique 2017.

5.11 – Wallonie-Bruxelles' Public Project Procurement Award
(*Prix de la Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Publique*)

This category also included awareness raising initiatives, such as events – festivals, congress, biennales, etc – and active campaigns communicated through the media and networks to promote awareness among the general public, professionals, regulators, and others about key issues of concern in the built environment. The major goal of these initiatives is to raise awareness about the subject amongst those involved in commissioning and delivering buildings and developments as well as end users and the general public. Thus, campaigning and events focus on ensuring that public bodies, private developers, and regulatory authorities incorporate design quality more prominently into their processes and decisions. An increasingly goal is directed to everyday users of buildings and spaces, about whom it is believed that demand for higher standards in the built environment will influence the producing side of the market (Carmona et al., 2017, p. 180).

As an example, the French "National Days of Architecture" is a national campaign aiming to raise awareness and stimulate architectural and urban design knowledge among professionals and the general public[80]. In its fifth edition, this national event lasts for three days and includes a diverse programme with more than 1,000 free events across the country, such as meetings and debates, visits to architectural offices, visits to buildings and sites, urban walks, exhibitions, films, educational workshops, etc. Several cities also have architectural events that last for one day or more, such as the Open House or similar events[81].

5.12 – Caixa forum cultural centre by Herzog & de Meuron, Madrid (Spain)
(Source: Rubén P. Bescós). The Madrid Architecture Week is organised by the Architects' Association of Madrid (COAM) through its Architectural Foundation together with the City Council and the Regional Community of Madrid.

Proactive inter-governmental or cross-stakeholder advocacy and partnership working around the delivery of design quality is a notable feature where some governments established dedicated institutions or have appointed a state architect or similar body to act as design champion across the public sector. Usually, these are pseudo-governmental institutions with a non-profit nature or working as an arm's length organisation with an independent status. According to their statutory mission, although the size and structure of these organizations varies across Europe, as well as the resources available, they implement several informal urban design governance tools, where advocating for good design is usually one of its core tasks. Nevertheless, different informal networks are often taking a lead in Europe by using proactive advocacy to shape policies and programmes or just to spread best practices.

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[80] *Journées Nationales de l'Architecture*. For more info: https://journeesarchitecture.culture.gouv.fr/

[81] Open House is an annual festival at city scale, now spread around the world. See: https://www.openhouseworldwide.org/

3.2.2 Quality delivery tools

The "quality delivery tools' steer those decision-making processes in a more focused manner, helping to ensure that design quality is delivered in specific interventions in the built environment. This means *delivery tools* move beyond the previous *culture tools* because they are more interventionalist in the design process, instead of focusing on the broader culture within which decisions on design are made, they focus on particular projects, places, or processes with potential to shape actual outcomes (Carmona, 2021).

Rating tools

Rating is the first type of the informal 'quality delivery tools', which allow judgments to be made about the quality of design in a systematic and structured manner, usually by parties (e.g., other professionals or community groups) external to, and therefore independent from, the particular design process being evaluated (Carmona, 2021). This includes *formative* evaluation tools, such as indicators or informal design review process which evaluate projects; and *summative* evaluation tools, such as certification schemes or competitions which allow design proposals to be evaluated prior to their development.

Within *formative* evaluation, for example, the Scottish Place Standard tool is a simple framework developed a couple of years ago to structure conversations about place and its physical elements as well as its social aspects. It includes 14 questions on the physical aspects of a place (buildings, open spaces, transport) and on the social aspects (for example, whether people feel they have a say in decision-making); each question is then rated on a 1 to 7 scale. Launched in 2015, Place Standard is currently being applied in several European countries.
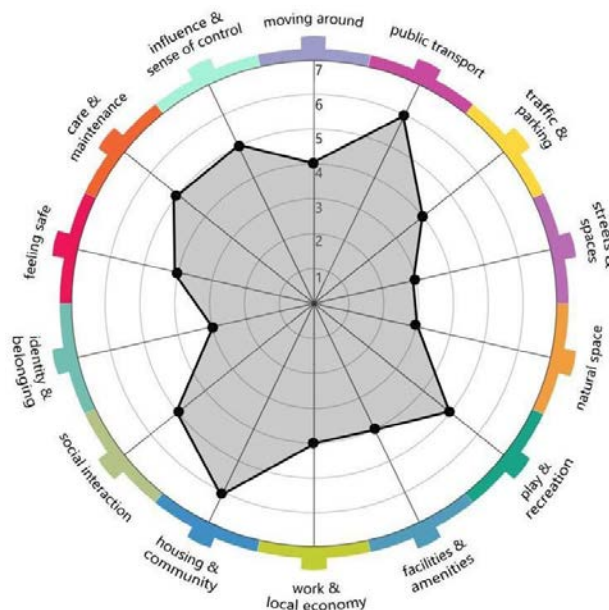
5.13 – Example of Place Standard final spider diagram (source: **www.placestandard.scot**). The tool was developed by Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS), together with NHS Health Scotland and the Planning & Architecture Department of the Scottish Government.

