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A European intensive seminar to learn both spatial quality and the cooperation process

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Town planning is closely linked with the national geographic and institutional context. Europeanization and globalisation are influencing planning but also planning education. The paper discusses how six universities from six different countries go into partnership to take into account this trend and elaborate a common pedagogic module through an intensive programme. The intensive programme achieves these objectives of the Europeanization of planning but also some specific ones which each university would not be able to achieve separately. The process of the intensive program itself pushes students to increase the quality of their proposals. It obliges students to work on unprecedented cases and to collaborate

Introduction

Since the start of the ERASMUS Programme in 1987, an ever growing number of students from all over Europe have been able to study a semester or more in one of over 1600 universities in 30 different countries. Within the ERASMUS student mobility programme, Intensive Programmes (IPs) take a special position. The aim of an IP is to bring together students from the same discipline for a period of at least ten working days and work together on a specific theme or topic of common interest. In Bristol, in 1991, a group of five universities first brought students together in an IP that has been held almost annually since (see appendix 1). These universities, UWE Bristol (UK), Hannover (Germany), Tours (France), Bologna (Italy) and Nijmegen (Netherlands), found a sixth partner from Oradea (Romania) to join for the first time in the IP held in 2009. The organisation of the IPs in this consortium is rotating, with IPs being held in a different location every year, and on different spatial planning topics that are of concern to all the partner countries.

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Over the years, planning practice throughout Europe has been influenced by many ongoing reforms. Europeanisation and globalisation have not only influenced planning practice, but also planning education. The Bologna Agreement in 1999 has prompted many changes to the curriculum of planning education across Europe, not merely because universities are changing their study formats to the Bachelor-Master system, but also in order to reflect the increasingly European nature of spatial planning policies.

This paper discusses how European Union (EU) and international influences are influencing planning education in different European countries. In tracing the evolution of the ERASMUS Lifelong Learning programme over the years, and the format and content of our joint Intensive Programme in general, we try to show how the framework for cooperation in planning education has shaped our cooperation over the years and supported its institutionalisation. However, changes to planning education across Europe following the Bologna agreement, and the increasingly ambitious expectations for cooperation in higher education funded by the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) also imply some challenges for international student workshops in the field of spatial planning, which will be discussed in this paper.

The outline of this paper is as follows. In section 2 the aims and objectives of the EU Erasmus Programme and the evolution of objectives for cooperation in higher education over the past decades will be discussed. Section 3 will look more closely at the Europeanisation of planning and its reflection in planning education. Section 4 will elaborate on the IP by the regional planning network, and discuss how the IP brings the students to case studies which force them to consider new approaches and which improves the collaborative skills of the students. Section 5 concludes and discusses opportunities and challenges that emerge for a long-standing cooperation network in the field of spatial planning.

2. Aims and objectives of the EU Erasmus activity and their evolution during the recent funding period

Internationalisation of education in the EU is an important topic for higher education institutions nowadays. One type of successful action to meet this expectation is the IP. As part of Action 4 of the ERASMUS programme, IP is a short programme of study which brings together students and staff from higher education institutions of at least three participating countries. They were introduced for the first time in 1988, one year after the ERASMUS start in 1987.

Even since the establishment of the Joint-Study Programmes (JSP) in 1976, higher education became part of the European agenda. As they remained operative for about a decade their purpose was to promote student mobility. Subsequently, in 1987 the ERASMUS programme was inaugurated. It rapidly became the most visible of the various newly emerging European educational programmes. Although the financial basis of the programme did not reach the volume needed for pursuing the ambitious aim initially set by the European

