

EURA Ten year Progress Report

Welcome

The European Urban Research Association (EUURA) is an international network of urban scholars. The Association was launched in 1997 and aspires to the three aims set out in the adjacent panel.

Over the years EUURA has been very active and the conference on 'Learning cities in a knowledge based society' held in Milan on 8-11 October 2008 is our seventeenth international event.

When the EUURA Governing Board met at our last conference, held in Glasgow in September 2007, it reflected on the achievements of EUURA over the years. As we felt it would be helpful in mapping out the future direction of EUURA we decided to conduct a review of the performance of EUURA. How well have we done? And what could be EUURA priorities for the next ten years?

This 'EUURA Ten Year Progress Report' is the result of that decision. The report has been co-authored by the Presidents of EUURA (past and present) on behalf of the Governing Board.

The report serves three purposes:

- 1) To provide a reasonably concise record of the activities of EUURA (1997-2007)
- 2) To provide a welcoming guide to our activities and ethos to those who are new to EUURA
- 3) To review our progress and provide pointers for the coming period

We welcome your comments. Please contact any member of the Board or the Secretariat – details on the back page. And thank you for your interest!

EUURA Governing Board
September 2008

The aims of EUURA

- To encourage international exchange and co-operation in relation to urban research
- To stimulate and encourage interdisciplinary and cross-national urban research
- To contribute to urban policy debates.

Contents

Introduction

The aspirations of EUURA

A look back

1. Encouraging international exchange in relation to urban research
2. Stimulating interdisciplinary and cross-national urban research
3. Contributing to urban policy debates

Looking ahead

1. Launch a new international journal
2. Expand the number of Institutional Members
3. Continue the good international collaboration
4. Inspire innovation

EURA Ten year Progress Report

Rob Atkinson, Robin Hambleton, Jacob Norvig Larsen and Pawel Swianiewicz reflect on the development of the association in the period 1997-2007 and consider

‘where next?’

Introduction

Launched in Brussels in September 1997 at an international conference on ‘Governing Cities – International Perspectives’, the European Urban Research Association (EURA) has, over the years, established itself as a vibrant network of urban scholars. Members of the association strive not just to understand what is happening in and around modern cities but also to work, in a variety of ways, to offer advice to city leaders, policy makers and activists on how to shape the future direction of European cities and city regions.

Given EURA is now celebrating its tenth birthday it seems like a good opportunity to review – albeit with a light touch – the progress that has been made by EURA and to offer some thoughts on possible future directions.

Gradually, from a small but ambitious networking initiative, EURA has become a mature international organization. A crucial step in the evolution of EURA was the adoption of the EURA Charter in 2005. This provides the association with a formal constitution. However, and this is an important strength, we still remain a loosely formalized and non-bureaucratic organization. We believe in flexible, bottom-up networking initiatives and it is the intention of the EURA Governing Board to maintain this character of EURA in years ahead.

The aspirations of EURA

EURA has always had a clear and focussed agenda. The three fundamental aims of the association, formulated in 1997, have appeared on the front page of every EURA Newsletter published since then:

- To encourage international exchange and co-operation in relation to urban research
- To stimulate and encourage interdisciplinary and cross-national urban research
- To contribute to urban policy debates

So, how has EURA done? Here we offer a report card on each aim in turn.

A look back

1) Encouraging international exchange in relation to urban research

EURA has pursued the aim of fostering international exchange in a variety of ways. But the conferences and workshops EURA has organized have been the lynchpin in our approach to building international dialogue and understanding during this last ten years. Of course, we are proud of the success of the EURA website in fostering links among scholars in different countries – www.eura.org. Moreover, the six monthly EURA Newsletter continues to provide an invaluable vehicle for the sharing of information and insights on urban issues – it provides an arena open to all who share the aims of EURA.

But, arguably the most exciting achievement of EURA in this first decade, is the way it has brought scholars from different countries, cultures and contexts together – to share perspectives, to learn new insights, to be startled by differences in perception, to debate the pros and cons of different concepts and approaches and, of course, to have good times together!

Since 1997 EURA has organised seventeen international conferences or workshops. In five of the last ten years we have organised more than one international event. Some of the time we have focussed energy on relatively big conferences – like the ones in Paris (1999), Copenhagen (2001), Turin (2002), Budapest (2003), Chicago (2004), Warsaw (2006), Glasgow (2007) and Milan (2008). At other times we have tried to put the spotlight on very specific themes or issues and organized more focussed workshops.