Nevertheless, according to the UM findings, this type of indicator or certification tools does not seem to be widely used in Europe at urban design level, although the small number of examples revealed by the survey are well developed (see UM Survey). The use of expert design review panels or design advisory boards in different forms is far more widespread and growing.

Design review is a peer review process of evaluating the design quality of built environment projects in an independent manner by experts without any links to the schemes under review. Its immediate function is to improve the design quality of individual development schemes by providing advice from a pool of experts whose joint experience can be tapped into. This brings a breadth and depth of experience that may not be available to the project team or to the planning authority, not least on more specialist areas such as inclusion, heritage, or sustainability.

Across the continent, design review panels are also known as *design advisory boards* (gestaltungsbeiräten), design commissions or building committees (*baukollegiums*), and the process itself is also referred to by other names including quality review, place review, design review, project review, and design surgery, etc. Design review is also one of the tools used by State Architects and City Chief Architects to promote design quality.

5.14 – Example of a presentation session to the Design Advisory Board (baukollegium) of Zurich, Switzerland (Source: Eisinger & Reuther, 2007, p. 254)

Among the *summative* evaluation tools, design competitions are widely used, even if intermittently, throughout Europe by both state and local governments. Looking at the UM findings, there are diverse practices relating to the use of design competitions across Europe. Nevertheless, design competitions are viewed as a form of promoting innovation in design and stimulating the building sector, as several designers respond to the same design problem according to a defined set of rules. Competitions usually involve a jury that assesses the different designs from an independent point of view. Although a design competition can be organized in several ways, there are two fundamental types of design competitions: conceptual (ideas only) and project (relating to a tangible building project) (Lehrer, 2011).

For example, in France design competitions have been mandatory for all new public buildings above a set threshold since 1980 (Biau, 2002b). More than 1000 competitions are held across the country every year, promoted by the national government down to the smallest municipality. A second decree, approved in 1988, obliges French competition organisers to compensate the candidates for a minimum of 80% of the value of the assignment carried out for the service provided. Because of this decree, competitions are always restricted, usually to three to five teams. The implementation of design competitions in France is overseen by the Inter-Ministry Mission for Quality in Public Construction (MIQCP) (see previous section).

Although design competitions are routinely used in some countries for bigger building projects, particularly those commissioned by governmental bodies, and are strongly favoured as a means of encouraging more innovative design solutions. Their use is relatively rare elsewhere (e.g., England / UK), unless there is some compulsion in their use because their cost implications tend to count against them (Bento & Carmona, 2020). An interesting example of a competition related to tangible building projects is the Open Call procedure from the Flemish Government Architect (Belgium). Created in 2000, the Open Call has been operating for almost 20 years and more than 700 projects have used the approach (Liefooghe & van den Driessche, 2019). The Open Call is free of charge for all public and semi-public organizations, including regional public services, city, and municipal authorities, as well as housing agencies, non-profit organizations, etc[82].

5.15 – Open Call 0229 bridge in Vroenhoven (Source: FGA, 2019 © Stijn Bollaert)

In Germany, several cities are using concept tendering procedures, which is an alternative means for municipalities to sell (or rather lease over the long-term) land that is in their direct sphere of influence (typically public land). Instead of using either a direct award, wherein conditions must be agreed upon with the buyer, or a bidding process, wherein price is the deciding factor, concept tendering brings to the fore the qualities and aspects of design/place by making them a key decision-making factor, equal to or even more important than price (Temel, 2019).[83]

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[82] For a full list of projects see: https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/en/instruments/open-call

[83] For more information see: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/konzeptvergabe/

Support tools

The second type of informal '*quality delivery tools'* is support, which is a more directive approach within the design process itself as it involves directly assisting or enabling design / development teams with particular projects, or with the commissioning of projects, or the preparation of design guidance and other tools. They potentially encompass a range of financial means that can be used to encourage better design outcomes, providing financial support to key initiatives / delivery organizations or the raising / steering / transferring of funding for better design (Carmona, 2021). Based on this differentiation, two main types of support tools were identified:

- *Indirect support tools*, notably financial support to key delivery organizations (e.g., arm's length agencies or centres with a design remit) or subsidies tied to the delivery of defined quality / quality culture objectives;
- *Direct support tools* that include the provision of hands-on professional enabling, negotiation or advice.

The first type refers to *indirect support tools*, such as the provision of grants-in-aid to support arm's length agencies and other key design organizations with a remit to instil and support a culture of good design or to deliver well-defined quality objectives in the built environment. This can be done in two ways: through *financial support* to key design organizations or the *provision of subsidies* for the delivery of tools or initiatives.

The recognition of the importance of a culture of design quality has led several governments to financially support arm's length agencies and centres with design remit dedicated to the cultural promotion of design quality at national, regional, and local level. The aim is to foster a placemaking culture across stakeholders and to raise public awareness about the value of design quality. These tools involve the provision of financial support directly to arm's length organizations, national/regional/local design centres or non-profit organizations, who may also obtain funding from other sources, from local authorities to private sponsorships.