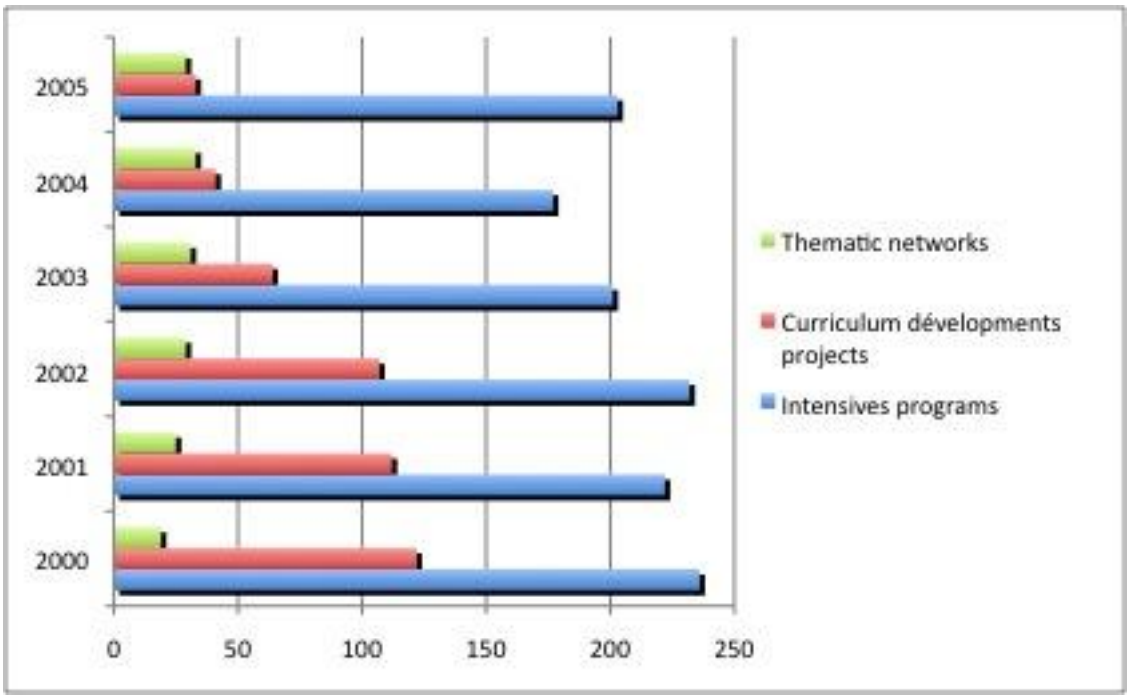
Community of supporting a temporary study period in another European country of 10 percent of students in higher education, ERASMUS became the largest student mobility programme established.

A new chapter in the history of European support for temporary student mobility and transborder cooperation of higher education institutions was expected to begin when the SOCRATES programme was established in 1995. Implemented in the area of higher education from the academic year 1997/98, SOCRATES brought together the various education programmes, thus aiming at increased administrative efficiency of education activities in various sectors. When ERASMUS became a sub-programme of SOCRATES, support for student mobility and cooperation in higher education was substantially increased. In addition to student mobility, teaching staff mobility and curricular innovation were now also promoted in order to place special emphasis on a broad development of the European dimension in higher education and to make the non-mobile students profit from the programme as well. While ERASMUS in the past had clearly focused on the learning opportunities of mobile students, SOCRATES aimed to also address the non-mobile of students, i.e. to make the majority of students benefit from the European dimension in higher education. Notably, curricular innovation and increasing teaching staff mobility was expected to contribute to European experiences on the part of the non-mobile students. For this purpose, activities supported in addition to student mobility, such as IPs, were given an increasing share of the resources and were expected to play a greater role. Support for Curriculum Development and IPs was extended and newly structured. Recently, SOCRATES has been replaced by the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), with ERASMUS now forming the higher education section of the latter. Promotion of the European Credit Transfer System became one of the priorities of the targeted measures to improve the conditions of student mobility.

The European Commission's expectations for IPs are set out as follows:

- Encourage efficient and multinational teaching of specialist topics which might otherwise not be taught at all, or only in a very restricted number of higher education institutions;
- Enable students and teachers to work together in multinational groups and so benefit from special learning and teaching conditions not available in a single institution, and to gain new perspectives on the topic being studied;
- Allow members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content and new curricula approaches and to test teaching methods in an international classroom environment.

Figure1: Evolution of Erasmus complementary measures (2000-2005)



Source: European Commission, directorate general for education and culture, 2008

An IP is thus focused on efficient (complementary and multi-disciplinary) teaching of specialist topics, students working in multinational groups and teaching staff exchanging views on teaching content and approaches. Another great role of IPs is the implementation of new study programmes or modules between partner institutions. According to EC figures available for 2000-2005 period, ERASMUS awarded 479 grants for Curriculum development projects, 1271 for IPs and 166 for networks. Outputs have been appropriate and their generation has benefited participant organizations and individuals. At the project level, there is evidence of tangible and useful outcomes, in particular positive impacts on curricula development. The important role of IPs can best be understood in considering the wider context for planning education in Europe, and the changing requirements for the profession which result from 'Europeanisation' processes. These implications will be discussed in the following section.