The centre spread on pages 4-5 provides a list of all the EURA events organized in the period 1997-2008. It shows that EURA has held international gatherings in 13 different countries and the map of Europe illustrates rather well how we have attempted to pursue the aims of EURA in a wide range of geographical settings.

This year – in October 2008 - we return to Italy to engage in a forward-looking conference in Milan hosted by the Politecnico di Milano on ‘Learning cities in a knowledge-based global society’. In 2009 we plan a major conference in Madrid on ‘City Futures in a globalising world’.

This will take the form of a Joint Conference with the US Urban Affairs Association (UAA) and can be seen as a follow up to the successful transatlantic conference on 'City Futures' we held (in partnership with the UAA) in Chicago in 2004. And in 2010 we plan a conference in Darmstadt.

We are most grateful to all the universities, research institutes and enthusiastic individuals who have made such a success of literally all these international events.

2) Stimulating interdisciplinary and cross-national urban research

Interwoven with our efforts to foster international exchange EURA has sought to lift the quality of interdisciplinary and cross-national research.

EURA events have fostered professional and personal acquaintances that have brought about a range of cross-national collaborations – from international guest professorships to a variety of collaborative international research and consultancy projects. **PLUS** and **G-FORS** provide a couple of examples.

Funded by the European Commission, under the Fifth Framework Programme, 'Cities of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage', the **PLUS** project (www.eura.org/plus-eura) on 'Participation, Leadership and Urban Sustainability', was a cross-national research project involving partners (29 in all) in nine countries. Completed in 2004, the project produced a range of papers, articles and two books on community involvement, city leadership and institutional sustainability.

'Governance for Sustainability', **G-FORS** (www.gfors.eu), is a Framework 6 funded project under Priority 7 – 'Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society'. G-FORS is investigating the contention that, unless cities and other levels of governance effectively incorporate a range of forms of knowledge in their approach to policy making, there is a danger that efforts to promote sustainability will be partial and ineffective. The G-FORS consortium, which has twelve members with both research and practice partners, including EURO CITIES, runs until January 2009.

Bringing together urban scholars and colleagues from countries all over Europe and beyond is obviously an important goal in its own right for a European association. A very positive by-product of this international community building is that many people have met each other for the first time at a EURA event, have become friends and have then met again at subsequent events. Many papers co-authored by scholars from different countries have stemmed from EURA meetings. Productive and innovative collaborative efforts thrive best when people find each other sympathetic. Fortunately EURA has developed a social environment that is characterised by a friendly and creative atmosphere. EURA gatherings are not short of humour and, from time to time, fun activities such as singing and dancing!

3) Contributing to urban policy debates

The development of a "EU urban policy" was initially promoted by a series of documents published by the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) during the 1990s (CEC, 1997 and 1998). These led to a greater focus on urban issues at EU level. Since 1998 the majority of EU Presidencies have had an urban theme as part of their work programme and have held international urban conferences or fora.

This has been both a strength and weakness - a strength in the sense that these efforts have helped to raise the profile of urban issues and have helped to keep them on the 'European' agenda. But a weakness in that, even when successive Presidencies have had an urban theme, each has had a somewhat different focus and emphasis. A consequence is that there has been no real sense of continuity in relation to urban policy between Presidencies. Critics have, not surprisingly, complained that there has been 'policy drift' and, more bluntly, a lack of leadership on the urban agenda at the European level.

