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INTERNATIONAL AESOP CONGRESS IN VIENNA - THE DREAM OF A GREATER EUROPE.

On July 13- 17, 2005 the AESOP Congress took place in the neighbouring Vienna, organised by the TU Vienna. The motto of this year congress was "**The Dream of a GREATER Europe**" and this year AESOP Congress was dealing with the challenges of the unification process for the planning profession in Europe.

AESOP (Association of European Schools of Planning) is a network of not only European universities and research institutes with the aim to develop and support education and research and development in spatial planning. AESOP supports study stays, research and development and educational activities to exchange the knowledge. The most important event of the year is the Congress which is every year a platform for presentation the updated experience and knowledge gained in the frame of urban projects at the European, regional or local levels. The congress makes space for mutual discussions and exchange of opinions on methodology and form of teaching urban subjects. part of each congress are specific working groups, including the editing ones. Out of 15 tracks of this year congress, I was most interested in the contributions of the following tracks:

- Urban Design and Physical Form
- Urban Renewal and Redevelopment
- Economic Aspects of Land Use
- Sustainable Development in Planning
- Transport Planning and Mobility
- Planning Education and Practice
- Culture, Entertainment and Urban Planning.

Traditional part of the Congress are study tours and mobile workshops the role of which is to present not only the development of the city, its architecture but also the approaches and results of urban policy in the city and region. The organizers introduced their city in a complex way. The participants have been acquainted with social housing past and present, urban renewal, recent architecture projects, urban design, historical Vienna, Vienna underground, recreation areas- all in the frame of 11 study tours.

At the end of the Congress the participants could take part in 3 mobile workshops to know the Vienna region better. One of them was organised by our Faculty of

Architecture and focused on cross-border development (Bratislava - Devínska Nová Ves - Lesser Carpathians) which was attended with the highest number of participants. The city of Bratislava was presented by its historical core but also by the development of the Záhorie region and by new pedestrian precinct in Petržalka. Professionally guided tour was given by the members and PhD. students of the Institute of Urban Design and Spatial Planning.

From the rich offer of the AESOP congress, it is necessary to mention the PhD. workshop which concentrated on the principal feature of a PhD. in planning (from the FA STU there was one PhD. student - Ing. arch Olga Melcerová as an active participant). it is a superb opportunity for the PhD. students to confront their various theoretical as well as methodological approaches. At the same time it is a good opportunity to know the failures and success of the planning practice of the host city through the keynote lectures of leading professionals as well as its architecture. Last but not least is the experience to "explore" the city with young people from all over the world.

Similarly to other years the Congress was motivating not only from the professional and scientific view (as the forum to present the latest knowledge from the field of spatial planning and urban design) but also the space for starting or strengthening professional relations and friendships. At the Congress I made presentation of the paper 'Retail Projects in Bratislava - The Phenomenon of Shopping Centres and Hypermarkets' as well as gave information on the preparation of the meeting of the deans of the schools associated in the AESOP that will take place in March 2006 at the FA STU in Bratislava.

Next year the AESOP Congress will move to the South American continent to Mexico. PhD. workshop will take place in Europe, at the University of Bristol, UK.