3. The implications of the Europeanisation of spatial planning for planning education

Spatial planning systems in Europe have over the past two decades increasingly become subject to international influences. The globalisation of economies and societies, and the international movement of people and goods that comes with it, have implied a need for planners to know more about for example the circumstances in other countries for trade and for developments in the construction industry. The influence

of the EU on spatial development has considerably expanded over the past years. Despite the fact that there is no EU competence for spatial planning (or land use planning), there is an increasing number of EU sector policies with spatial impacts, for instance in the field of environment, transport, agriculture and regional policy (van Ravesteyn and Evers 2004). EU legislation also regulates planning procedures, for instance through the requirement to undertake Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for large scale developments and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for spatial planning instruments. For spatial planners in the current 27 EU member states, it has been estimated that around 70% of their decisions and policies now have their origin in EU law and policy. In recognition of the increasing interlinkages between regions, spatial planners from across Europe have collaborated since the 1980s to agree on spatial development strategies for the European continent (CEMAT 2001) and for the EU territory (CSD 1999; TAEU 2007).

The Council of Europe and the EU institutions have for many decades supported cooperation between regional and local authorities across Europe. Many of the existing cooperation networks have their roots in the search for joint responses to common spatial development problems, such as for instance the management of large rivers such as the Rhine or Danube (Dühr 2007). The EU has since the 1990s financially supported cooperation across national borders through the INTERREG initiative, in order to reduce the effects of national borders in the single market and to provide an incentive to fostering European integration. Many thousands of planning professionals have over the past decades become involved in such cooperation projects, seeking for instance joint responses to spatial development issues (such as cross-border transport or river management) or to exchange experience on how to respond best to challenges, such as climate change. Cooperation with planners and other partners from other policy sectors or NGOs in other European regions has now become a routine part of the work of planning professionals in all EU member states (Dühr and Nadin 2007). Indeed, the EU influence on spatial planning within the member states is such that it has been argued that “although it certainly remains necessary to conduct spatial policy at the national level, doing so without regard to the growing influence of 'Brussels' will doom it to failure” (van Ravesteyn and Evers 2004: 9).

In response to these international and EU influences, many planning systems in Europe have over recent years undergone often far-reaching reforms (see Albrechts et al. 2003), and the question has been raised whether such a ‘Europeanisation of spatial planning’ (Dühr et al. 2007) may perhaps lead to a convergence of planning systems. There is current little research evidence that would allow firm conclusions, but there are indications that spatial planning systems are responding to shared challenges and through processes of learning and policy transfer may develop similar adaptations (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Colomb 2007; de Jong et al. 2002). However, it has also been pointed out that fundamental national characteristics of planning cultures will likely remain. This is because planning systems have developed within a particular legal, administrative and institutional environment, and fundamental values and deep-seated beliefs about the organisation of space are not likely to change in the short- to medium-term. De Jong and Edelenbos (2007:

687), in their account of participant observation of knowledge transfer in a transnational expert network on sustainable urban management, have for instance shown how actors adjust EU concepts of foreign policy ideas in such a way that vital institutional differences remain: "Often this exchange is to a very large extent a process of absorbing appealing labels for policy solutions from the international or national policy levels, and then adopting an interpretation of it suitable to one's own context". So far, therefore, there are no indications that territorial cooperation and other exchanges between planners would lead to a convergence of planning systems and policies: "For those who believe European integration and harmonization implies that European cities should become more similar this may be a disappointment. Planning convergence is not really what European cities and regions are headed for. For those who have placed their faith in continued variety, it is rather a relief. Continued variety has a greater potential to offer innovative solutions" (De Jong and Edelenbos 2007: 704).