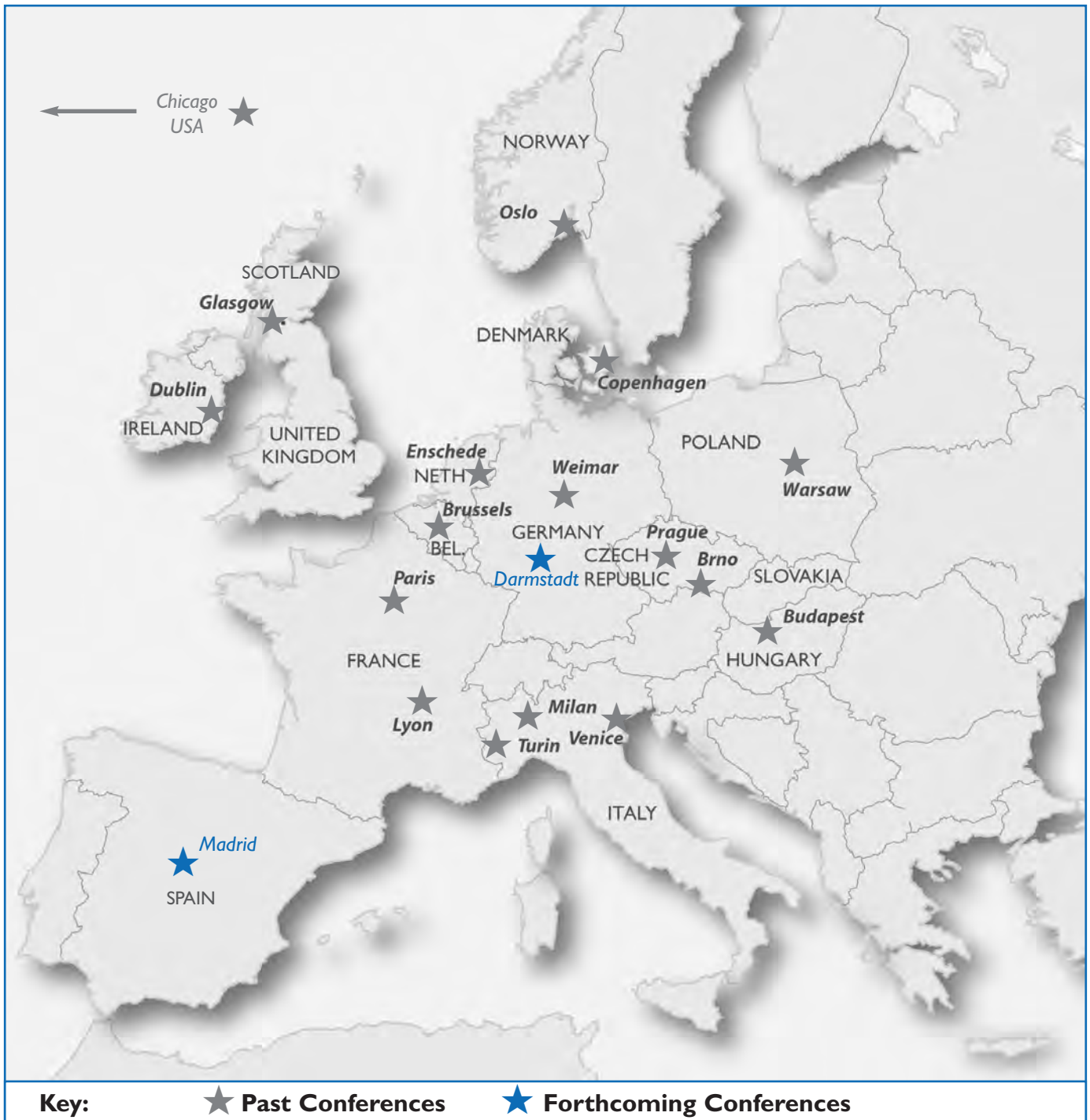
It is not, however, all gloom and doom. Since the Dutch Presidency of 2004 and the agreement of the Rotterdam *Urban Acquis*, there does seem to have been a greater degree of coherence about the EU approach to urban issues. EU Presidencies since 2004 have sought to enhance and develop the urban agenda through the Bristol Accord (2005) and, more recently under the German Presidency, through the Leipzig Charter (German Presidency, 2007a). Indeed one of the accompanying explanatory notes boldly states 'The Leipzig Charter will create a foundation for a new urban policy in Europe.' (German Presidency, 2007b, p1).

Despite these developments, the idea of an EU Urban Policy remains highly contentious as the EU lacks a legal competence to develop and implement an urban policy. Nevertheless, the *Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion* (CEC, 2004) explicitly points to the importance of EU 'urban policy' which amounts to *de facto* acknowledgement that EU policies have important implications for the future development of cities. There is, at the very least, an implicit EU urban policy – or what we might term an 'urban agenda'.

