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of City and Regional
Planners

Ministry of Housing,
Spatial Planning and
the Environment,
The Netherlands

VROM-ISoCaRP Young Planning Professionals' Workshop
Bilbao, Spain, 13-17 October 2005

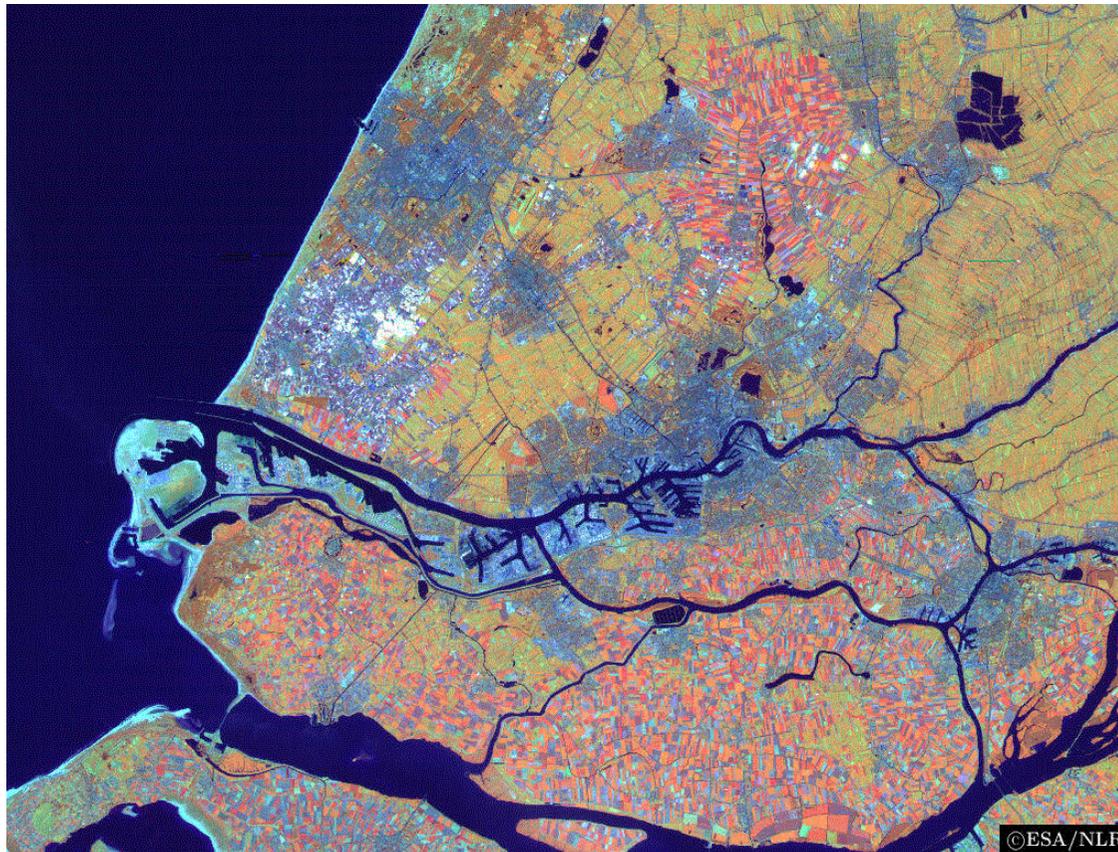
on the occasion of the 41st ISoCaRP Congress, Bilbao, Spain, October 2005
“Making Spaces for the Creative Economy“



**Increasing the international
economic competitiveness of
the South Wing of Randstad
Holland (The Netherlands)**



International Society of City and Regional Planners – ISoCaRP
in cooperation with the
Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment- VROM
and the **Province of South-Holland – The Netherlands**



**Increasing the international
economic Competitiveness
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ISoCaRP Congress 2005
Making Spaces for the creative Economy
Bilbao, Spain
October 2005



**International Society of City and Regional Planners
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COLOPHON

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Young Planning Professionals' Workshop VROM - ISoCaRP

Increasing the international competitiveness of the South Wing of Randstad Holland in the Netherlands, Bilbao, Spain, 2005

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Introduction by the Coordinators

Towards a stronger South Wing in The Netherlands

Increasing the international economic competitiveness of the Southern Wing of Randstad Holland, The Netherlands

by Anita Bijvoet and Susanne Vleeshouwers (Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM));
Bart Bomas (Province of South-Holland, The Netherlands)

Introduction

The VROM-ISoCaRP Young Planning Professionals' Workshop (YPP workshop) took place from 13 to 17 October 2005 just before the 41st ISoCaRP congress in Bilbao. Nine young professionals from all over the world had the opportunity to work together on a case and contribute and share their knowledge and experience - also of their home situation - with each other. During these four days they worked together in the Academy of Arts of Bilbao (Bilbao Arte), a very inspiring working environment. Afterwards the results were presented to the ISoCaRP congress participants on Sunday, 16 October.