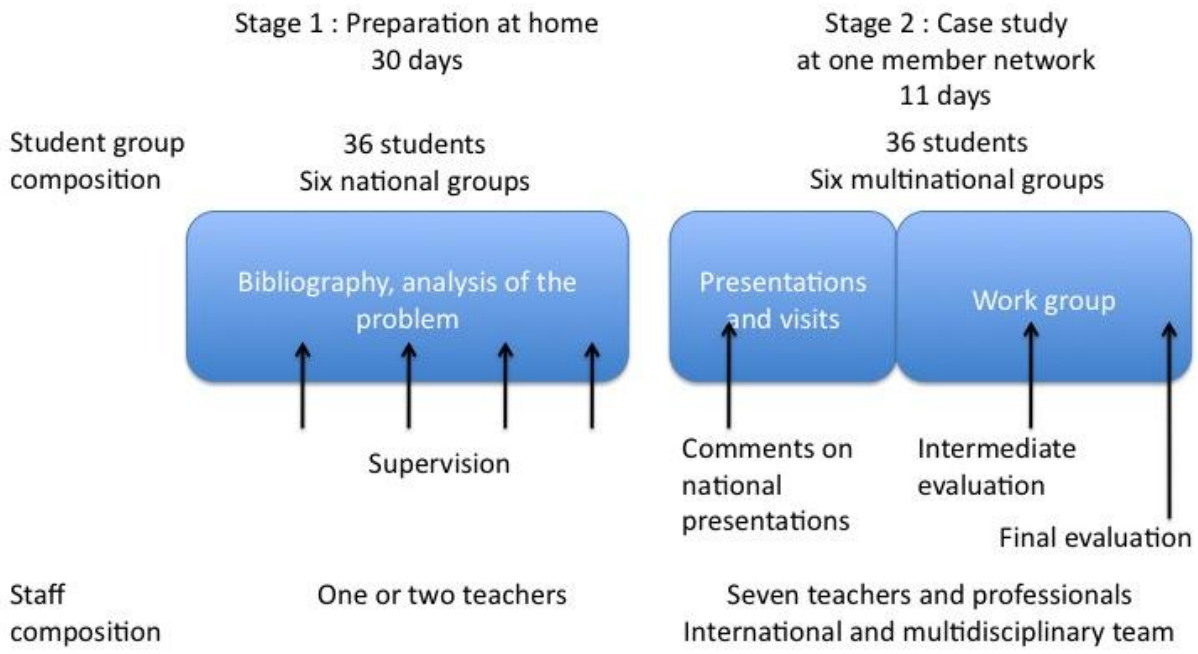
Changes to planning systems in response to international influences, and increasing territorial cooperation in Europe, are also having an effect on planning academia and planning education. Spatial planning academics have traditionally been cooperating on research projects, many of which are co-financed by the EU's Research Framework Programme or the ESPON programme, and have sought to exchange ideas at international conferences. The Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) holds an annual congress to provide a platform for such exchanges on planning research and education. AESOP is also undertaking ongoing reviews of planning education approaches in the member countries, in particular in response to the current changes in many curricula following the Bologna agreement in 1999 (Geppert and Verhage 2008; Davoudi and Ellison 2006). Increasing cooperation in the field of spatial planning has brought to the fore differences in the understanding of what spatial planning is about and how it is conducted (CEC 1997). There are considerable differences across Europe in the scope of planning systems and the disciplines involved in spatial planning. Reflecting different planning traditions in Europe (see Dühr 2007), 'spatial planners' thus come from a diverse field of different disciplines, including land use planning, town and country planning, economics, law, geography, political and social sciences, environmental studies, architecture, real estate, and so on. Planners in Europe continue to be largely educated in the context of these planning traditions, although following the Bologna agreement many changes aimed at harmonisation and further exchanges have been taking place to higher education in Europe, including in relation to planning degrees. In recognition of the European dimension of spatial planning, and the need for the new generation of spatial planners to possess cross-cultural communication skills that are a prerequisite for territorial cooperation, many planning schools have over recent years launched International Masters programmes on different aspects of European or international spatial planning. One example of such a new Masters programme, which considers the EU influences on spatial planning and educates planners on comparative planning research, is the Masters programme 'European spatial and environmental planning' of Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen in the Netherlands (www.ru.nl/fm/esep). Yet, also for the Bachelor programmes,

planning schools increasingly recognise the advantages of facilitating cooperation with students representing other planning traditions and to include an international dimension in the 'regular' planning curriculum. Initiatives, such as the long-standing IPs between the universities from Hannover, Nijmegen, Bristol, Tours, Bologna and Oradea, therefore play an important role in stimulating learning processes across cultural and disciplinary boundaries. They can be understood as playing a vital role in preparing future planning graduates for the changing context for spatial planning in Europe and the different expectations that planning professionals have to meet.

4. The Erasmus IP by the regional planning network

The Intensive Programme brings together 36 students in planning from 6 universities of 6 different countries, with students being expected to work on a real planning project. It can be divided into two main stages: the preparation work at home and the case study (see fig. 2).

Figure 2: General organisation of the Intensive Programme



The first part of the preparation work at the home university is for the students to develop an understanding of the problem to solve (i.e. sustainable development, climate change) and what the role of spatial planning

is (or should be) in response to these. This preparation work should include a review of the relevant academic literature, a critical analysis of the policy debate in the students' country and region, and possibly an illustration of the challenges and opportunities that planners in this country or region face in a recent development project. The subject of the preparation work is linked with the case study in order to prepare the students for working on the group assignment during the actual Intensive Programme at one of the universities of the network.

