Towards an ARCHITECTURAL POLICY for TURKEY

The Chamber of Architects of Turkey is currently leading a campaign to develop an architectural policy for Turkey with the idea that creation of an architectural policy peculiar to the country is a significant step to achieve higher quality in the built environment. Architectural policy was an issue of debate for long years, but especially in the last two years this has become one of the priorities of the Chamber and a series of small and large meetings were held with a variety of participants to remember past experiences, as well as discussing current conditions and looking for the future perspective. The policy text was presented to the President of the Turkish Republic during a visit of the Chamber's Executive Board on March 20, 2007. It was also declared to the public opinion at a press conference on February 27, 2007 and circulated to all relevant public authorities by that date. The aim is to create awareness both in public authorities and in the society about the significance of a consistent and integral policy on built environment. The current policy text is just a very first step of an extensive policy; it is a draft to be developed by public participation and revised in time by changing conditions.

For further information about the architectural policy process in Turkey:

Chamber of Architects of Turkey (CAT)
A: Konur Sokak 4/2 06650 Kızılay - Ankara TURKEY
T: +90 0 312 417 37 27
F: +90 0 312 418 03 61
E: info@mo.org.tr
W: www.mo.org.tr/eng

Towards an ARCHITECTURAL POLICY for TURKEY

INTRODUCTION

Architecture is a cultural and artistic form of expression and a social element of culture.

Architecture as a cultural element belongs to the whole world, it is universal; and at the same time, with its products it belongs to a place, it is local. It is the most important part of the cultural wealth of a country, and is an indication of a city's or country's level of civilization. It determines the place a country or city holds in the world, and shapes the image it projects.

Unlike other fields of art, architecture offers a living environment for the human being and determines how a person lives. It has an impact that lasts for generations; it gives one a sense of belonging to a place and to be proud of that place.

Social culture is closely related to the built environment. Culture is reflected on the built environment, is nourished by the built environment and transforms life.

Well-designed livable spaces increase productivity, bestow identity and make people happy.
The right to live in a healthy, safe environment is one of the most fundamental human rights in terms of universal law. This right is included in our Constitution as part of the state's duty and goals. A well-built environment is the preliminary step for a healthy, safe social environment.
Houses, schools, offices,
factories, hospitals etc. are all products of architecture. However, architecture is not limited to buildings alone. The environments and urban spaces surrounding buildings are directly related to architecture.

Buildings, streets and open areas form a city's silhouette and identity, but they become old and worn in time; repairing, refunctioning, restoring and renovating them are important contributions of architecture to the city.

Architecture is not limited with creating buildings that have an aesthetical value; besides aesthetics, meeting needs, user-friendliness, choosing the right technology and taking economy into consideration are also components of architecture.

In brief, any environment inhabited by people is an architectural environment. Architecture is the practice of creating buildings and designing spaces that form the physical environment of all settlements, from shelter to urban scale; and therefore architecture is beneficial and important for everyone.

Towards an ARCHITECTURAL POLICY for TURKEY

ARCHITECTURE AND TURKEY

Turkey is an architectural land which has become an origin and meeting place for many cultures.

Layer upon layer of civilizations have continued their existence on the lands of our country and their ineffaceable traces are there for all to see. Anatolia is a great source where many settlement cultures have flourished.

Besides its archeological richness, Turkey also has a great wealth of architecture. Architecture is one of the most important fields of art in which we have successful examples throughout our history.

As a reflection of the modernization adventure during the first years following the founding of our Republic, practices of planning and architecture acquired pioneering experiences under the conditions of the day. However, during the immigration process to cities that occurred with the impact of dependant development policies adopted after the 1950s, the rate at which the population was becoming urbanized could not keep up with the rate of urbanization itself. Therefore, unplanned development, illegal building and spread of squatter towns have all caused the deterioration of the urban fabric, historical heritage and natural environment, together with a loss of identity. Conjoined with inconsistent political approaches, these problems have grown and are still growing.

There's no denying that our country's architecture has been affected by the unhealthy and unlawful urbanization process. Building activity took place to a large extent without the contribution of architecture, the services offered by architecture have been reduced to a mere bureaucratic formality, have lost their quality, and most examples of fine architecture have simply faded away in this environment. Whereas it is clear that today's architecture will constitute the heritage of the future.