For example, the *Flanders Architecture Institute* (VAi) is solely dedicated to architectural promotion and is responsible for delivering the cultural dimension of the Flemish architectural policy, through exhibitions and other activities aimed at making the general public aware of architecture and urban design[84]. Funded by the Flemish government, VAI was entrusted with the management of the *Flanders Architecture Archives*, which was being taken care of by regional and provincial authorities across Flanders. Since 2002, VAI is also responsible for the publication of the Architectural Yearbooks designed to highlight architecture achievements and to keep a broader public informed about it (5.16)[85].

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[84] The Flemish government established the *Flanders Architecture Institute* the international arts centre 'deSingel' in 2001.

[85] For more info see https://www.vai.be/en/

5.16 – Flanders Architecture Institute (VAI), Belgium (Source: VAI)

Some countries have created partnership agreements to finance new cultural organizations to deliver part of their architectural policy programmes. For example, the 2002 Irish architectural policy included a proposal to create a new Virtual Architecture Centre. Although this measure never came to be materialized, it facilitated the establishment of a partnership agreement between several institutions to create and provide financial support to the *Irish Architecture Foundation* (IAF) in 2005. The partnership involved two government departments, Dublin local administration and two non-governmental bodies, all contributing financially to support IAF. This agreement is still in force today (see Table).

Source	Amount €
Arts Council	58,000
DOEHLG	60,000
Dublin City Council	30,000
Office of Public Works	30,000
RIAI	50,000
TOTAL	**228,000**

5.17 – Principal Core Funding Contributions to IAF in 2008
(based on the Report of the Arts Council *Public Engagement & Architecture*, 2008)

Another interesting example of financial support through partnerships is that of the Houses of Architecture in Austria, where each federal province (*Bundesland)* has created its own centre of architecture*,* which receives funding from federal, state, and local administrations[86]. At the beginning of the 1990s, a funding scheme for architecture and design was introduced by the Austrian federal government to ensure the continuity of the Houses of Architecture by covering part of their operation costs. Depending on the federal state, the remaining funding is

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[86] Although the *Austrian Society for Architecture* was set up in the 1960s, the first *House of Architecture was created* in Graz/Steiermark in 1988, followed by the *Architecture Centre Vienna* (Az *W – Architekturzentrum Wien) in 1993.*

supplemented by financial support from federal states and / or municipalities, membership fees and private sponsors[87].

Some governments use funding programmes to support innovative cultural projects, such as temporary installations, experimental projects, or exhibitions, etc. For example, the Architecture Unit of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles has been managing a budget article for several years entitled "*Subsidies to associations for the defence and enhancement of architecture*", which has benefited several dozen actions in Wallonia and Brussels (exhibitions, publications, seminars, conferences, debates, documentaries, etc.). Another interesting example is that of the Czech subsidies for design competitions, which supports architectural and urban design competitions for the local procurement of design services of public buildings, public spaces, and planning documents, by subsidizing half the costs associated with competition prizes[88].

The second type was *direct support tools*, which includes the provision of hands-on professional enabling, negotiation or advice, offered in relation to particular projects. As referred to in the previous section, some states across Europe have been appointing a 'State Architect' to provide support to public actors (see previous section). At a lower level, these approaches are echoed in municipalities that have appointed a city architect (and team) tasked with providing proactive advocacy and direct enabling of good design, such as in the examples of Budapest (Hungary), Copenhagen (Denmark) or Warsaw (Poland).

5.18 – Budapest City Architect TÉR_KÖZ programme public space interventions (Source: Budapest City)

This role is also played by non-governmental bodies, such as the French Councils for Architecture, Urbanism, and the Environment (CAUE), which among other tools, provide free design advice and support to local councils and citizens (see previous Section).

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[87] In 1996, the nine Houses of Architecture, along with the Austrian Society for Architecture, founded an Umbrella Organisation, *The Austrian Architectural Foundation,* which is a common public platform for Austrian architectural initiatives. Along with statutory professional associations, educational faculties, and independent architectural initiatives, it constitutes an important third pillar for upholding the Austrian building culture.

[88] The Czech program aims to promote more frequent use of design competitions by municipalities, which would in turn foster higher quality architectural and urban works. This subsidy is coordinated by the Czech Ministry of Regional Development. For more info see: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/subsidies-for-architectural-and-urban-competitions/

Exploration tools

Exploration is the third and final type of informal 'quality delivery tools' of the typology of tools of urban design governance. Exploration tools engage directly in the design process through mechanisms that investigate, test out and involve the community in particular design approaches. They are hands on but exploratory in nature, either utilising temporary interventions or inputting into larger project or place-shaping processes (Carmona et al., 2022).

According to the UM findings, exploration tools can be classified in two main types depending on whether the focus of the tool is public or professional:

- *Proactive engagement tools*, such as design-led community participation or co-governance agreements;
- *Professional investigation tools*, such as research by design and testing and on-site experimentation.