The second step of the Intensive Programme is the case study. It is organised by one member of the network. The organisation rotates every year. The students are mixed and divided into six multi-national groups. The second stage lasts 11 days and can be divided into two parts. The first is dedicated to presentations and field visits. The students present the preparation work they have done in their own countries. Then some lectures focusing on the case study topic are proposed as well as visits of good local examples of planning linked with the topic. The aim of this set of presentations is to help the students understand the context for the case study and introduce the group assignment. Presentations are focused on the local geographical context and tools or good practices. During the second part of the case study, the students work alone. They have to produce a SWOT analysis and to design a master plan. The students have to defend their proposals.

During their work, the students are autonomous. They are managed by one or two teachers during the preparation phase and by a team of six or seven teachers during the second stage. The meetings between students and teachers are very regular during the two stages. The aim is to orientate the students to the results expected rather than evaluate them.

4.1 Recap how planning can response to climate change and high quality of space

Since 2009, the intensive programme has focused on planning responses to climate change. Climate change is due to the increase of CO_2 in the atmosphere. The main origins of its emission have been identified as being individual transport and housing. Technical innovations (insulation of houses, new car engines…) can reduce consumption of carbon energy but will not be sufficient (Souami, 2007). Energy consumption can also be reduced by urban morphology and the model of a compact city is often brought into discussion in this context. Some authors (e.g. Massot and Orfeuil 2007; Sieverts 1997) argue that this is a rather ideological position that cannot be substantiated. Indeed, the compact city is associated with social mix and collective life, short distances and public transport, which all contribute to saving energy. Massot and Orfeuil (idem) argue that it is more effective to work on the consumption level of each mode of transport than to increase the density of peripheral fringes of the cities or of the peri-urban areas. Or, as Sieverts (1997) puts it: why deliver density in the Zwischenstadt, when people prefer and can afford less dense housing? An alternative to the compact city is a decentralised-concentrated city (Holden and Norland, 2005). The city would be fragmented in a center and several secondary towns linked by a strong transport network. This type of city maximizes advantages of the density (low energy use for both housing and every day travel) and minimizes

the disadvantages (long distance leisure travel time correlated with very extreme densities). Climate change call into question undelimited urban sprawl and low densities. However, the "right" and adapted to climate change morphologies of towns are still under debate. There is no clear model that planners can refer to.

Planning response to climate change comes up against another difficulty. It seems much more difficult to adapt the town to low-level energy consumption than to modernise any other technical network (Souami, 2007). As the energy systems consumption (flows, volumes…) is highly correlated to the given territory, it is hardly possible to import a concept from somewhere else and an original solution has to be found for each city. Energy consumption can be seen as a systemic problem. One can influence modes of transports, siting of employment poles and housing areas, citizen behaviour etc. Each item is strongly influenced by the local configuration of the town considered, but the general response depends on the way of combining each of them. Is not as easy to transfer as a technical solution for classical technical networks as a waste water network (Ibid). The energy system can be characterized by the flows, the storage capacity and the outputs. But the physical characteristics of the system itself influence the level of energy consumption. The compacity of the town (Maizia, 2007) influences the loss of energy from buildings. The green infrastructure can make the atmosphere of the cities more suitable for the inhabitants and avoid the use of energy to cool it in summer (Gill and al, 2007). According to its shape (corridor, patch, matrix), the green infrastructure modifies shading, evaporative cooling, the infiltration or flood storage capacity. More generally, the micro urban climate can be designed by planners. They can model the correlations between the urban shape and local temperature, winds and air hygrometry.

Planners are face with great difficulties to implement a city adapted to climate change. They need new knowledge. For example planners are uncomfortable with climate knowledge (Eliasson, 2000). Some departments in planning develop specific modules to teach planners to design with urban micro climates (de Schiller and Evans, 1996). Energy systems can also be considered as a new field for planners. Dedicated modules can acculturate planners but they will not become specialists in such fields.

Planning response to climate change mobilize core skills of planners: the diagnosis and synthesis of multidisciplinary knowledge. Planners have to design adapted solutions. They work on an inheritance situation which has its own dynamics. They cannot transfer standardized solutions and have to elaborate original solutions. Diagnosises are central to understanding the local situation. To design a global and innovative solution which incorporates new approaches, planners have to lead multidisciplinary teams in order to amalgamate fragmented and specialized knowledge.

