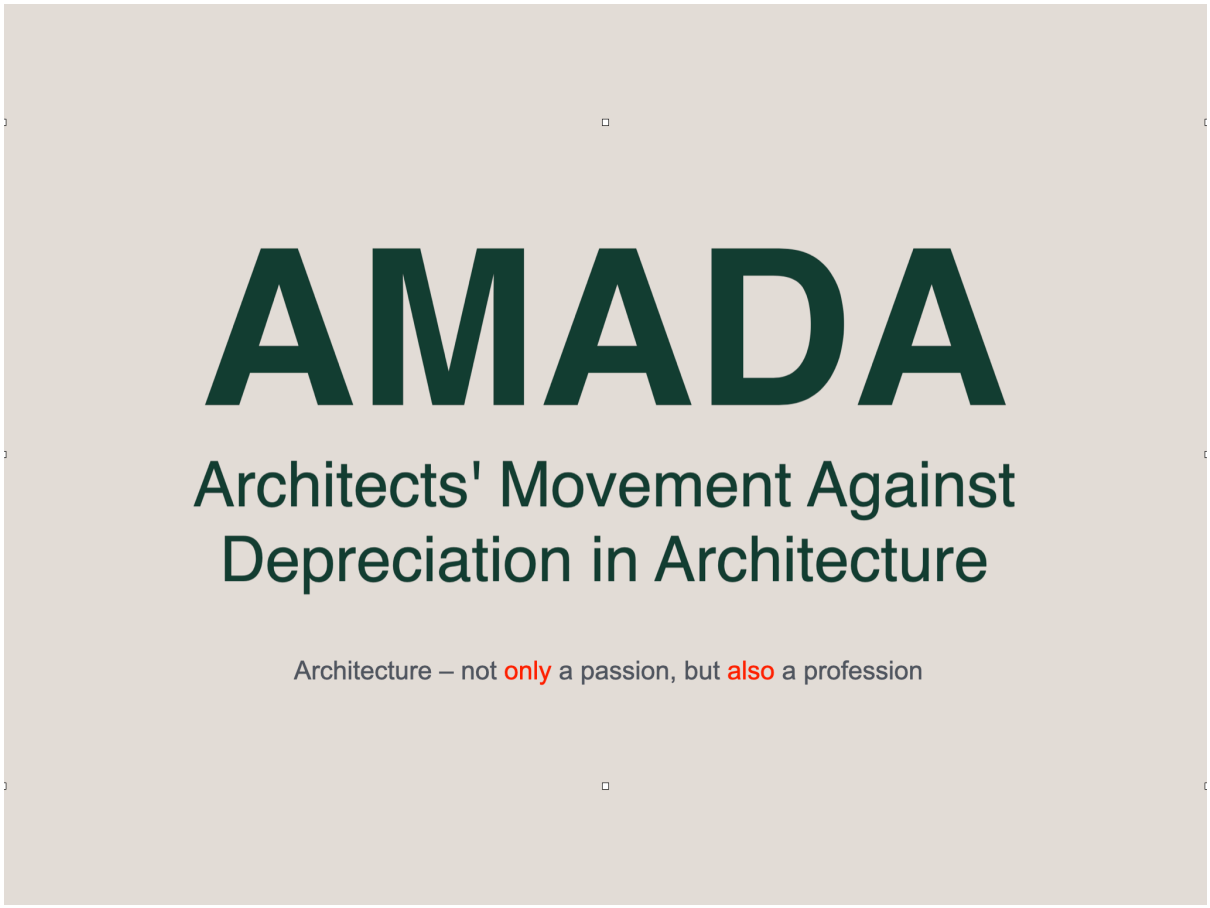

AMADA Report 2025

„Beyond Passion: The Devaluation of Architects in 21st-Century Europe"

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Order of Architects Portugal OA, National Council of Architects, Planners, Landscapers and Conservators CNAPPC, ASEMAS (Mutua de Seguros y Reaseguros a Prima Fija), Federal Chamber of Architects BAK, Swiss Conference of Architects CSA, Czech Chamber of Architects CCA, Polish Chamber of Architects IARP, The Latvia Association of Architects LAA, Estonian Association of Architects EAL, The Romanian Order Of Architects OAR, Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria CAB, Croatian Chamber of Architects CCA, Chamber of Architecture and Spatial Planning of Slovenia ZAPS.

February-May 2025

Executive Summary – AMADA Report 2025

Summary of the AMADA Report 2025: Beyond Passion – The Devaluation of Architects in 21st-Century Europe

The AMADA Report 2025 presents a comprehensive and critical analysis of the professional status of architects in Europe. The report, developed through cooperation between ACE member organisations and national professional bodies, highlights the progressive devaluation of the architectural profession in the context of deregulation, distorted public procurement practices, and increasing socio-economic pressures.

The report identifies a paradox: while the responsibilities and expectations toward architects have increased – including digitalisation, sustainability, and legal accountability – their remuneration and social standing have stagnated or even deteriorated. Analysis of income data from 13 European countries reveals that only a minority of countries offer architects a status index above 1.20 (a baseline of financial recognition), with many others showing architects earning less than their national average salary.