The first type of exploration tools includes different types of proactive engagement activities with local stakeholders and communities in design processes, such as design-led community participation activities, as a precursor to major development projects. By actively involving communities in place-shaping processes, these initiatives promote a wider inclusion of local concerns in the decision-making environment of new development projects or in the definition of local development strategies. Furthermore, they have the potential to empower local communities by strengthening their capacities and improving communication between authorities and concerned citizens, such as co-design of projects, workshops or design charrettes (Ibidem).

5.19 – One example of the Nantes citizens vote, France (Source: Régis Routier, Ville de Nantes)

A complementary way of promoting engagement with local stakeholders and communities in design processes has been through the establishment of co-governance agreements between local authorities and citizens for improving their close surroundings or managing vacant and underused spaces, which sometimes are also referred to as 'urban commons'. Although there is

usually a formal arrangement underpinning such agreements (known in Italy as 'pact'), there are also extended processes of informal collaboration between the stakeholders involved, such as local councils, housing associations and residents (Ibid.).

The second type of exploration tools includes different investigation tools, which investigate particular design issues in order to identify and test out innovative solutions, such as research by design or testing and on-site experimentation. In the former, research by design is usually used to explore design alternatives for key projects, places, or problems, which can include different visualization methods to explore alternative solutions. This is mostly used at local level by design teams (e.g., city architects) to stimulate design thinking about particular areas or in cooperative planning processes with stakeholders in large urban development projects.

In the latter, testing and on-site experimentation has been applied in several cities across Europe, such as temporary occupation of non-used sites and places as an experimental process to test. Although this can be done in very different forms and timeframes, the main purpose is to bring unused properties temporarily to life, to test new uses and activities in order to adapt these places to the current needs of the citizens or just activate them. One interesting example was the Grand Voizins project, which encompasses the temporary occupation of a former hospital in Paris, considered to be one of the most successful examples of temporary occupation across Europe[89].

In a different format, some cities have been supporting 'urban labs' to develop research and new insights about urban challenges bringing together a wide range of development actors around a particular area or topic. Urban labs may use a variety of tools to explore urban design problems as well as to develop different initiatives aiming at co-designing new spatial solutions together with the various actors and agents present in a certain place, such as design workshops, public debates, artistic installations, social media engagement, etc. Urban labs may last for a week, a month or even several years (e.g., International Building Exhibitions - IBA[90]).

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[89] For more info see: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/les-grands-voisins/

[90] For more info see: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/international-building-exhibition-iba/
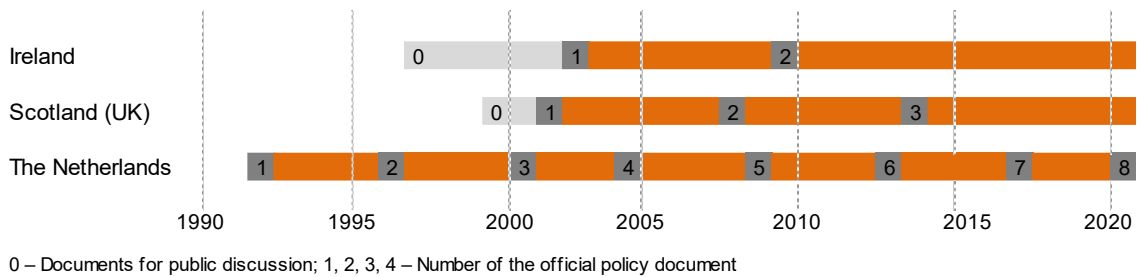
4. IMPACT OF ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES

The present section intends to discuss the impact of national architectural policies based on the findings of a PhD research (Bento, 2017) about the role of national architectural policies focused on three case studies: Ireland, The Netherlands and Scotland. Since the success of the policies is dependent on several variables besides the policy itself, this section will start by examining the policy implementation performance in the three countries. Based on the experience of the case studies, a second part will explore the impacts of architectural policies on processes of design governance and, finally, a third part will discuss the main limitations of architectural policies revealing the red lines of policies and the short-range impact of most of their tools.

4.1 Architecture policy implementation

Although the previous two sections offer a diverse pallet of architectural policies and tools across Europe, when it comes to their implementation there are substantial differences between the different countries. This derives mostly from the level of support and resources available (time, personal, financial, organizational) in each context, which leads to different grades of execution among countries / regions. Inevitably, these restrictions will directly impact the results on the ground and on the policy's effectiveness in reaching its aims. Within complex systems literature, the implementation process is defined as "the process of preparing an organization for an organizational change and the actual implementation and embedding of that change" (Rooimans, Theye & Koop, 2003)[91]. Therefore, public policies must be seen as an incremental process that it is not assessed only by visible outputs but also by an ongoing process of (social/cultural) change that needs to be considered before drawing any conclusions on the effectiveness of policies.