In principle the intensive seminar is quite similar to a classical workshop. The students are face with a planning problem. They begin their work with an academic review, they formulate objectives and orientations and they design a master plan. They are asked to justify their proposals according to selected (i.e. sustainability) criteria. The teachers team think that doing this kind of exercise in an international

context brings specific added values as we will try to demonstrate. The rolling organisation allows a quick adaptation of the contents of the Intensive Programme to the more usual issues the students are going to face during their professional life. The interdisciplinary approach is stronger and the cross-cultural skills are strengthened.

4.2 The added value of rotating organisation and studied cases across Europe

The organisation of the Intensive Programme rotates among the six partners of the network. The partner who receives the others has the main load of the organisation of the case study (scientific programme and material matters). The rotating organisation allows the sharing of the load between all the partners and it also has a pedagogical interest. The themes of the Intensive Programme evolve, reflecting the current policy debates at EU and national levels, and the sites studied present a diverse set of planning challenges.

4.2.1 An adaptive process

Fubini A. (2004, p. 17) defines planning as a metaphor of its time. The field of planning is progressively integrating changes taking place in society. For example the emergence of sustainable development obliges us to widen the temporal and spatial scales. These changes affect the legal and socio-economic spheres. Environmental rights and tiers of governmental rights are more strongly asserted. As a consequence, planners have to consider new relationships between territories and the system of human activities.

The IP themes have evolved over time to reflect the prevailing priorities of the planning profession alongside the developing focus of European interest. The chronology (see appendix 1) shows a broad shift from the focus on policy and decision making initially, to small area designation in the mid 90s toward sustainable planning in more recent years in line with shifting priorities at national and European levels. In the last few years we can see the Intensive Programme themes evolve from sustainable planning, to water management and climate change.

The evolution of the themes is encouraged by the process of organising every Intensive Programme. Every year, one of the partners coordinates the application for EU-funding on behalf of the consortium in order to organise the Intensive Programme. The European Union does not fund the same Intensive programme over successive years but requires renewal applications or completely new applications on different topics. Among other things, the Lifelong Learning Programme requires that the potential outputs to professional actors are demonstrated in order to qualify for the grant. Because of the partnership with the European Union and with professionals, the lead partner has to keep in mind their relevance.

4.2.2 Diversity of case studies across Europe

The rotating organisation of the IP across the network members adds value to the learning experience, which a single country could hardly achieve. The students are expected to work on a real planning case that is, of course, deeply influenced by the national context in which it takes place.

In 2009 and 2010, the intensive programs focused on climate change. The students have to design a master plan for a new major urban extension. As in the previous examples, the case studies proposed are specifically characterized by country. The sites of Joué-les-Tours (in Tours) is located in the urban fringe of the built up area while Waalsprong is close to the city-centre of Nijmegen and concerned by floods. Students have to elaborate a list of criteria for climate change and spatial planning. Then they have to elaborate a swot analysis and design a master plan. The results of these works show that each group of students favoured high density, social mixity, mixity of uses and green infrastructure. They reverse the priority between the road network and the green infrastructure. The latter influences the global architecture of the new district. Implementing these criteria, students conformed with the criteria suggested by Holden and Norland (2005) to adapt the city to climate change. At this stage, the students define a master plan without elaborating a finished project but they define the principles to respect to achieve high quality space. The main output of the rotating organisation is the specificities of each national context. In the case of Tours and Nijmegen, the case studies are marked by both their geographical and political context. The human density and the approach of floods are quite different. In France, towns spread in empty spaces, while in the Netherlands, towns extend in already occupied spaces. In France, the urbanisation of flood prone areas is derogatory while in the Netherlands it is the rule (Serrano and al, 2008).

This rotating organisation combined with the different main themes is at the origin of amazement and discovery for the students. The added value is also for staff members who have been able develop a set of international examples of planning responses.

4.3 The multidisciplinary approach

4.3.1 An integrated exercise

In order to help students to have a wider view, students prepare a review on a specific aspect of climate change (see table 1) resulting in a comparable outcome. Theses areas are defined according to the orientation of the planning degrees at the partner universities. The preparation work at the home university is for the students to develop an understanding of the causes and effects of climate change in their country and region, and what the role of spatial planning should be in response to these. In this part of the preparation, attention should be paid to the geographical, socio-economic and environmental context, as well as the political and institutional dimension for spatial planning responses to climate change, the need for an integrated multi-level governance perspective in finding appropriate responses, and the interdisciplinary nature of planning responses to climate change.