Public procurement practices often privilege the lowest price over quality, which undermines design standards and long-term value. This has led to a race to the bottom, particularly affecting small and medium-sized offices that represent 95% of the profession. These trends are compounded by inconsistencies in salary calculations, the undervaluation of architectural services compared to construction costs, and a lack of harmonised methodologies across Europe.

To better understand these phenomena, AMADA developed two comparative studies: one on public procurement practices and the other on the valuation of architectural services based on three project typologies. These studies reveal significant discrepancies in working time, salary levels, and service scope, particularly in pre-design and supervision phases. The exercise demonstrated the importance of clearly defining architectural tasks and using harmonised tools to ensure comparability.

Despite the complexity of the topic, AMADA successfully piloted a method for collecting consistent data and defined a framework for future research. This work, while not fully conclusive, represents a crucial foundation for evidence-based policymaking. AMADA recognises that future phases must improve scope definition, sample size, and integration of national contexts, but the pilot demonstrated both the need and feasibility of a common European approach.

The report positions architecture as a key discipline in achieving the EU's climate, social, and economic objectives. It calls for courageous leadership, more robust representation of architects in policy-making, and systemic reforms to restore the dignity and effectiveness of the profession.

Contents:

1. Shaping Europe in the 21st century

The profession of architect as such emerged in ancient Greece, where its practitioners enjoyed the status of skilled professionals. During the Renaissance, architects became artists and intellectuals. Today, we are at a turning point for Europe, with the profession of architecture at a crossroads of political change, economic transformation and social responsibility. As architects, we shape not only buildings, but also societies, communities and democracy itself.

Europe is changing rapidly. We are facing geopolitical instability, the need to ensure economic competitiveness and a growing demand for social cohesion. Our cities and communities are under pressure from economic challenges, social inequalities, climate change and political fragmentation. These challenges are reflected in the European Commission's recent reports – **Enrico Letta's** report on the single market and **Mario Draghi's** report on European competitiveness.

The gap between what we want to build and the reality we face is growing. It is up to us to bridge this gap. It is our duty as citizens of 21st-century Europe not only to respond to these challenges, but also to chart the way forward.

2. Architecture: Strengthening democracy and unity

Architecture is not just about design – it is about building identity and promoting unity. In these turbulent times, we must defend the idea that high-quality architecture is an investment in democracy and social cohesion.

In his report, Enrico Letty emphasises the importance of social justice and the fight against inequality, pointing out that cohesion is the glue that holds Europe together. He reminds us that architecture has the power to create inclusive, democratic spaces that bring communities together.

At the same time, **Mario Draghi**'s report highlights the urgent need to regain economic strength through productivity and innovation. The poor state of the construction sector is a key issue, and if this trend continues, it will inevitably lead to a broader discussion on serial construction. Serial construction is increasingly seen as a potential solution to the productivity gap, but it comes with challenges and responsibilities.

We must make it clear that serial construction cannot become synonymous with low quality or architectural monotony. Instead, we need to establish a clear position that ensures quality and sustainability are maintained even when using standardised, industrialised construction methods. This will require innovative thinking, creative use of the modular approach and rigorous quality standards to ensure that architectural value is preserved.

This situation calls for resilience and foresight from Europe, where architecture plays a key role in stimulating economic growth while remaining rooted in cultural and social values. This is an opportunity for us to show that architecture and urban planning are not merely technical tasks, but powerful tools for social transformation and economic revitalisation.

3. Deregulation of liberal professions in Europe: consequences and challenges

In recent decades, Europe has experienced significant deregulation of liberal professions. The European Commission and the OECD, with the support of national competition authorities, have carried out a series of reforms of regulated sectors, including liberal professions, mainly for economic reasons. The aim of these changes was to improve the functioning of the internal market, increase competitiveness, reduce barriers to market entry and promote innovation. In practice, these reforms have led to a significant reduction in regulation in many sectors.

On the one hand, deregulation has allowed greater freedom to provide services and reduced bureaucratic obstacles, which is in line with the political objective of creating more flexible and competitive markets. On the other hand, however, the removal of control mechanisms has had negative consequences. Serious concerns have been raised about a decline in service quality, reduced consumer protection and lower vocational training standards. Previous regulations guaranteed minimum competences and compliance with ethical standards, which are now being called into question. Deregulation has become a challenge for the balance between the free market and technical and professional requirements.

The lack of adequate regulatory tools in most European countries has exacerbated the trend towards deregulation, with far-reaching social and economic consequences. In the case of the liberal professions, this has facilitated market access and reduced the costs of obtaining licences, but at the same time has contributed to job instability and pressure to lower service prices. From the consumer's point of view, deregulation means more choice and potentially lower prices, but often at the expense of lower quality and safety guarantees.

After two decades of applying this model, Europe is beginning to see its negative effects. In response, strategic measures have been taken to limit the effects of excessive deregulation. Anti-dumping measures have been introduced to counter unfair competition, both from non-European companies and those operating in the internal market. Key sectors such as energy and automotive have been covered by support programmes, such as the Horizon Europe initiative, which has been allocated around €100 billion.