In our cities, which have become unhealthy with the pressure of building a large number of shelters in a short time, architecture has been forgotten in the spiral of numerous unlawful building operations, and several amnesties for building and squatters granted as a result of approaches based on land profit.

All these developments has led to a built environment devoid of architecture; and in the end, what has been lost are human, urban, natural and historical treasures. Though forced to experience such a process, this is a country of architectures that has a heritage accumulated for thousands of years.

Towards an ARCHITECTURAL POLICY for TURKEY

GOAL: "AN ARCHITECTURAL POLICY FOR TURKEY"

"Where the sun does not enter, the doctor does"
A forgotten Turkish proverb

The rupture of the bond between architectural culture and society, between architectural services and their users constitutes the most important cause for an unfavorable environment.

This rift, which causes our living environments to be formed by spaces devoid of architectural culture and services, has gradually resulted in the degeneration of building culture. Today, as the most effective elements of the prevailing socio-cultural erosion, these spatial formations irreversibly shape our lives.

In order to overcome this vicious circle, we have to give in our lives a more effective place to architecture and the services it offers. Reuniting the artistic, cultural, human and functional characteristics of architecture with society and its cities is one of the surest guarantees for a future that has identity, is civilized and healthy.

The people of our country should not be satisfied by only being proud of the architectural works it has created over the centuries, but it is also necessary to find answers to the needs of the present and the future. Besides the conservation of nature, the environment and existing historical treasures, it should establish the conditions for producing contemporary architectural treasures that have identity, matching the architectural experience of our country; and it should be able to appreciate present-day architectural production, which adds meaning to our lives despite all the unfavorable conditions.

The objective is to increase the country's architectural assets and thus make settlements livable by means of adding contemporary architectural works to those others which respect local and regional values. Consequently, in public administration policies and implementation programs we must give place to principles that will enable the enhancement of urban planning and architecture's impact, starting with planning on the national scale.

At a time when membership in the European Union is under consideration, our country needs to achieve, without delay, an "Architectural Policy for Turkey" to "reunite this country of architectures dating back to thousands of years again with architecture" and in order to ensure that an environment which is permanent,

sustainable, contemporary and has and identity become the nation-wide goal of fundamental development and urbanization within the framework of the abovementioned principles, which will also serve as guidelines for the equal and mutual provision of architectural services within an international context.

THE FUTURE AND OUR RESOURCES

The Architectural Policy for Turkey should be determined within the framework of the following observations and resources:

Observations Regarding the Future

- Turkey's population, and especially its young population, is increasing.
- Rural immigration to cities still continues, the urban population is rapidly growing and now constitutes the majority.
- Families are growing smaller and their structure is rapidly changing.
- Urban needs are rapidly increasing.
- Growing without a plan, our cities are threatened with disaster.
- All these developments require on the one hand the construction of new settlements and building, and on the other the revision of urban renewal and of the existing stock of buildings.
- This rapid transformation is also a serious threat in terms of Turkey's and the world's ecosystem.
- This process necessitates that new approaches be established for urbanization policies and urban investments.
- In addition to these conditions our membership process to the European Union is under consideration.

Our Country's Resources

Turkey,
- holds an important place in terms of cultural and architectural heritage,
- has establishments in the sector that use contemporary technology and are internationally active,
- has a trained workforce in the fields of architecture and engineering,
- has sufficient technology and production of building materials which is strong in terms of both quality and quantity.
- has the necessary background to hold out against the cultural and professional damage created by the global trade of services and to have a guiding role in terms of the problems brought by the rapid transformation in building stock within the process of our membership process to the European Union,
- has the necessary accumulation to ensure the rationalistic management of resources and to offer new approaches for urbanization policies and urban investments,
- has to plan its investments in line with its knowledge and experience in all fields that give shape to living environments, but especially in the fields of architecture and engineering, and it must find the right answers for the future.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The creation of an Architectural Policy for Turkey is the shared goal and responsibility of the Chamber of Architects, of architects themselves, of public administration, local governments, and all sectors and institutions concerned on behalf of the country.

1. It is the obligation of public administration to ensure for all citizens, living conditions as equitably as possible and living environments of good quality. Public administration therefore integrates a socio-economic planning understanding with a physical planning in the scientific sense. It launches a planning process aiming to evenly distribute settlements across the country, prevent the damaging of cultural and natural heritage and stop the growth rate of cities that are threatened with disasters. It ensures that the necessary institutions be established in order to put into practice programs drawn up for this purpose.