Furthermore, the importance of cities has been enhanced in recent years by the increased acceptance amongst politicians and policy makers that cities are Europe's 'motors of economic development'. This function has become closely associated with the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy thereby strengthening the position of urban areas in the thinking of many key actors at all levels of governance.

Continued on Page 6

Location of EURA events



EURA events (1997-2010)

1997

'Governing cities: international perspectives'

Brussels, September 1997. Hosted by the University of the West of England, Bristol

Organisers: Robin Hambleton and Murray Stewart

60 participants from 14 countries. 17 papers. Involvement of EC and OECD

1998

'Towards an urban agenda in the European Union'

Venice, May 1998. Hosted by Dipartimento di Analisi Economica e Sociale del Territorio (DAEST)

Organiser: Paola Somma

46 participants from 14 countries. Report to European

1999

'Innovations in urban governance'

Oslo, April 1999. Hosted by the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)

Organisers: Jon Naustdalslid and Jan Erling Klausen

20 participants from 8 countries. 15 papers. Involvement of City of Oslo

'European cities in transformation'

Paris, October 1999. Hosted by LATTTS, Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chausees

Organiser: Christian Lefevre

Over 100 participants from 16 countries. 17 papers. Involvement of the Chairman of the Association of Mayors of the largest French cities and OECD

2000

'Cities in the region'

Dublin, April 2000. Hosted by the Department of Regional and Urban Planning, University College, Dublin

Organiser: Michael Bannon

72 participants from 13 countries. 22 papers plus a presentation on the Urban Audit

Involvement of Irish Central government, the City of Dublin and numerous local authorities

2001

'Area-based initiatives in contemporary urban policy – innovations in city governance'

Copenhagen, 17-19 May 2001. Hosted by Danish Building and Urban Research

Organisers: Jacob Norvig Larsen and Hans Kristensen

142 participants from 24 countries. 62 papers. Colloquium on EU Framework 5 urban research projects led by DG Research. Presentations from DG Regio on European urban programmes and the Danish Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Danish urban policy

'Strategies for revitalising East European cities'

Prague, 20-22 September 2001. Hosted by the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Organisers: Michal Illner and Rob Atkinson

40 participants from 13 countries. 33 papers plus presentations on the development of Prague. Involvement in the City of Prague

2002

'Urban and spatial European policies – levels of territorial government'

Turin, 18-20 April 2002. Hosted by the Politecnico e Università di Torino

Organisers: Alessandro Balducci and Giuseppe Dematteis

100 participants from 16 countries. 50 papers

'City images and urban regeneration'

Weimar, 11-12 October 2002. Hosted by Bauhaus University Weimar

Organiser: Frank Eckardt

45 participants. Over 20 papers from across Europe

2003

'Universities and their role in urban community development'

Enschede, 10-11 April 2003. Hosted by the University of Twente

Organiser: Prof dr S.A.H. Denters

'European urban development, research and policy: The future of European cohesion policy'

Budapest, 28-30 August 2003. Hosted by the Metropolitan Research Institute

Organiser: Ivàn Tosics

90 participants, more than half representing Central and East European countries. 31 papers

2004

'City futures – an international conference on globalism and urban change'

Chicago, 8-10 July 2004. Hosted by the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)

A joint conference organised by EURA and the US Urban Affairs Association (UAA)

Organisers: Robin Hambleton and Janet Smith

250 participants from 36 countries. Over 160 papers presented

'Public spaces and quality of life in cities'

Brno, 23-25 September 2004. Hosted by the Faculty of Architecture TU Brno

Organiser: Vladimira Silhankova

2005

'International policies and strategies of cities'

Lyon, 10 December 2005. Hosted by Institut d'Études Politiques de Lyon

Organisers: Christian Lefèvre and Bernard Jouve

Papers presented by members of CITTA and invited speakers

2006

'Cities in city regions' – 1st Bi-annual EURA conference)

Warsaw, 11-14 May 2006. Hosted by University of Warsaw

Organiser: Pawel Swianiewicz

Over 120 participants from 26 countries, over 80 papers

2007

'The vital city'

Glasgow, 12-14 September 2007. Hosted by the University of Glasgow

Organiser: Ivan Turok

Over 260 participants from 30 countries. Over 180 papers

2008

'Learning cities in a knowledge-based global society' – 2nd Bi-annual EURA conference

Milan, 9-11 October 2008. Hosted by the Politecnico di Milano

Organiser: Alessandro Balducci

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

2009

'City Futures in a Globalising World'

Madrid, 4-6 June 2009.

