

SELMA HARRINGTON



CANDIDATE'S PROFILE

Selma Harrington has been nominated by the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) as a Candidate for the 2010-2011 Presidency of the ACE.

Selma was born and educated in Sarajevo, Bosnia–Herzegovina. She has practised as an architect in Ireland for the past 12 years, and previously in Central and Western Europe, Africa and South-East Asia. She has worked as a Project Architect leading teams in large and medium-sized practices. She is now a self-employed architect, consultant and lecturer. She has completed residential, educational, commercial, healthcare, conservation and urban rejuvenation projects; and has also done street furniture and product design.

Her travels, her good humour and diplomacy, and her skills in communication, administration and in project management, have given Selma a keen understanding of problems facing architects and their professional organisations within the enlarging European economic area. Selma is actively involved in the work of the RIAI, especially as a committee member in a variety of roles. She is Head of the RIAI International Affairs Division, and of the Irish delegation to ACE.

Since 2003 she has been active in the ACE, participating in the former Permanent Committees, and recently in the Thematic Area *Architecture and Quality of Life*. She has an overview of the ACE's work, a constructive relationship with ACE Board members and with its Secretariat, and an expanding network of contacts with delegates from national Member Organisations.

Selma has experience in representing national and international professional organisations. She has been

- Secretary General of ECIA (European Council of Interior Architects) 2004-08
- President of the Institute of Designers in Ireland, 2003
- One of the organisers for the UIA Seminar 'Architecture & Poverty', 2002
- Honorary Treasurer of the Institute for Design and Disability in Ireland 2001
- Committee Member of IAESTE (International Association for Exchange of Scientific and Technical Expertise) and ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design)

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Colleagues and clients who work with Selma have learned to rely on her professionalism and her efficient management . They know her ability to create a constructive and friendly working climate in a variety of situations; using clear thinking; initiative, creativity and leadership; and dedication and attention to detail. These are matched with fluency in English and in Bosnian/Serbo-Croat, and with a good command of French and Italian.

Her candidacy has the support of an active and experienced team of RIAI colleagues, on whose help she can draw if elected ACE President.

CANDIDATE'S POLICY PLATFORM *REVIEW, RESOURCE, RE-IMAGINE*

The ACE approaches its **20th anniversary in 2010**. Building on its achievements under the Political Agenda 2006-2008, it must adapt to the suddenly changed economic and political environment across the EU, and to the impact which economic turmoil has had on the architectural profession.

The recent ACE Sector Study shows the concerns (and pessimism) of the majority of respondents, who are experiencing sharp decline in demand for architects' services. But the increase in the number of respondents shows that the ACE is more and more perceived as an umbrella under which shelter can be sought. The ACE is a resource that can be used in a meaningful way to inform its Member Organisations, and so to support them in achieving benefits for architects across Europe.

At recent ACE meetings, there is a clearly expressed consensus of ACE delegates, around the idea that *the market cannot, on its own or beyond a certain point, promote the quality of the built environment and, more generally, the quality of life of citizens.*

The ACE's mission seems clearest within the sphere of **Practice of the Profession**. At the end of 2009, the Services Directive will take effect in the market for architects' services. There is a risk that new competent authorities – municipalities or chambers of commerce, for example – will further tip the balance against EU regulation of architects and architecture, and towards a deregulatory competition dogma. The devolution from EU level to national level of many competition policies and issues has increased – and not reduced as one might have hoped – the risks to architects, to their clients and to the environment in general.

ACE Member Organisations represent independent and employed professionals, and their competent authorities. The ACE must help them (mainly with information and communication) to convey their wisdom and experience at national level. This is equally necessary in the field of **Access to the Profession**, to inform the dialogue of Member Organisations with those responsible for transposing and implementing laws and policies; including the Professional Qualifications Directive, as well as the Services and Competition Directives, the draft Consumer Protection Directive etc.

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There is a lack of coherence and convergence among EU Directives in both of these ACE Thematic Areas, and among the EU agencies and officials responsible for them. This deficiency is a threat to architecture; but it presents an opportunity for the ACE, as champion of architecture as a public art and of the client/consumer, to form alliances to uphold standards in architecture. The ACE's work on **Architecture and Quality of Life** should inform, and perhaps pervade, the other two thematic areas.

A key priority and focus in this area is **Sustainability**, understood in its broadest sense to include the natural and built environment:-- to include the global priority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and to include impacts of energy, technology and economic activity on society from EU level down to local communities. **Sustainability** must respect urbanism, heritage and regional values; as well as addressing design of new buildings; and must do so in the training of architects as well as in professional practice.

The ACE's achievements rely on the actual activity and interaction of practising architects from member organisations, at national and ACE level, in direct communication with national and EU institutions. The ACE Executive Board, led by the President, and working day-to-day through ACE's Secretariat, must facilitate that action and interaction; and must confidently coordinate it within the limits of ACE resources and of the work and other inputs from Member Organisations. Those other unputs should draw on the diverse cultures, skills, knowledge and experience of all ACE Member Countries.

If elected, I aim to lead the work of the ACE as follows:

- **Interact on behalf of the Board with Member Organisations, which are the principal concern and resource of the ACE, motivating new active participants in the work of the ACE so as to refresh and rejuvenate it.**
- **Understand and respond to the economic challenges facing European societies, helping to equip architects to provide leadership and new thinking; in emerging from recession, and in promoting the economic, technological, cultural and sustainable potential of architects' role .**
- **Focus on common goals of ACE Member Organisations, mindful of the ACE membership base among architect practitioners and competent authorities, and promoting institutional change and diversity in a way which protects architects' public value as an independent profession; particularly through strengthened interaction with EU organisations.**
- **Recognize ACE achievements over the past 20 years; review board and administrative structures as necessary; and build on these to enhance the ACE's strength and reputation as an effective, resource-efficient organisation, working with other organisations which can help us to achieve our goals.**