Didier Van cutsem  
Secretary General  

Report on activities October 2013 - March 2014  

Dear colleagues and friends,  

After 6 months of activities since October 2013, please find hereafter the latest achievements listed.  

1. Short preliminary note: responsibilities of the SG  
The SG profile and responsibilities changed since the last elections: he is now working “on the implementation of the ISOCARP strategies, of the EXCO and President decisions and programs, when and as required. He is providing and submitting reports on all activities, as well as responsible for monitoring, guiding and supporting the Secretariat as direct responsible person of the secretariat staff as well as internal matters such as statutes. Another activity is the development of EU projects and their policy, as well as the proposal and monitoring of the execution of the EU projects. Furthermore, his task is to develop and control all activities and responsibilities in relation to fund raising, looking for and submitting applications for sponsorship, grants and donations, soliciting gifts from individual donors and request. He develops and submits to EXCO for approval the ISOCARP policies on financial sponsorships, grants, requests, etc. Together with the other VPs, he provides and submits Progress Reports to ExCo for the regular ExCo meetings or on request, prepares strategic guidelines in relation to the SG responsibilities at the beginning of each year and submits to ExCo for adoption, as well as annual report for BM and GM.” (SG Profile Elections)  


1. Together with the VP Communication and the HQ, a concept of the new website and newsletter, a new flyer and bookmark was developed. The new website will be finally set up in April 2014, including new functionalities for the membership, will become the new “business card” of the Society and the core of the membership’s involvement. The website features will include discussion platform, ND own web space, new communication tools such as Twitter. Links to existing databases have been established, with agreements with URBACT (www.urbact.eu), EUKN (www.eukn.org) and others. This should be the first step towards high attractiveness and a better involvement of membership.  

2. A Survey of existing relationships with other organisations, cooperation networks, public and private actors with the Society until now were done: today, the Society has 39 “partners”. An elaboration of a collaboration/partnership strategy, identification of potentials for membership and expected win-wins for the Society were developed and presented to the EXCO: a primary importance network for the period 2014-2017 and selection of new partners were discussed and agreed. A new set of agreements should make ISOCARP able to become part of a Network of Excellence and have a future-oriented collaboration. To implement this, ISOCARP is seeking cooperation and synergies with actual selected partners, and starting new cooperation with proposed partners, in a “proactive action”. The win-wins / benefits to ISOCARP and ISOCARP members are clearly identified, to be developed in steps on short, medium and long term.  

3. The Society should achieve high quality products and standards. Membership is high qualified; therefore the products and standards should be high level. This is related of course with the partnership quality; indeed, high-level partners will increase the added value and visibility. This is reflected in the choice of the partnerships.  

4. The internal management of the Head Office is effective and has to be continuously upgraded. The SG has a daily communication with the staff. The Staff questions were clarified early 2014: the staff hierarchy and the corresponding salaries were adopted during the last Exco. Gaby and Monica will have their salaries automatically yearly updated to Dutch level. The employment contracts of Eline van Haastrecht, Project Assistant, and Bart van Tongeren, Project Assistant, were prolonged (Eline until end of October 2015, Bart until
end of October 2014). Eline is helping two days/week the secretariat, and will be more involved in the future in research and content (Projects) as well as the 50th anniversary. Bart will continue to work on UN-Habitat, HPF Chair and WUC Co-Chair with Shipra. Talya ten Brink, Student, was helping the secretariat in layout questions and print; she left the Head Office last month. Thanks to the secretariat for their very good job. This communication structure, internal & external, is helping the Exco members in their daily work.

5. ISOCARP should be part of the global network and become worldwide reference in knowledge and research. This can be achieved by a balanced partnership in research, practice and institutions. The process should be twofold: bottom-up starting by the members and the National Delegations, encouraging initiatives on local level - and top-down by having key roles in high level institutions, such as UN-Habitat or World Bank. Research and education institutions and partners should be involved in the process, together with GPEAN and AESOP, interested universities and research institutions. Strategic partnerships were targeted early 2014 and will be implemented in the next months.

6. A central aim is to have a financial sustainable situation early 2015 before the 50th Anniversary celebrations. Strategic partnerships / Sponsorship, good event results, joint events with financial return, projects and products (UPATs, YPP, training) will ensure a stabilized financial situation.

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