A joint conference organized by EURA and the US Urban Affairs Association (UAA) as a transatlantic follow up to the successful 'City Futures' Conference held in Chicago in 2004.

2010

3rd Bi-annual EURA conference

Darmstadt, 2010 (Date: tbd)

This international conference will be organized by the Darmstadt Technical University.

EURA has contributed to these urban policy developments by participating in debates at European, national and local levels. For example, in 1998 the EURA workshop held in Venice in May of that year examined the document 'Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union' (CEC, 1998) and produced a report for the European Commission. In 2003/04 EURA prepared the academic input into a Stakeholder Forum organised by DG Environment on the 'Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment'. And EURA is also represented on the EUROCITIES Urban Policy Research Working Group and seeks to collaborate with the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN). At national and local levels individual members of EURA are actively contributing to debates around urban policy and urban development.

Looking ahead

The future of EURA is, of course, in the hands of its members. In our view the three core aims of EURA remain sound and the association should continue to focus on achieving them in this next decade. Here we highlight four ideas for the future of EURA and we welcome comments on them.

1) Launch a new international journal

It has long been a wish that EURA should be able to offer both its own members and the urban research and practice community in general the benefits of a journal dedicated to cultivating links between the interests of urban scholars and policy makers. We are delighted that an entirely new international journal - **Urban Research & Practice** – was launched in March 2008. (see back page for the journal website)

Urban Research & Practice is a truly interdisciplinary journal, which will provide a systematic analysis of urban issues, urban developments and urban policy and implementation. It will seek to explain cross-national variations in urban policies and/or urban governance and will also look at the European-wide factors that impact on urban areas, urban policies and urban governance.

Urban Research & Practice aims to bridge the intellectual and geographical 'divides' that currently exist in the field of urban affairs. As well as traditional academic papers, the journal includes a policy section, a project report section and book reviews. We see this new journal making a major and lasting contribution to the field of interdisciplinary, cross-national urban research. We encourage you to write for it and subscribe to it.

2) Expand the number of Institutional Members of EURA

EURA has members in over twenty countries and has a core group of over 30 institutional members. At the EURA Governing Board meeting held in Glasgow at 'The Vital City' conference in September 2007 the EURA leadership took the view that the time is now right to expand the number of EURA Institutional Members significantly. We believe this is a good way of delivering the aims of EURA and, while we will always provide a warm welcome to our many individual members, it is clear that we should be doing much more to involve the many institutions who share our aims.

As part of this we encourage you to spread the word about EURA to institutional leaders – in universities, in research centres, in government and elsewhere. Please invite them to join EURA as Institutional Members. This will give them an electronic link to the EURA website as well as opportunities to contribute in a variety of ways to the future direction of engaged urban scholarship in an international setting.

3) Continue the good international collaboration

We want to build upon our earlier achievements and successes and encourage an expansion of cross-national comparative urban research. As we mentioned above, our conferences have been particularly important in establishing dialogue between academics (and practitioners) from different countries and disciplines. We want to continue this path, and several new meetings are already under preparation.

Following the success of the PLUS and GFORS projects we will encourage the creation of new international and interdisciplinary research initiatives.

4) Inspire innovation

EURA has much to be proud of. In ten years it has 'come from nowhere' to a position where it is now regarded as a well respected international network of urban scholars. It has established itself not just as an important thought leader in the world of urban studies and urban policy development, but also as an intellectual home for the next generation of urban scholars.

We need your ideas to ensure EURA prospers in the future and we are open to new suggestions on how to promote and expand the field.

One recent example can illustrate the point. In July 2005, at a CEU Summer University course on Local Government Studies held in Budapest, an international group of PhD students (the JUNIUS network) suggested that EURA should create an award to act as an incentive to young or emerging scholars. We thought this was a great idea and, in 2006, we announced the 'EURA Young Scholar Award'. Following an international competition the first Young Scholar Award was made at 'The Vital City' conference in Glasgow. We intend to make further awards in the future. Please visit the EURA website to find out more.

We believe that a fundamental reason why EURA has been so successful is that it is flexible and is enthusiastic about innovation. It is an inclusive association and welcomes new ideas from any source. We expect EURA in 2017 to be very different from 2007 – but in what way depends on you!