Looking at the policies of the three case studies - Ireland, the Netherlands, and Scotland -, it is possible to highlight several differences. Firstly, from a chronological perspective, the Netherlands was the first to adopt a policy on architecture, almost ten years before the two other countries. Since then, the Dutch government has been revising its policy every four years to renew its policy budget, being currently in its eight version; whereas Scotland has revised its policy two times and Ireland only once. This regularity provides spaces for reflection and the continuous involvement of the different stakeholders around the Dutch architectural policy and its mains goals, tools, and initiatives. Furthermore, preceding most of the new policy versions, the Dutch government commissioned evaluation studies, generally to an independent institution or an expert panel, to assess the policy's success in reaching its intended aims.

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[91] In this context, the implementation process represents the way implementations in general are being realized within an organization (Ibidem). According to this theory, the overall maturity of an implementation process within an organization can be assessed and determined by an evaluation matrix with at least four indicators: *process, human resource, information, means and control* (Ibidem).

0 – Documents for public discussion; 1, 2, 3, 4 – Number of the official policy document

6.1 – Chronological development of the architectural policies of the three countries (source: João Bento)

Secondly, the policy budget is another important indicator that distinguishes the Dutch policies from those of the two other countries. Comparing the three policy budgets, the Netherlands is by far the country that has invested the most in its architectural policy implementation: an annual budget of 10.8 million Euros. It is important to highlight that the Dutch policy has been supporting the *Netherlands Architecture Institute* (NAi) and the *Fund for Architecture* from the outset, which consumes most of its policy budget. The Scottish policy has almost 3 million Euros per year to support its policy programme, mostly delivered by A+DS, while the Irish policy, and with the lowest budget, has less than a quarter of the Scottish annual budget and a very small part of the Dutch.

	The Netherlands	Scotland (UK)	Ireland
Annual policy budget (average)	10,8 million Euros*	2 million Pounds (2,8 million Euros)	400.000€**

* 4.5 million Euros of the Dutch budgets go to the Institute for Creative Industries (former NAi) and 3.9 million go to the Stimulation fund for architecture, design, and e-culture (former Fund for Architecture)

** This amount has suffered cuts over the years due to budget reduction (Irish Public Official, 2015: Interview)

6.2 – Architectural policy annual budget in the three countries (situation in 2017) [92].

In the opposite direction, the Irish policy's annual budget was reduced by 80% between 2015-16, due to the strong financial crisis that hit the country in 2016, having only 70.000 Euros available per year. To overcome these constraints, the Irish Government has formed partnerships with several institutions to advance its policy actions such as the creation of the Irish Architectural Foundation, in 2005 (see previous Section). This means that part of the impact of the architectural policies is not expressed only in visible artefacts but as invisible drivers of design governance processes. However, architectural policies need a policy budget, no matter how small, otherwise the policy will be unable to carry out most of its action plan and will therefore become an ineffective policy instrument, largely due to the informal nature of its policy tools.

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[92] Although the Scottish and the Irish policy does not include a policy budget, the analysis of the information contained in the progress reports and in the interviews makes it possible to build a comparative annual budget for the three countries.

Thirdly, it is important to underline the strong social awareness on spatial quality and landscape that exists in the Netherlands (Bento, 2017). According to a Dutch local officer (Ibidem), a cultural and social concern with the landscape and the territory is embedded in Dutch culture given the country's continuing struggle against floods, which demanded careful planning of the countryside and of the water system. This means that aspects as traditions and values were a strong determinant for the Netherlands to be a pioneering and innovative country in environmental policies, including architecture and land-use planning. All these aspects indicate the serious commitment of the Dutch government to its architectural policy, which has inspired most of the countries with a policy in this domain.

6.3 – Aqueduct Ringvaart over the A4 Highway, Haarlemmermeer, The Netherlands (2006).

Cross-analysing the findings of the three case studies (for a full analysis see Bento, 2017), it is possible to classify them in three levels of implementation performance:

- *Advance* - the Dutch policy shows the *highest* level of execution, with a diverse range of policy tools and regular annual budget. In the European panorama, the Netherlands stands out as the country that has been putting more efforts and resources into the delivery of its policy tools. The 30 years of architectural policies have successfully raised the profile of architecture and the level of awareness of clients and the general public, which ended up influencing the producing side of the development process and led to the improvement of the quality of the Dutch built environment and landscape. This has been the result of a continued investment in its policy tools, together with a sophisticated planning system and other social aspects described above, which could not be thoroughly examined in this report. Although it is not possible to determine with accuracy the impacts of the policies on the design quality of places, as they are also the result of a combination of several policies and other social factors, the Dutch Architectural policies have clearly had an impact on the development actors decision-making environments and have played a key role in raising the standards.

- *Good* - the Scottish government has also been implementing the majority of its architecture policy tools and investing considerable amounts of resources in its execution, although not in the same proportion as the Dutch policies. Again, the question of whether the Scottish policies are effectively improving the quality of places has to be seen in the light of its context, in which most of the policy tools are informal in nature and long-term aimed. According to the interviewees, the wide range of activities and programmes developed by A+DS are having a positive impact on the wider community, clients, and designers. A+DS is also delivering design review services, which is quite a unique policy instrument, improving the standards of design of the built environment.