Participants

All nine participants were professionals in planning, design, regional economics or architectural studies. They were under the age of 35 and selected as a group of nine highly qualified young planners with a fine variety of skills and disciplines:

Manish Fernandes (Portugal) focussing on urban anthropology and cultural history as a base for urban rehabilitation;

Rameeta Garewal (India) focussing on the balance between the development of the creative economy in Europe, America and in Southeast Asia, Africa and South America;

Madina Junussova (Kazakhstan) having experience in analysing and redefining the interaction between two or more urban networks;

Martin Pfirrmann (Germany) a spatial and environmental planner who combines regional planning knowledge with experience reshaping the economic structure;

Ousmane Sall (Senegal/Switzerland) who has been working on the Genovese agglomeration based on a co-operation between France and Switzerland;

Polise Moreira de Marchi (Brazil), who has been working on a project that requested knowledge of new economic and cultural trends.

Camelia Kusumo (Indonesia/Netherlands), who is a PHD-student of the University of Delft, with lots of knowledge on the South Wing case;

Jeffrey Tubbs (USA), has experience in special developments in Philadelphia to attract young creative professionals;

Liese Vonk (The Netherlands) who has been working on the South Wing case and who was longing into put her knowledge in an international perspective.

The Young Planning Professionals Workshop 2005 took off under the authority of the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) (Anita Bijvoet and Susanne Vleeshouwers) and the Province of South-Holland (Bart Bomas), in association with the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP, Judy van Hemert) and with the help of experienced planners as Jim Colman (Australia, ISoCaRP) & Fernando Brandão Alves (Portugal, ISoCaRP).

Context: Randstad Holland

Central theme of the workshop was ***How to increase the international economic competitiveness of the South Wing of Randstad Holland in the Netherlands?***

The metropolitan region (urban network) Randstad Holland is the most important economic region of The Netherlands and is a very high-density area in the western part of the country. Since the 14th century this conglomerate of cities situated mainly below sea level has been known as Holland, the Lowlands or Les Pays-Bas. During the 17th century the area experienced the Golden Age, a period of remarkable prosperity stimulated mainly by its convenient coastal location, an abundance of great rivers (the Rhine, Maas and Schelde) but also by the vibrant spirit of tolerance and commerce of that time. Since then the constellation of towns has grown into an urban network of 6.6 million people, concentrated in three major cities.

- Amsterdam: the capital of the Netherlands, a financial and cultural center, harbouring Europe's fourth largest airport,
- Rotterdam: boasting the world's second largest seaport,
- The Hague: the seat of government and host to the International Court of Justice and other international institutions for peace and justice.

Holland is clearly a metropolis with special qualities:

- Located in a delta of great European rivers flowing into the North Sea, it is surrounded by an abundance of salt and fresh water; situated below sea level on 'uninhabitable' land and extremely densely populated due to its sophisticated infrastructure of water defences.
- An urban network of remarkably diverse cities and towns; rather polynucleus than a single agglomeration like London or Paris. Surrounding a considerable 'Green Belt' (the Groene Hart) currently being used for agriculture mainly.
- An international player with respect to trade, industrial transport, information logistics and water management.

In the Young Planning Professionals' Workshop this southern part of Randstad Holland was the central focus area (South Wing). In the modern world every region must utilize its strengths to establish itself in the global community. So what are the internationally recognized strengths of this part of the world? Which distinct qualities does the Southern Wing of Randstad Holland have to offer upon which the future of the region can be built? The Young Planning Professionals were asked to:

Design a strategic vision for the future of the South Wing (2040). What, why and how?'

Homework

Before the actual workshop in October 2005 we asked the participants to prepare some homework. The 9 young professionals had to write a short note about their 'home country' situation (1/2 A4, max 500 words). The planners could use this abstract (they submitted it beforehand to ISoCaRP and in preparation for their paper for the congress¹), and use it for the workshop theme. As coordinators we were curious about:

- What their country does to improve its position on the world market and what it does to counteract negative impacts on the environment.
- What the key success factors are in creating an internationally competitive business climate in their country or an important city in their own neighbourhood.

