

The Changing Demography of Europe

A Presentation on

Accessibility to the Built Environment: The Role of the Architect

Adrian Joyce

Senior Adviser

Architects Council of Europe



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Presentation to the ELA

March 2004

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The Architects' Council of Europe - 1

42 Member Organisations from:

- 25 Member States of the EU
- 3 Accession States
- Norway and Switzerland

Representing about 400,000 Practising Architects



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The Architects' Council of Europe - 2

Member Organisations are:

- Professional Representative Bodies
- Regulatory Bodies

Main Objectives:

- Promoting Architecture
- Uniting Architects



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The Architects' Council of Europe - 3

- **Permanent Secretariat in Brussels**
- **2 General Assemblies per Year**
- **About 200 Participants in Working Groups**

Website: www.ace-cae.org



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Overview

- **Working Definition**
- **Statistics on Ageing**
- **EU Policies and Activity**
- **National Policies**
- **Regional and Local Policies**
- **The Policy of the ACE**
- **The Role of the Architect**
- **Conclusions**



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Working Definition - 1

Important to Agree a Common Understanding

“Accessibility Means More Than Simply Providing for Easy Barrier-free Entrances to Buildings and Public Transport. It Extends to Include the Provision, to Everybody (Regardless of Physical or Mental Ability), of Access to Education, Training and Employment on the One Hand and to an Active Social and Economic Life on the Other Hand at all Stages of Life”



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Working Definition - 2

Who Should be Considered?

EVERYBODY

**We Shall All, at one time or another, Face the Challenge
of Having Limited Abilities**

Therefore the Approach is Good for Everybody



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Statistics on Ageing - 1

**General Agreement that the EU is Ageing
Fertility and Mortality Rates are Both Falling**

Challenges Ahead:

- **Pensions**
- **Employment**
- **Care**
- **Accommodation**

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Statistics on Ageing - 2

Today:

About 17% of EU-15 Population is Over 65

In 2025:

About 25% of EU-15 Population will be Over 65



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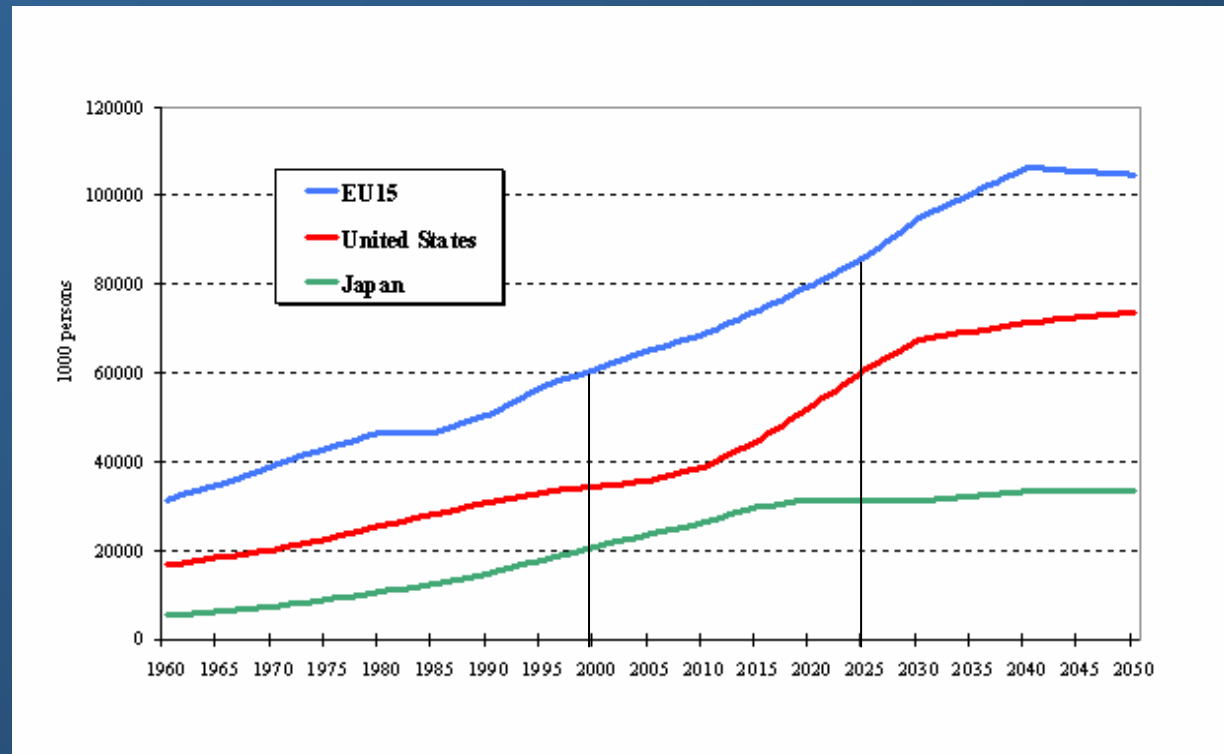
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Statistics on Ageing - 3



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Statistics on Ageing - 4

Aspirations of the Aged:

- Independence
- Stay in the Family Home
- Remain Active

Implications for All Policies



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Statistics on Ageing - 5

Accidents in the Home

A Dangerous Place - Fatalities:

- Slips
 - Trips
 - Falls
 - Fire
- } >50%
- >15%

90% aged over 40 - 65% aged over 64



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EU Policies and Activity - 1