- *Intermediate* - Of the three countries, Ireland has been the least successful in putting its architecture policy in operation. In its first seven years, the policy did not generate any visible results and its implementation was considered low. Nevertheless, the second Irish policy introduced a much more comprehensive action plan, identifying and committing the different policy stakeholders, which included not only public bodies but also several non-governmental entities. Despite the huge difference with the Dutch budget, the Irish department in charge of the second policy was able to guarantee an annual funding for the total seven-year period, although in the last three it has suffered a reduction by more than 80%. Hence, the level of impact of the Irish policy actions does not have the same extent as the more diversified agenda of the other two countries. According to several interviewees, the new IAF is having a considerable impact, even if the range of initiatives is more restricted than in the other two countries. The schoolchildren's programme or the Open House event are examples of two initiatives which are successfully creating an audience and raising awareness about the value of design. Equally important has been the commitment of several government players revealing a new impetus for better places that did not exist before.

Following this brief overview of the policy implementation of the three case studies, the referred PhD research (Bento, 2017) aimed to understand the main policy successes and barriers through a serious of in-depth interviews with major stakeholders. Based on these past research findings, the next two parts will discuss the architectural policy impacts and its main limitations in processes of design governance.

4.2 Architectural policy impacts in the governance of design

'DCAL Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on Architecture and the Built Environment emphasised that having a formal Architectural policy owned by government can be 'enormously helpful in encouraging better outcomes'. (…) 'it has taken several years and excellent Ministerial leadership to give it confidence and connections that are now making real differences to places week by week and establishing methods of working in central and local government' (Northern Ireland 2013, p. 9)

The above excerpt is quite explicit in terms of the added value of having a governmental policy on architecture, saying that the policy has been extremely helpful for the government to lead and encourage central and local governments to aim for better places. Although at different degrees, the same positive view on the role of the architectural policies has been given by almost all interviewees of the three case studies. In fact, they all agree in one crucial point: having a policy on architecture is important to raise the profile of the value of design quality and set an agenda for future action, even if the extent of its impact may not be easily perceived. To understand the reason for this positive opinion, this section will break down the impacts of a formal policy on architecture in four dimensions.

Improvement of design governance processes

One of the main impacts of a national policy on architecture is, according to interviewees, its capacity to improve the processes of design governance. A conceptual shift from 'government to governance' has been taking place since the beginning of the 1990s, which embodies the idea of a 'new way of thinking about state capabilities and sate-society relationships' (Pierre & Peters, 2000). In all the three case studies, the adoption of the architectural policies was preceded by a process of participation and negotiation between policy actors, including public and private stakeholders. In addition, in the Irish and Scottish cases, there have been periods of public consultation before the adoption of the policies, animated by debates to improve the policy formulation and integrate as many different views as possible[93].

The development of the policies also facilitated the development of networks of trust and cooperation between the actors, based on the assumption that the state will achieve better results by persuading others and by creating incentives instead of issuing orders in an 'authoritarian way'. Considering the complex system of actors involved in the design of built environment, the development of the policies provided opportunities to reconcile different interests on design and the establishment of compromises among stakeholders in order to achieve better places. In addition, the state does not have the financial capacity to implement many of the policy actions alone, which means that it has to build partnerships and share decisions and investments (e.g., Irish Architectural Foundation in Ireland).

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[93] In the Dutch case, although there were no public consultations documents, there were always several round tables to discuss and improve the policy formulation and integrate as many different views as possible.

6.4 – Carré Apartments, Breda, The Netherlands (1999); Design:
Kem Koolhas (OMA Office); Client: Municipality of Breda (Source: Gerhard Bissell)

Furthermore, architecture policy initiatives open new spaces for dialogue about subjects that otherwise would be difficult to create, sitting different people at the same table to exchange strategies aimed at improving the system of rules, stimulus and structures involved in the processes of design. It is therefore possible to conclude that the processes involved in the preparation and development of a national policy on architecture contributed to a better process of design governance, involving a wide range actor in a cooperative and inclusive way.

Design leadership – design quality as a corporative aim

The adoption of a national architectural policy is a direct way for the government to take a leading role in the promotion of design excellence and fostering a place-making culture. In accordance to governance theory (Pierre, 2000), from a governance perspective the state should 'steer and not row'. This means that by setting a public policy on design quality based on a medium and long-term view, the government shows the direction that society and development actors should go in, or in other words, by 'encouraging organizations to act holistically and work in a joined-up fashion with others to achieve a quality place rather than think and act in silos to suit their own professional interests' (Adams & Tiesdell, 2013).

Besides the policy documents, all three countries have dedicated actors to promote high-quality public works. Setting up a public agenda to promote better buildings and places plays an important role in convincing other public departments to engage and raise the quality of their developments. Although the public recognition of the value of design quality in itself is not enough to improve the quality of the built environment, an architectural policy can produce an impact and give an impetus to cultural change if dedicated institutional actors take the lead and demonstrate the willingness to invest in the front-end vision to achieve quality places.