This approach is anticipated to ensure that the multi-national teams for the IP project work consist in “specialists” with complementary expertise and knowledge of certain aspects of planning and appropriate mitigation and adaptation responses of planning.

Table 1: areas for 'specialisation' of the national groups in preparation for the IP 2010

Bologna	Specialists in urban design and urban form (energy efficiency in design, passive solar gain, etc.)
Bristol	Specialists in transport and traffic (reducing the need to travel, etc.)
Hannover	Specialists of the natural environment (green infrastructure, urban climate, biodiversity, landscape and open space etc.)
Nijmegen	Specialists in water management (adaptation responses to flood risk, sea level rise, etc.)
Oradea	Specialists in site analysis, and on policy responses on recycling and waste management
Tours	Specialists in energy efficiency and renewable energies (incorporating renewable energy sources in the built environment, etc.)

During the Intensive Programme, students from the participating universities develop proposals for a major urban site. During the first stage they have to do a SWOT analysis in order to appreciate the geographical and urban context of the site. Then, they have to design a master plan which indicates the strategic orientations for the site. In doing so, they do not only work in international groups of students who study different aspects of spatial planning in the participating universities (e. g. comprehensive integrated planning, landscape planning or urban design) but moreover, they are also expected to consider a wide range of issues affecting the development of major urban sites. The wider geographical and socio-economic context of the site, the legal and administrative planning context, transport and accessibility, energy efficiency and water management issues are examples of issues that have to be considered in an integrated way in developing development proposals.

4.3.2 Multidisciplinary and international staff team

The students are supported by guest lecturers from different disciplines (planning, economics, architecture, political science), and an international multidisciplinary staff team (see appendix 2).

The multidisciplinary team is assembled during the second stage of the intensive seminar. It orientates the students' work. It gives them a feedback twice: in the middle of the workshop and at the end for the final presentations. Thanks to the diversity of the disciplines constituted, each student group receives sector-based

advice which he or she can integrate. While the staff team does not cover all the fields of planning, it presents a considerable variety of planning professions from across Europe, including architects. Apparently they bring the same disciplinary approach but they are imbued with their specific cultural background. Thus students benefit from a wide range of points of view.

4.4 European territorial cooperation and learning

The topical themes and the multidisciplinary approach are some of the strengths of the Intensive Programme. They are not specific to it, classical workshops can also bring them. The international dimension of the Intensive Programme just intensifies them. The most specific and maybe the most important added value is cooperation and learning. During the workshop, students have to confront a double issue at stake: apply their knowledge in order to design a master plan and get to know each other by working with unknown people abroad and in a foreign language. The students improve their cross-cultural skills.

4.4.1 Improve cooperation skill

The European Union has a greater and greater influence on actions in the field of environment and planning (see section 3. above). The European construction has another major influence on planning policies, it brings out cooperation as an important instrument to achieve European development objectives (Faludi, 2008). There is no EU competence for spatial planning, and despite numerous EU influences on planning systems, policies and practices in the member states, considerable diversity in how planning is conducted remains. Governments and planners have to invent it through the concrete problems they want to solve. Planning is heavily influenced by the national context, people must at first learn to understand each other. The European Union invents specific tools for this kind of cooperation between several member states on common problems: the Interreg programmes. Progressively, the European Union wants to improve the competitiveness of the territories and to narrow the development gap between them. Territorial cooperation is seen as the main means to achieve both. Progressively, territorial cooperation is leaving the Interreg programmes where it is explicitly the aim of the work to spread to all European policies. Territorial cooperation is so widely used that it can be considered as a specific approach developed in the European Union. Thus there is a European way of planning, a European model of society which results in mutual learning about differences and similarities (Idem). Cooperation can be considered as a major skill for planners because of the increase in collaborative work with colleagues coming from other countries. It is also considered as a basic skill for planners in their core curriculum (Geppert and Verhage, 2008).

We can consider that students are put in a similar situation as planners who are confronted with the working out of transnational territorial projects. When they arrive, the students are mixed in multinational groups. In each group there is one student of each nationality. They are at the end of their curriculum in planning. They already have knowledge and skills in planning within their own country and national context. But according to their country students develop a specific approach to planning (Serrano, 2004). Students are asked to

analyse a situation and to design a master plan to improve it. They have to do it in a limited time at the same time as getting to know each other. Students have to develop their own ideas and demonstrate their pertinence. They also have to try to understand different points of view from their own. In a few words students learn to present arguments and to elaborate a compromise in order to achieve a common solution.