2003 - European Year of People with Disabilities



Expert Working Group

ACE Representative - Fionnuala Rogerson



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EU Policies and Activity - 2

Main Recommendations:

- **Accessibility Should be Considered in all Policies**
- **Increase Research on Accessibility**
- **Assure a Follow-up to the EPYD**
- **Update and Develop Standards**
- **Develop Statistics and Indicators**
- **Involve all Actors**
- **Strengthen Co-ordination**



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EU Policies and Activity - 3

Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment

- “Passport” for Buildings
- Urban Transport

The ACE are Taking Part in Main Advisory Panel

More Integration of the Concept Needed



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EU Policies and Activity - 4

**Communication on Buildings - COM (2003) 755final
Includes Section on Accessibility**

Launched in December 2003

**The ACE are Advising on an Architecture Policy
Opportunity to Demonstrate Leadership**



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National Policies - 1

Member States are the Main Competent Authorities

- Legislation
- Standards
- Policies - Employment, Equality, Architectural etc.
- Incentives

Approach Should not be Exclusively Standards Based



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National Policies - 2

Value to Society:

- **Inclusiveness**
- **Social Cohesion**
- **Added Value - e.g. Property +3% if Adaptable**
- **Increased Turnover for Businesses**
- **Lower Care and Social Support Costs**



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Regional and Local Policies

Spatial Development Plans

- Recognise Needs
- Co-ordinate Standards
- Integrate Policies

Building Control Regulations

- Performance Based
- Indicators

Enforcement

- Unfortunately Essential



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The ACE Policy

Accessibility is Part of Sustainability

Acknowledge the Role of the Architect

Ensure Independence

Encourage Education

Ensure Involvement in EU Policy Development

Advise Member Organisations



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The Role of the Architect - 1

To Design

Take all Features and Constraints into Account

Act Independently

Be Conscious of Impact

- **On Society**
- **On the End-user**
- **On the Environment**
- **On the Future**



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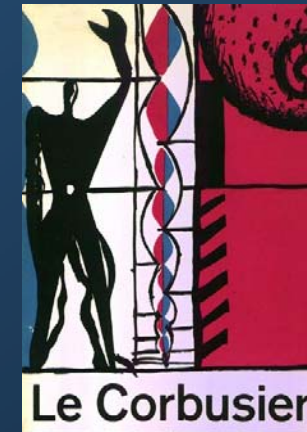
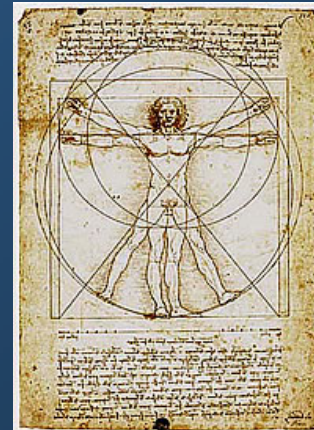
The Role of the Architect - 2

Achieved Through

- High Quality Education and Training
- Extensive Experience
- Lifelong Learning

Traditional Education

- “Standard Man”



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The Role of the Architect - 3

Example - Adaptable Housing:

Changing Demographics - Smaller Household Sizes

- Getting Towards 1 per Household

Large Existing Stock

- People Wish to Remain in Their Homes

Large Need for Renovation

- Especially in Accession States

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The Role of the Architect - 4

Adaptable Housing:

“Housing which is lifetime adaptable fulfils general housing needs and it makes provision for future installations such as a ground floor shower, chair or stair lifts and it contains features that make for easier and safer use of the home such as accessible switches and controls and lower window sills.

An adaptable house is capable of being altered without major reconstruction to meet the changing needs of its present and future occupants”



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The Role of the Architect - 5

Practical Measures:

- No Steps at Entrances
- Wider Doors and Corridors
- Low Level Light Switches
- Easy Opening Doors and Windows
- Good Living Space Throughout
- Accessible Bathrooms
- Easy to Operate Taps and Fittings

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The Role of the Architect - 6

Cost Implications

- **Incorporation at Design Stage - Negligible**
- **Incorporation During Life of Building - Very High**

Cost Benefits

- **Increased Value of House - +3%**
- **Decreased Cost of Care and Support Services**



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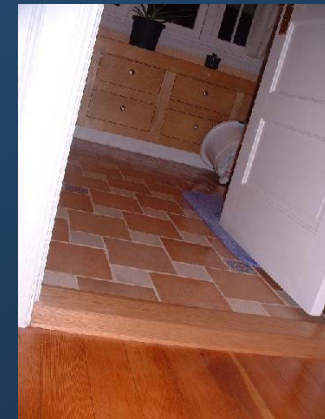
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The Role of the Architect - 7

The External Environment

- Routes Between Parking and Entrances
- Low or No Thresholds
- Accessible Door Controls
- Clear Signage
- Generous Porches and Lobbies
- Dished Footpaths



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Other Factors - 1

Public Transport

- **Must be Accessible**
- **Proximity to Homes and Services**

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SMART Design & Technology

- **Effort Saving Devices**
- **Simple Controls**



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Other Factors - 2

Human Rights

- The EU Treaty
- Fundamental Charter of Human Rights
- Policy Development

Tools - Aaoutils

- Aimed at Construction Professionals
- Could be Further Developed
- Visit: <http://anlh.be/aaoutils/en/index.html>

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Conclusions:

- **Architect Does not Operate in a Vacuum**
- **All Actors Must Co-operate**
- **Existing Housing**
- **Historical and Heritage Buildings**

Is Total Accessibility a Dream?

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