New set of informal design quality tools

One of the main impacts of the architecture policies of the three countries was the creation of a wide range of informal design quality tools (see previous Section) delivered by dedicated design institutions, such as State Architects offices, arm's length agencies (e.g., Scottish A+DS) or architecture centres (e.g., Irish Architecture Foundation). These institutions have produced a large number of activities, colloquiums, exhibitions, design guidance, design review, etc., that did not exist before the policy. Nonetheless, the impact of informal quality tools on the perception of different development actors on design quality is not easy to assess. Although there is a danger of "simply talking to the converted, telling architect, that it should be into placemaking, that good design is important" (Scottish policy expert, 2015: interview), informal tools are important to complement regulatory design instruments, that alone may not be enough to improve the quality of places. Cultural change has to be seen as a long-term objective (see below).

6.6 – The design of the new building of Department of Finance was coordinated by OPW Architectural Services, led by the Irish State Architect, Dublin, Ireland (2009); Design: Grafton Architects / OPW Architectural Services; Client: The Commissioners of Public Works (Source DG - Denis Gilbert).

Improvement of interdepartmental coordination

Another advantage of having a national policy on architecture that emerges from the case studies is the improvement of inter-ministerial coordination on design quality issues. In fact, as a result of architectural policy, all three case studies have developed mechanisms of transversal collaboration between different state departments and agencies with the objective of placing design quality as a corporate aim. To do so, all three countries have established an interdepartmental policy platform to assist in the co-ordination of initiatives and delivery of actions between built environment bodies. The platforms meet regularly to debate the progress in architectural policy and monitor its action agenda. According to some interviewees, the joint meetings are important to develop bridges and stimulate connections between different government departments with responsibilities in built environment issues (e.g., planning, transport, heritage, public works, and education). Nonetheless, as will be seen below, the capacity to improve interdepartmental policy coordination is one of the main difficulties of the policies.

4.3 The limitations of architectural policies

'There is a complete and cynical disconnection between the political rhetoric on the value of design and place-making, and the reality of procurement in Scotland.' (Paul Stallan, Stallan-Brand Architects)

'How do you get the policy to relate to people on the ground (…) the average housebuilder / developer would not comply with the policy recommendations. Its lack of statutory powers diminished its effectiveness.' (BEFS workshop, 2013)

The first quote reveals a paradox between government statements on the value of design quality and the procurement practices of most public authorities and agencies in Scotland. In fact, the state is a complex and multi-level organization, and it is extremely difficult to mobilize and persuade the wide array of departments and public agencies to raise their design standards against the culture of the lowest price. The second quote points out to a lack of effectiveness of the architectural policy instruments in introducing changes in the development process. There is a permanent tension between the architectural policy goals and the building and planning reality because under market conditions design quality is most of the times regarded as superficial and is not seen as a safe investment. The construction industry, estate promoters and urban developers are mostly guided by commercial interests and market considerations, which do not take a longer-term view (Bento, 2017). As such, if architectural policies are to have a positive impact on procurement and development processes, they must adopt a mix of informal policy tools and legal measures, since merely demonstrating that investment in quality pays off may not do the trick. Against this background, this section will try to address the main limitations of architectural policies, identify the main barriers to policy and which levers need to be pulled.

The lack of statutory 'status' and regulatory tools

The wide range of architectural policy tools are essentially informal cultural and capacity-building/delivery tools, generally known as soft instruments. Although these tools are important to complement the formal tools, by raising awareness and stimulating the demand side, there is a risk that they might not be able to influence the choices of producers (investors, developers), who end up having most of the decision-making power on the overall quality of developments.

The development process is mostly a profit-driven process in which commercial pressures often go against long-term investment in design quality. The problem is complex, as most decisions related to the built environment are carried out by development actors 'far removed from their impact on the ground' (Carmona et al. 2003). For this reason, exhortations of the public benefits of good design will have a limited impact on a climate in which financial value and return are the main drivers for private sector investment (Ibidem). The question of effectiveness is therefore one of the crucial issues that architectural policies need to address and better convene in the future.

Although each national context has its own regulatory system, there are certain quality criteria that may be introduced in the procurement and development processes without restricting the design capacity for innovation too much (see the new Catalonia and Spanish Law in Section 5). For example, the new Scottish policy *Place and Architecture* (2013) introduces principles of good design as 'material considerations in determining planning applications and appeals'. Another example is the *Place Standard* assessment tool, aimed at creating greater certainty around quality of place. Another interesting example was the establishment of Quality teams in the Dutch local authorities, to introduce design quality concerns early on in the development process[94]. Nevertheless, local design statement and non-statutory design guidance within the planning policy are also important tools. In this regard, architectural policies should pursue a mix of policy tools, combining regulatory and informal tools, in order to raise the effectiveness of the policies.

