

SHARE Cyprus 2024 16.04.2024

Constantinos CONSTANTI, President, Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ETEK)

WELCOME

Distinguished Speakers,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Technical Chamber of Cyprus I would like to welcome you in the SHARE Cyprus 2024 Forum.

As the preable of the Council's conclusions on the New European Bauhaus initiative states :

"Architecture and the built environment are embodiments of past and present culture, ways of living and values. They establish the stock for our cultural heritage of the future and contribute to shaping our societies and identities.

Architects, play a central role in all phases of the development of high-quality architecture and living environment, and can therefore contribute in a significant manner to the public interest by taking into account territorial diversity and the needs of civil society..."

Our time is characterised by constant changes and challenges affecting urban communities and architecture worldwide. Natural disasters, climate change, social inequalities and economic crises are challenges that require communities to be resilient, and therefore flexible and adaptable. Accelerating the green transition of the construction sector is a complex challenge that needs to be addressed urgently, in an innovative and systemic way. Buildings and construction need a paradigm shift: adapting the built environment to climate change, implementing circular economy principles, new post-pandemic living and working practices, pushing for the integration of multiple innovations, participatory processes in design, to name but a few.

In order to create a sustainable future, rethinking how buildings, and therefore cities, are designed and built is crucial. The present condition is an opportunity to redefine mindsets and design, or in other words, we need to rethink design but also to redesign thinking. As Architects we can be the leading actors of sustainability and through this role we have the opportunity to design and build the world of tomorrow by contributing to the challenges of the present.

But for this to happen, architecture should be central to our thinking, to the policies we implement, to our daily lives. In Cyprus, unfortunately, we still have a long way to go. Architecture and architects are often disregarded in public procurement. Quality and resilience in buildings, in our cities, in the public space, cannot be achieved with stand-alone architectural landmarks in the urban landscape, but rather with a systemic promotion of quality architectural design at all scales of buildings and urban space.

The Technical Chamber aims at raising awareness about the great importance of architectural excellence in our built environment and

supports the creation of the necessary context (political, social, and cultural) in order for that to be possible. Focusing on sustainable and inclusive design practices, enhancing architectural innovation, giving the opportunity to young architects to shine, promoting architectural competitions, integrating architectural heritage in the current cultural context, will contribute to the new reality we need to create.

The Chamber has implemented a series of interventions over the past three years to ensure architectural quality in the production of the built environment. Among them:

- We have elaborated and submitted a proposal for legislative regulation of the procedures for the implementation of remarkable public projects.
- We have supported authorities and institutions interested in organising architectural competitions, either by providing information on the process or by appointing professional consultants to support them in organising the competitions.
- We have implemented a large number of interventions either in cases where other methods are inappropriately used for the implementation of projects, or where architectural competitions that have been announced have distortions in the terms and procedure followed.
- We have undertaken the initiative to appoint a working group to elaborate a policy text on architecture, based on respective policies and good practices from abroad, which will be forwarded to the relevant ministries to be endorsed by the state.
- We have started the process of revising ETEK Rules for Architectural Competitions. During their ten-year implementation, considerable experience has been gained of their strengths as well as weaknesses or shortcomings. Addressing them will further enhance the use of Architectural Competitions with emphasis on their successful outcome.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The quality of the built environment constitutes a public good. We are at a critical point where our profession needs a paradigm shift to ensure a resilient and sustainable future. At our core is the human experience, connecting the environment with the social and cultural way we live.

Before leaving this podium i would like to congratulate the organisers. The Technical Chamber welcomes and supports conferences and forums with an international aspect like the one we have today, where experts, architects and practitioners present, discuss views and expertise with one single purpose – to improve our places and spaces as a mean to better our lives and communities.

I hope today we will have the opportunity to share a vision for our next steps as practitioners in this new era.

Thank you