



**European Association for
Architectural Education**
Association Européenne pour
l'Enseignement de l'Architecture

Government of the Republic of Croatia
Mr. Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister

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Zurich, October 23rd 2023

Esteemed Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the European Association for Architectural Education whose primary goal is to advance the quality of architectural education and also to promote the quality of architecture in Europe. We have been following recent developments related to architectural design competitions in Croatia and felt compelled to share our concerns on this matter.

Standing for maintaining and advancing the quality of the built environment, which are central to current European policies, we were disheartened to learn about the narrowing interpretation of the Spatial Planning Law that restricts the scope of architectural competitions primarily to publicly-owned sites, excluding privately-owned land and critical national infrastructure.

Architectural design competitions (ADCs) have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness in achieving excellence in building and community design. They are a testament to the power of competition, innovation, and public engagement in the architectural process. These competitions, based on the quality of proposed solutions, have resulted in high-value designs that benefit us all, improving our quality of life and promoting design excellence.

However, the shift in interpretation of the law threatens to reduce the number of architectural competitions in Croatia, potentially diminishing the architectural quality of our built environment, limiting public participation, and affecting the transparency of decision-making processes. A related concern is the potential impact of these changes on architectural education in Croatia. Universities and schools of architecture play a significant role in nurturing architectural talent and providing a platform for young architects to engage with real-world design challenges through competitions. Furthermore, architectural competitions are an essential component of architectural education, providing students with valuable insights into the profession and fostering a culture of innovation and creativity. As a result, these competitions are not only a means of improving our built environment but also an investment in the future of our architectural profession.



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In addition to the concerns raised by the architectural community and educational institutions, I would like to draw your attention to the Statement of the New European Bauhaus Collective (NEBC) on Public Procurement. The NEBC, a group of pan-European organisations representing architects, spatial planners, landscape architects, interior architects, engineers, designers, artists, educators and researchers of the built environment, and more broadly the cultural and creative sectors, has highlighted the importance of architectural competitions as a recommended procedure in public procurement laws. Their statement, issued in 2021, emphasizes the role of competitions in promoting enduring, excellent, and responsible solutions for buildings and communities.

The NEBC's position aligns with the principles outlined in the Davos Declaration - Davos Quality Principles and the European Union's "Towards a shared culture of Architecture" report, both of which stress the significance of architectural competitions in achieving design excellence, sustainability, and public engagement.

In light of these considerations, we respectfully urge you to reconsider the recent shift in the interpretation of the Spatial Planning Law. We believe that architectural competitions should remain open and inclusive, encompassing a wide range of projects, including those on privately-owned land and critical national infrastructure. ADCs are an investment in the future of our architectural profession and an acknowledgment of the vital role architecture plays in the cultural and economic life of our nations.

I hope that you will take these concerns into account and work towards a solution that upholds the values of architectural excellence. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to seeing positive developments that will preserve and promote architectural competitions in your country.

Respectfully

Prof. Dr. Oya Atalay Franck

President, EAAE European Association for Architectural Education

Dean, ZHAW School of Architecture Design and Civil Engineering

cc: Mr. Branko Bačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Planning,
Construction and State Assets

Ms. Rajka Bunjevac, Croatian Chamber of Architects, President

Mr. Roman Šilje, Croatian Architects' Association, President