¹ We refer to the advice ISoCaRP stipulated in the Call for Papers for Candidate Planners who wished to be eligible for the VROM Workshop and which was the following: 'Considering the link between the VROM Workshop theme and the main Congress theme, applicants are advised to submit their abstract in view to combining the required above-mentioned pre-study for this VROM workshop and

the possible invitation for a full paper for presentation in one of the main congress workshops'

The ISoCaRP website especially designed for the Young Planning Professionals workshops played an important role in the process. Each workshop member had the opportunity to read each other's articles beforehand. Also a lot of useful information, maps and presentations were placed on this website by the organisers and were at hand during the workshop.

Results

The young planning professionals worked on the assignment in two groups.

The first group - (*Martin Pfirrmann, Camelia Kusomo, Polise Moreira de Marchi, Ousmane Sall and Manish Fernandes*) decided to choose the question as to how to ensure international competitiveness along with a sustainable development in the whole region of the South Wing. Their main themes were to develop a South Wing city net, a center for logistics (Cargo Airport in the port area of Rotterdam), creativity & innovation, and the sustainability of the environment.

The second group (*Jeffrey Tubbs, Liese Vonk, Rameeta Garewal and Madina Junussova*) paid attention to redefine the identity of the region to overcome certain challenges: unstable environmental conditions and lack of network links. In their opinion a renewed focus on innovative integration and new development of cities and the evolving landscape is necessary. Their goal was to develop a Green Hub through which the area (polycentric city network with real green areas in the region) could grow to a 'global green research and development arena' in the South Wing.

Conclusions

Back in Holland we organized a meeting in January 2006 with our colleagues of the Ministry of Spatial Planning and the South Wing Atelier of the Province of South-Holland to discuss the final results. The two concepts were met with enthusiasm. The most important remarks were:

- The two approaches are completely different and therefore very useful in the discussions about a vision for the South Wing.
- The Citynet approach shows a top-down insight with a coherent vision on economic key factors as logistics and knowledge relating to sustainability. Inspiring is the idea of gateway Rotterdam with a new cargo-airport located in sea.
- The Green Hub approach shows a bottom-up vision on the development of the area. The unique conditions of the existing fabric of interwoven landscape and cities are explored.
- The workshops indicate that South Wing is a convenient level of scale for a recognizable network city within Randstad Holland. On the other hand, for the international competitiveness a broader level is needed: Randstad Holland. This is because only at this scale level the agglomeration of Holland can compete with other metropolitan city regions such as London or Paris.

It was a great pleasure for us to work with the young professionals and the ISoCaRP coordinators Jim Colman and Fernando Brandão Alves and learning from their (international) point of view about relevant aspects of the Dutch case.

Project Theme

Introduction

With its rich cultural history, its scenery and its strong mercantile spirit, Randstad Holland, in the western part of the Netherlands, has long defined the face of the Netherlands. Nowadays, this region is also the hub of the Netherlands' major economic activities and international connections. With its gross regional product of over 206 billion Euros (2002 level) Randstad Holland ranks as the fifth conurbation in Europe. The port of Rotterdam is the largest seaport in the world and Schiphol Airport is the fourth largest airport in Europe. Randstad Holland has 6.6 million inhabitants (2004), which is about 41% of the total population of the Netherlands.

Randstad Holland literally means 'Rim City'. The Randstad Holland consists of an urbanized area in the shape of a horseshoe, which lies around the so-called 'Green Heart'. The Green Heart is the Dutch equivalent of a Green Belt. Planners normally distinguish between a Northern and a Southern wing of the Randstad Holland. The Northern Wing is the area of Amsterdam and Utrecht, the Southern Wing the area of The Hague and Rotterdam. These two 'wings' are to some extent separate urban regions.

The issue of the 'Young Planning Professionals' workshop is how to make the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland more internationally competitive. In recent years, the economy in the Southern Wing of the Randstad is lagging behind. In the Northern Wing of the Randstad Holland, ICT businesses and airport related activities have provided for fast economic growth. However, the economy of the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland is still largely dependent on industrial and port related activities. Unemployment and foreign immigration have created serious social problems.

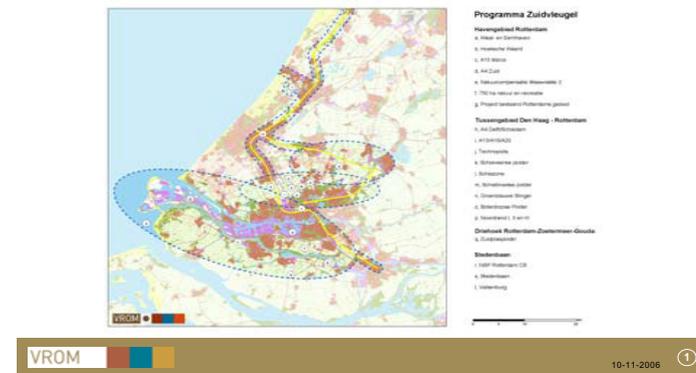
A second reason for the focus on the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland is that the Dutch Minister for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment has a special responsibility for this area. In the draft 'Space Report' (*National Spatial Strategy. Creating Space for development (Nota Ruimte)*), the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland is one of the four special 'programme regions'. Within these 'programme regions', large and complex spatial projects are to be speeded up through coordination of investments by the separate government ministries. Examples are main

roads, transport hubs, major industrial estates and ecological zones. All projects should fit within the wider goals of the Space Report.