2. Being responsible for architectural quality, public administration puts a sustainable Architectural Policy into effect. In its legislative capacity, it institutes legal arrangements for the sound implementation of this policy. When making legal arrangements it respects public and architectural law in the universal sense, and through arrangements made within the context of international trade of services, it protects the architects and architecture of the country.

3. A major part of our country's investments are made in construction. By their very nature, the architectural services, with their dimensions involving design, application, management and supervision, are closely related to the proper use of the country's resources, and thus constitute the most important component of the implementation of these investments. When implementing public investments, public administration primarily takes into consideration architectural quality; it thus displays a leadership position in terms of building quality that is exemplary for all of the country's construction activities.

4. Public administration is responsible for organizing construction activities as a whole. While fulfilling this duty, it takes care of architectural services and ensures the well-operation of these services. In order to increase the architectural assets of the country, it ensures that architectural design is embraced as a necessity and that it be supported and improved. Within this scope, besides taking measures to improve design quality, the contribution of architectural design is sought in each

instance of environmental planning, in every building.

5. For the conservation and vitalization of historical and natural beauties, which include products of architecture, public administration establishes scientifically-based institutional structures, provides the necessary support for these and guarantees their institutionalization. Central and local governments attach special importance to conservation and vitalization projects that constitute the symbolic value of cities, they support the efforts of urban organizations and city-dwellers, and it establishes conditions to ensure their participation in the process. Within the context of the country's artistic and cultural wealth, the inventory of all the architectural heritage, including the Republican Era, is drawn up and registered after which this heritage is placed under protection. And, as our future heritage, the same is done for today's architecture.

6. The shaping of works of architecture and livable environments demands the intensive contribution of various professions as much as it requires creative effort. For this reason, unlike any other kind of service procurement, when ordering a project for a built environment and having it constructed, it is determined and carried out such that the process by which the job is given is executed properly. All disciplines, professions and expertise involved in the process of creating buildings have joint responsibility for it. As scientific knowledge increases and life speeds up and the process is enriched, arrangements are made to maintain the integrity of the process.

7. For central and local governments and the building industry to make better use of the architectural services, besides legal arrangements regarding this industry, programs are carried out concerning the needs of these sectors. Architectural competitions are held especially for public buildings and arrangements regarding the urban environment. It is also encouraged to organize competitions for other important design projects. With the aim of establishing quality architectural and urban environments, central and local governments take measures for the education and participation of society. With this objective in mind, programs are worked up for national and local media, and educational programs are carried out in schools.

8. Author's rights and copyrights in architecture are protected. Intellectual rights arising in the entire architectural field, and especially those involving design and construction, are not only placed under legal guarantee, care is also taken for their improvement through legal implementations.

9. All parties constituting the architectural milieu ensure the improvement of architectural education (including planning, urban design, landscape

architecture and interior architecture), the systematization of continuous professional development, and the establishment and operation of a professional qualification system. With the cooperation of public administration, and with the aim of imparting architectural education with a character that takes the nation's resources into consideration while meeting its needs, the duration and content of education are revised.

10. For the supervision of architectural services and the guaranteeing of consumer rights, building and professional liability insurance are instituted. Architectural practice's responsibility toward society is warranted according to rules of professional ethics.

11. Within the context of the Architectural Policy for Turkey, and in order to find shared answers for the future of and the problems concerning the built environment, action programs are implemented under the auspices of public administration, with the cooperation of central and local governments, and involving the democratic participation of city-dwellers, urban organizations and society, and these programs are designed to become permanent institutions. These policies and programs are encouraged to be established and implemented not just centrally but locally as well.

In brief, the Architectural Policy for Turkey aims to place under guarantee the user, the architect and the architectural services, in accordance with international developments and the situation in our country, and for the benefit of the public and society.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL POLICY FOR TURKEY

Starting with the Ministry of Culture, public institutions and organizations concerned and professional organizations that act as public institutions and other public organizational bodies are all responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Chamber of Architects of Turkey is the fundamental guarantee for the goal of the Architectural Policy for Turkey. Together with sectors concerned, it implements and develops the operation strategy and action program addressing this goal.