4.4.2 Develop an open mind

Learning helps to accumulate one of the resources needed in governance: the capacity to jointly identify and solve problems. It is more and more invaluable in a world marked by uncertainties (Faludi, 2008).

The students are faced with an unknown situation and unknown colleagues, they are destabilised which weakens their usual approaches and solutions. They have to shape new solutions and approaches. The short time available for the SWOT analysis and the design of the master plans prevent truly original solutions. Because of the urgency, the students mobilize some stereotypes. Should we deplore the lack of creativity despite the organisation of multinational teams? In fact, the students become aware of specific approaches inside general schemes (Hernandez and Serrano, 2008). The final evaluation shows there is a shift between the first and the second stage. The second stage is much shorter yet it is much more rewarding for the students. They declare that the main benefit of the Intensive Programme is the acquisition of new knowledge from the others. This stimulates their curiosity and their international mobility.

5. Conclusion: Response to the EU objectives and Europeanisation of planning achievements

As we saw, students working in international and multidisciplinary groups introduce elements from their national and disciplinary background into the case study they are working on. Often, these approaches are challenged by group members from other countries and then intensively discussed. Students learn, thus, to defend their position or, if confronted with good arguments, to think it over. Students may move towards a common European planning approach, which can be described as a form of ‘Europeanisation’ process. These discussions, accompanied by intensive after-work exchanges, contribute by far more to mutual understanding than any lecture on comparative European planning ever could. It is obvious that the IP contributes considerably to the internationalisation strategies of the participating universities.

Further considerations can be derived from this kind of short but intensive collaboration between universities. The Bologna declaration, which aims to achieve greater compatibility and comparability in the system of higher education can be seen as a response to the twenty first century’s two big trends of internationalisation and competition. In planning, despite the appearance of homogeneity with the two cycles systems, a survey has revealed major differences in defining the degree levels (Davoudi and Elison 2006). The IP is a shared module recognized by all partners. It is included in the current curriculums and credits are

given according to the ECTS. The IP can be considered as a limited part of the whole curriculum but students must mobilise all their background to be able to treat a real case. This kind of final exercise obliges every university to bring the students to an equivalent and compatible level of skills.

At last but not at least, the language used during the IP is English. The IP can be considered as a module with its lectures and case studies. It contributes to the development of English language courses observed across planning higher schools in Europe (Davoudi, in Geppert and Verhage 2008).

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Appendix 1: Subjects of the intensive seminar since 1991

Date	Place	Title
1991	Bristol	Planning for the environmental quality in new development
1992	Tours	Co-ordination and decision-making procedures for planning
1993	Nijmegen	Public and private partnership in physical planning
1994	Hannover	European policies and regional and local planning – Objectives, procedures, impacts – co-operation or competition?
1995	Bologna	The less privileged area policies: how can planning measures help these areas at a regional level?
1996	Bristol	Rehabilitation policies in run down and underprivileged urban neighbourhoods
1997	Tours	Policy and implementation of sustainable mobility in urban areas
1999	Nijmegen	Planning for sustainable cities: the Arnhem-Nijmegen Node (KAN)
2000	Hannover	Planning for sustainable cities: the Expo city
2001	Bologna	Urban centres and sustainable development: the case of the Bologna railway station
2003	Bristol	Sustainable solutions for Bristol: Redcliffe and the Millennium Mile
2004	Tours	Planning for the mixed use sustainable development: les deux lions
2005	Nijmegen	Koers West redevelopment
2006	Hannover	Sustainable Spatial planning and good ecological potential: the case of Continental brown field
2007	Bologna	Sustainable Spatial planning and flood protection: the case of Cesenatico
2008	Bristol	Urban containment and water management: planning the sustainable neighbourhood in a compact city
2009	Tours	Design a low energy consumption district at the border of Tours' urban area
2010	Nijmegen	Spatial planning response to climate change: the 'Waalsprong'

Appendix 2: Staff participating to IP in Tours 2009

University	Name	Main field
Bologna (Italy)	Proli, Stefania Stincheddu, Antonio	Architect Architect
Bristol (United Kingdom)	Marco, Elena Sara, Rachel Smith, Nick	Architect Architect Planner
Hannover (Germany)	Scholles, Frank	Landscape planner
Nijmegen (The Netherlands)	Dühr, Stefanie Beekmans, Jasper	Geographer / Planner Regional planner
Oradea (Romania)	Olau, Paul	Geographer
Tours (France)	Verdelli, Laura Serrano, José	Architect Agronomic engineer