Two important questions facing the Southern Wing of Randstad Holland are:

1. How to turn the economy of the Southern Wing into a 'knowledge based' economy?
2. How to create an attractive living, social, and business climate?

→ Zuidvleugelprogramma



Nowadays, economic processes increasingly have a global character. New elements are introduced into worldwide competition; besides economic aspects, also cultural, social and ecological elements are relevant. The Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland is competing with other European regions to attract businesses. Differences in accessibility being small, cultural, social and ecological conditions are becoming increasingly important. Innovation is called for.

Southern Wing of Randstad Holland

This area as the south-western part of the Randstad contains the Port of Rotterdam, Greenport Westland (glass horticulture) and the seat of national government and many (mainly international) organizations for peace and justice in The Hague. It has over a million inhabitants. However, further development seems to be hindered by a number of 'internal factors' and weakens its position on the world market:

- traffic congestion and poor accessibility;
- imbalance between urbanized and non-urbanized areas;
- lack of recreational areas and nature reserves;
- lack of space to accommodate all (desired) activities, especially 'port related activities'.

In addition, the region also suffers from external competition, both from within the Netherlands and from other European countries. Due to the enlargement of the European Union, the economic heart of Europe is moving eastwards. The Netherlands is an exporting country and economic recession and a strong Euro makes our produce more expensive.

Research and design questions

The main issue to be discussed in the workshop was how to overcome a number of problems and strengthen the overall position of the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland. The workshop especially dealt with the international competitiveness of the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland. How to broaden its economic base; how to achieve the right balance between urbanization and landscape; and how to develop the

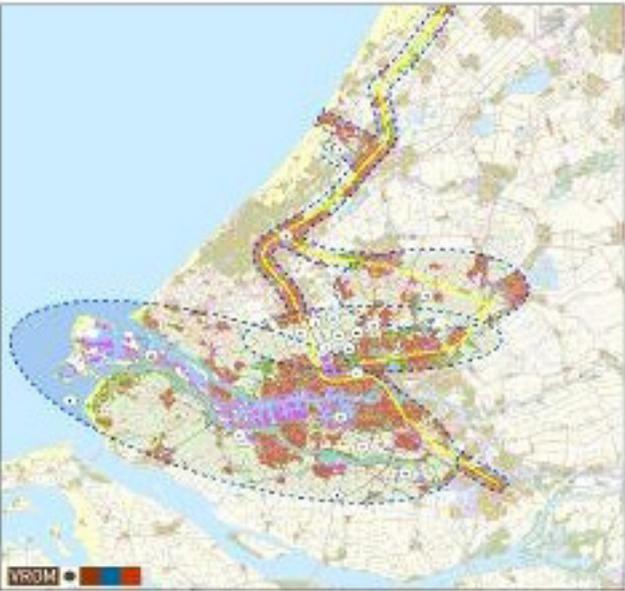
Southern Wing into an attractive cosmopolitan urban network? How to make the most of the assets of the Southern Wing Randstad Holland, such as the Port of Rotterdam, the Green Heart (nature surrounded by a ring of conurbations), the Greenports (glass house horticulture), architecture and design (Rotterdam), knowledge institutions (universities of Rotterdam, Delft and Leiden), water and the coastline?

What kind of measures to take and on what scale (European/ national/ regional/ provincial/ local) to deal with those issues? Is it enough to stimulate and facilitate economic activity, accessibility and create attractive areas to live in? Is building more facilities for higher income groups a key point? Should we decide not to invest in the port anymore but pursue strong alliances with neighbouring ports like Amsterdam or Antwerp and Hamburg in the adjacent European countries? How to attract firms based on knowledge and innovative techniques, universities and cultural activities?

There is a link with the ISoCaRP congress theme 2005 "spaces for the creative economy". The 'creative city' is an important issue in the Southern Wing of the Randstad Holland. The Ministry for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment has initiated a study on this subject. Input from young planners with knowledge from / or experience in these issues would be helpful at this stage. We are looking for new ways to deal with the transformation of an 'industrial based economy' to a 'knowledge based economy'. In particular, strategies linking culture, economy and technology, knowledge and innovation are sought for.