Bibliography

Bristol Accord (2005) *Conclusions of Ministerial Informal Meeting on Sustainable Communities in Europe*, UK Presidency, Bristol 6-7 December 2005, ODPM, London.

Commission of the European Communities (1997) *Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union*, Communication from the Commission, COM(97) 197, final, 06.05.97, Commission of the European Communities: Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (1998) *Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action*, Communication from the Commission COM(1998) 605 final, 28.10.98, Commission of the European Communities: Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (2004) *A new Partnership for Cohesion. Convergence, Competitiveness, Cooperation*, Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels.

German Presidency (2007a) *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, Final Draft, document prepared by the German Presidency of the European Union, Leipzig.

German Presidency (2007b) *Renaissance der Städte*, document prepared for the Informelles Ministertreffen Leipzig, May 24-25th 2007.

About the authors

Pawel Swianiewicz is the current President of EURA and Robin Hambleton, Jacob Norvig Larsen and Rob Atkinson are Past Presidents of EURA.

The European Urban Research Association

EURA has both institutional and individual membership. - [Join Now](#)

Urban Research and Practice - our new journal
To view the first issue for free visit: www.informaworld.com/RURP

EURA Young scholar award

EURA has a bi-annual Young Scholar Award. - see our website

The European Urban Research Association Governing Board

Dr Pawel Swianiewicz
(President)
University of Warsaw,
Poland
pswian@uw.edu.pl

Dr Dubravka Alibegovic
The Institute of Economics, Zagreb,
Croatia
djurlina@eizg.hr

Professor Rob Atkinson
University of the West of England, UK
rob.atkinson@uwe.ac.uk

Professor Alessandro Balducci
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
sandro.balducci@polimi.it

Ulas Bayraktar
IEP-Paris/University of Mersin, Turkey
ulasbayraktar@yahoo.com

Dr Laurence Carmichael
University of the West of England, UK
laurence.carmichael@uwe.ac.uk

Professor Dr Jens Dangschat
Technische Universität Wien, Austria
jens.dangschat@tuwien.ac.at

Professor Bas Denters
University of Twente, The
Netherlands
s.a.h.denters@bsk.utwente.nl

Professor Panos Getimis
Panteion University, Athens,
Greece
pget@panteion.gr

Professor Robin Hambleton
University of the West of England,
UK
robin.hambleton@uwe.ac.uk

Professor Dr Hubert Heinelt
Technische Universität,
Darmstadt, Germany
heinelt@pg.tu-darmstadt.de

Mervi Ilmonen
Helsinki University of Technology,
Finland
mervi.ilmonen@hut.fi

**Associate Professor Folke
Johansson**
Goteborg University, Sweden
folke.iohansson@pol.gu.se

Dr Jan Erling Klausen
Norwegian Institute for Urban
and Regional Research, Norway
jan.e.klausen@nibr.no

Professor Christian Lefèvre
LATTS-ENPC, France
lefevre@descartes.enpc.fr

Dr Jacob Norvig Larsen
Danish Building and Urban
Research, Denmark
jnl@sbi.dk

**Associate Professor Liliana
Padovani**
Istituto Universitario di
Architettura di Venezia, Italy
padovani@iuav.it

Anne Querrien
Les Annales de la Recherche
Urbaine, France
anne.querrien@equipement.gouv.fr

Dr Cristiana Rossignolo
Politecnico di Torino, Italy
rossignolo@archi.polito.it

Dr Paula Russell
University College Dublin,
Republic of Ireland
paula.russell@ucd.ie

**Professor Inés Sánchez de
Madariaga**
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid,
Spain
imadariaga@orangecorreo.es

Dr Ivan Tosics
Metropolitan Research Institute,
Hungary
tosics@mri.hu

Your views

We would welcome your views and reactions to this EURA Ten Year Progress Report. Please send your comments - particularly if you have new ideas for EURA - to any member of the EURA Governing Board or to Julie Triggles in the EURA Secretariat

Email: Julie.Triggles@uwe.ac.uk

Published by:

Faculty of Environment and Technology
University of the West of England, Bristol
Coldharbour Lane,
Frenchay,
Bristol
BS16 1QY, UK

Don't forget you can always visit our website at:

<http://www.eura.org>