

# Recognising the value of architecture as a key lever for high-quality living spaces



Manifesto for the EU institutions

Time to Act: for high-quality architecture and living environment for all



## ACE key policy priorities for the EU institutions

### Promoting high-quality architecture and living environment for all

- **Recognising the value of architecture as a key lever for high-quality living spaces**
- Embedding the values of the New European Bauhaus in EU legislation
- Developing a proposal for a Planning Services Directive

### Advancing the highest standards in education and ensuring the upskilling of professionals

- Aligning with the International Standard of Training (5+2)
- Resolving the problem of mixed qualifications
- Ensuring the up-skilling of professionals

### Establishing a SME-friendly regulatory framework

- Ensuring strict reciprocal application of the Government Procurement Agreement and International Procurement Instrument
- Revising the Public Procurement Directive

### Favouring architectural and planning solutions in the built environment

- Tackling whole-life impact of the built environment and apply circular economy principles in the construction sector
- Promoting renovation, transformation and re-use of existing buildings over demolition and new builds
- Adapting living spaces to the effect of climate change through architectural and planning solutions

**Challenge:** How to achieve high-quality in the built environment?

**Solution:** Recognise the value of architecture as a key lever for high-quality architecture.

## Background

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness within the political realm of the positive contribution a high-quality built environment. Yet, at the same time, as underlined by the Davos Declaration, there is “a trend towards a loss of quality in (...) the built environment (...) all over Europe” and many EU countries are experiencing a housing crisis characterised by a shortage of affordable housing as well as the poor quality of a significant number of dwellings.

## ACE Policy Position

A high-quality architecture is a driver of economic growth, social cohesion, climate resilience and cultural vibrancy. Designing high-quality built environments should therefore be considered as a matter of public interest.

- **People and communities:** quality places encourage people to connect with each other and foster inclusive and cohesive societies.
- **Culture and identity:** quality places can contribute to create and sustain a sense of place and to strengthen identities and engender civic pride.
- **Sustainable development:** quality places help to reduce our resource consumption and carbon emissions and thereby help to mitigate climate change.
- **Economic advantages:** high-quality built environments arouse interest and generate dynamics that help to attract investors, workers and visitors.
- **Health benefits:** quality places have positive impacts on people’s health and wellbeing and are a considerable impetus for healthier lifestyle choices.

Designing quality places requires bespoke solutions, based on a careful assessment of the context and needs of the end-users. Conversely, standardised and “one-size-fits-all” solutions, single-minded approaches, and excessive focus on economic or technical aspects cannot result in qualitative outcomes.

Addressing the housing crisis requires us to put an end to the search for short-term economic gains and to tackle unnecessary and costly regulations. We urgently need to adopt an attitude that favours common good and quality of life and puts people and nature at the core of housing and urban developments. The ACE Statement For Affordable and Quality Housing includes a set of recommendations, to name but a few:

- Make public financial incentives for the construction/ renovation of public and private housing conditional on achieving high quality standards.
- Encourage participatory housing, self-development and the setting up of residents’ cooperatives.
- Support brownfield redevelopment with incentives and setting priority on urban planning documents.

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### **Links**

- ACE Statement [For Affordable and Quality Housing](#)
- ACE publication [High-quality Architecture and Built Environment: A Political Goal](#)
- Davos Declaration [Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe](#)
- OMC Group report [Towards a shared culture of architecture](#)
- ACE Statement [Achieving Quality in the Built Environment](#)
- Council conclusions on Culture, [high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus](#)

**“Architects, inter alia, play a central role 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 by taking into account territorial diversity and the needs of civil society.”**

**Source:** 2021 Council Conclusions on Culture, High-quality Architecture and built environment s key elements of the New European Bauhaus.