6.5 – The Dublin Docklands Area, a major project of physical,
social and economic regeneration in the East side of Dublin, managed by the Dublin Docklands
Development Authority established in 1997 (Source: Kennedy Wilson).

Inter-sectoral barriers and the need for better co-ordination

One of the main barriers that architectural policies have to face with regard to their implementation strategies is how to influence different state departments and improve the co-ordination of the wide range of policies that affect the built environment. As the policy scope increased to higher spatial scales (e.g., urban planning, infrastructure, and landscape design), the number of supporting departments that need to be involved also increased. In addition, architectural policies proclaim that the state should present itself as an exemplary client committed to quality in every aspect of building procurement and property development. However, public administration is a complex and multi-level organization. Consequently, to achieve their aims, architectural policies have to be able to persuade a constellation of public managers and principals, who have their own agendas and priorities, to give more priority to design quality rather than to the lowest price.

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[94] See: https://urbanmaestro.org/example/q-teams/

Looking at the three case studies, one of the ways to address this has been to create an inter-departmental platform and to set up the position of a State Architect / Chief Government Architect. As seen earlier, the creation of an inter-departmental working group may get different state actors involved in the policy formulation, to monitor the policy progress and improve inter-departmental co-ordination. As a complement, the State Architect teams are playing an important role in influencing and providing design support services to other public departments and clients to ensure that design quality is a priority and not seen as an optional extra.

In the Scottish case, some of the interviewees mentioned that the Chief Architect was not placed higher enough in the governmental structure, which curtailed his or her capacity to demand higher design standards in public agencies outside his or her department. Some interviewees suggested that the position should sit near the cabinet. This means that, despite the title and the small team that supports its activities, inter-departmental barriers will continue to be a difficult challenge if the State Architect does not have enough political support.

6.7 - Robin House Children's Hospice, Loch Lomond, Scotland (2005); Design: Gareth Hoskins Architects; Client: Children Hospice Association (Source: Andrew Lee Photography)

A long-term goal: the need to create a virtuous circle of production

The production of the built environment is a complex field where multiple actors intervene and where several interests are at stake. This means that the quality of the urban environment derives from various interventions and policy decisions over time and reflects the collective work of multiple stakeholders – public, private and community (Urban Maestro, 2021). To achieve better places, a constant endeavour from all actors involved in the production of the built environment is required. As such, it is not enough only to regulate (formal tools) the development process to achieve better places, it is also necessary to raise awareness and motivate the producers (investors, developers, designers) as well as to promote informed and educated demand (clients and consumers), to be able to create a virtuous circle of production.

Through an architectural policy, governments define a strategic vision and action plan to promote successful and sustainable places, which is a long-term goal. Several interviewees mentioned that while the interest in architecture has increased, it remains circumscribed to a select group of people. In addition, they mention a gap between the professional and the public debate that was difficult to bridge. This shows the complex task and long-term goals of architectural policies. In fact, changing attitudes towards better design, and developing skills where they barely exist, will be a slow process. Thus, the policy objectives will not be achieved in a short period of time, which hinders the perception of decision-makers of the impact of policies.

Policy reorientation in a period of austerity

The prosperous times of the 1990s, which lay down the fertile ground for the birth of the first generation of architectural policies, are over. Besides the economic turn, the social and political context has also changed. Considering the new scenario, architectural policies have been facing great challenges. In fact, all the interviewees mentioned the effects of the financial crisis on the budget of architectural policies, leading to a recalibration of their tools. The Dutch cultural budget suffered a 25% reduction, which led to a restructuring of architectural policy tools, with a new discourse about the economic value of design with a stronger focus on cultural industries, product innovation and internationalization. In the Irish case, the policy budget also suffered notable cuts that have prevented the execution of most of its actions. This means that in a time of crisis and austerity, architectural policies need to reinvent themselves otherwise they will face the risk of losing their position as a policy. Issues like lack of housing, shrinking cities and vacancy have entered the agenda, and architectural policies should take advantage of design thinking to propose new ways of improving social conditions in a holistic manner with fewer resources.

Bridging with local authorities

In all three countries, interviewees reported that local authorities were slowly losing their design skills by dismissing architects and designers. Although some of the architectural policies contained an explicit reference to this phenomenon, the central state has been unable to reverse this trend. Some of the policies introduced the wish to appoint city and county architects in each county, to act as design champions. The aim was to strengthen design processes at local government level to better co-ordinate the design and planning processes, ensuring design skills at all stages of the planning process as a way to encourage good design quality. According to the interviewees, however, they were not able to financially support these positions due to budget cuts, which means that design deficit continues to be a challenge for most small and medium-sized local authorities.

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KEY ONLINE RESOURCES

- New European Bauhaus

https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/

- Davos Declaration

https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/

- Architectural policies in Europe (ACE-CAE)

https://www.ace-cae.eu/architects-in-europe/eu-architectural-policy/

- Project Urban Maestro:

https://urbanmaestro.org/