Project Theme - Presentation

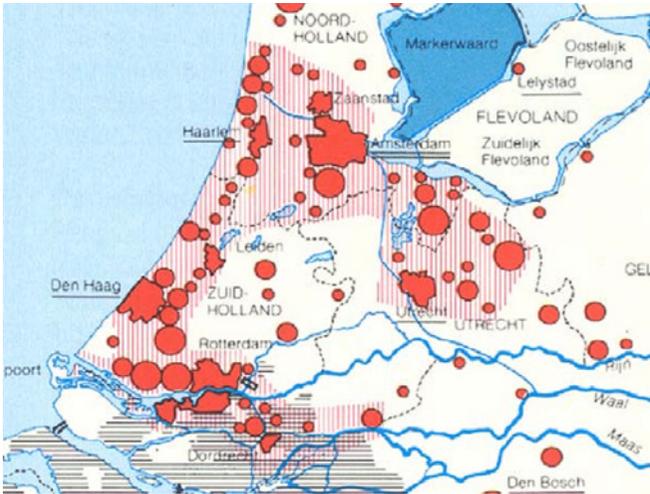
Increase the international economic competitiveness of the South Wing of Randstad Holland in the Netherlands



Location of the South Wing



Metropolitan Region Randstad Holland



Southern Part of Randstad Holland





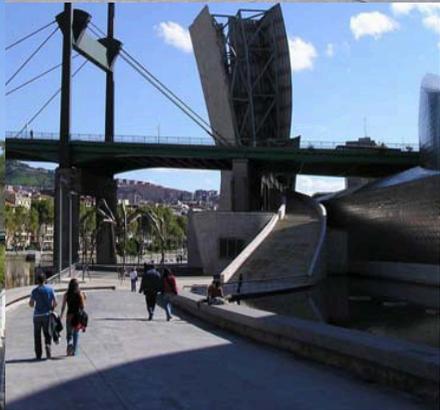


Work in Progress!

Location of the Workshop:
Bilbao Arte







Short Contribution on the ISoCaRP Young Planning Professionals' Workshop in Bilbao 2005 by the ISoCaRP Coordinator

by Jim Colman, Sydney, Australia

For me, the exhilarating experience of working as a Coordinator with the Young Planning Professionals (YPPs) commenced on the evening of their arrival from places as far apart as Senegal, Kazakhstan, India, Brazil, and the USA. Meeting as complete strangers, the ice was soon broken as the magic of converting these strangers into friends and colleagues immediately commenced. The very next day it was down to work in the excellent studios of the Bilbao Arte, located across the river from the Casco Viejo on one of the many narrow winding streets of this handsome city.

The project was a very challenging one: nothing less than formulating a fresh vision for the future of the South Randstad, in the Netherlands. The job put great demands on the two groups of YPPs as they applied their imagination, their intelligence, and their creative skills to the task of defining a new direction for what is certainly one of the most important city regions in Europe – if not in the world..

As Coordinator, I had the privilege of being able to move between the 2 groups, asking questions, tossing ideas, provoking debate and generally trying to keep the program moving ahead to the final moment of truth when the YPPs would face the full plenary session of the ISoCaRP Congress and present their results. IT was interesting to see that although the two groups had a common starting point, clear differences quickly emerged. These differences revealed the differing priorities which each group assigned to such structural elements as infrastructure, agriculture, the

sensitive physical environment, the existing settlement pattern, the port and airport, and the coastline.

The common thread, of course, was the recognition that the study area was seen by all as being of global significance, with a wealth of resources which have the potential to bring benefits not only to the international scientific, corporate and governmental communities but also – as a mandate – to the ordinary inhabitants and their own local communities and organizations.

How to achieve this potential was the question which occupied our young professionals over the 3-day exercise. The results were necessarily sketchy but full of latent value and promise. VROM received the results of about 240 hours of intense professional work – roughly equivalent to the output one might expect from a single experienced planner working full-time for 8 weeks. There is no doubt that the YPPs themselves gained immensely from the experience. From my perspective as a consultant and teacher, I found the whole effort to be an intellectual stimulus as well as an example of collaborative inter-disciplinary activity, undertaken under pressure with a tight non-negotiable deadline.

In summary, it was an exemplary project with a truly challenging brief, a 'real-world' client, excellent support from VROM personnel, and an enthusiastic group of YPPs who wasted no time in getting down to work and drafting their findings in a thoroughly professional way. For its part, VROM deserves high praise for its sponsorship, and the YPPs deserve congratulations for a job well done.