4. Deregulation in architecture: a professional crisis

As part of the deregulation process since 2005, many EU Member States have amended their regulations governing the practice of architecture as a liberal profession in a market economy. Tools for calculating the costs of public works projects were abolished, which also had far-reaching consequences for private projects. The lowest price for a service became one of the basic criteria for selecting a contractor. As a result, the working conditions of architects and other designers have deteriorated significantly. The main problems facing the industry in many European countries are:

- excessive bureaucracy and complex legal regulations,
- job insecurity and low wages,
- devaluation of the profession, unfair competition and price dumping,

- an inadequate tax system for independent professionals,
- the constant need to update technology (BIM, digitisation, artificial intelligence).
- The growing scope of services required and increased professional responsibility.
- Lower quality of services in procedures where price becomes the main criterion for selecting a contractor.

Changes in the national regulations of EU Member States have not been coordinated with the relevant regulations on project quality protection, safety standards or anti-dumping mechanisms. As a result, cheap, low-quality designs are becoming the norm, leading to higher infrastructure maintenance costs throughout its lifetime. These problems affect not only buildings but also roads, bridges and public facilities, which pose a threat to users due to inferior (cheaper) materials and lower standards.

The lack of regulation encourages unfair competition, especially in public procurement. Companies that lower prices at the expense of quality may ignore important technical standards, which in the long run leads to serious problems. These include issues of accessibility, energy efficiency, resource optimisation and resilience to climate change and natural disasters. Price dumping is becoming widespread, manifesting itself not only in undercutting project prices to levels that make it impossible to maintain quality, but also in offering additional services free of charge. This practice, which is particularly common among large design firms and corporations, distorts fair competition.

5. Protecting quality and European values in architecture

Architecture is an industry that goes far beyond design. It encompasses a wide range of services, imposing increasing legal and tax obligations on architects. This responsibility should be reflected in fair remuneration based on quality and safety standards.

Currently, the profession of architect in Europe is losing value. Architectural firms are losing their innovative character and becoming mere administrative entities instead of creative city designers. This process threatens Europe's architectural identity and its global influence. This is particularly important in the face of the challenges of the 21st century, where issues such as the digitisation of life, ecology and security must be balanced with quality and a well-built environment. Architects emphasise that, as individuals with a particularly interdisciplinary education, they are prepared and ready to take on the role of guarantor of this process in a holistic, sustainable and beneficial way for the whole of European society. The multidisciplinary education of architects and their practical skills in coordinating groups working on a common project make this professional group ideally suited to lead multidisciplinary teams in the current situation of rapid and forced changes in Europe, which, in addition to the Green Deal, must above all ensure the safety of its citizens.

6. Strengthening Europe's competitiveness: public procurement and housing

One of the most pressing issues on our agenda right now is **public procurement**. Public procurement is not just about transactions – it is an investment in quality, sustainability and the public good. However, too often, the lowest price wins out over quality, undermining trust and long-term value. The Letty and Draghi reports clearly show that Europe's competitiveness depends on investing in sustainable, innovative and high-quality projects.

We must advocate for public procurement policies that prioritise quality over cost, strengthen SMEs and support innovation. We must simplify procedures and ensure that high standards are incorporated into public procurement. Our message must be clear: public money should be used to build lasting value, not just cheap solutions.

An additional problem is the high insurance guarantees required from investors. This leads to a situation where large global companies are driving smaller design offices out of the market. According to an industry survey conducted by the Architects' Council of Europe, 95% of architectural firms are small and medium-sized enterprises, which are increasingly unable to compete with international corporations.

The lack of symmetry in contracts concluded with project contractors is also worrying, as these contracts usually protect the contracting authority at the expense of the statutory rights of the project contractor, in particular with regard to the rules on payment for services, the excessive guarantees mentioned above, the transfer of copyright, etc.

The requirements imposed on project contractors favour large corporations, eliminating the possibility for young designers and small design companies to participate in tendering procedures, restricting the right to provide services on the free market and, in many cases, eliminating the innovation of the proposed design solutions. As a result, these long-term measures may lead to increased operating costs for the European built environment and a lack of competitiveness and innovation in the European market. The exclusion of designers from the public procurement market through excessive regulations and requirements imposed on participants in public procurement is also inconsistent with the European Union's policy of promoting joint action to strengthen social cohesion and jointly shape a society capable of countering threats to Europe's security.

Housing is becoming a serious challenge. We are facing a crisis that affects all communities in Europe. Affordable and sustainable housing is not just an economic issue – it is a social responsibility. The ‘Type E building’ initiative in Germany shows us that simplicity and quality can go hand in hand. We must support renovation instead of new buildings, prioritise regional materials and promote internal development and densification. The appeal from both Letty and Draghi is clear: sustainable development is non-negotiable and we must be leaders in implementing green and innovative solutions.

7. Call to action: Lead with courage and vision

Europe calls on us not only to adapt to change, but also to shape it. Our cities and communities need leaders who are courageous, creative and committed to delivering high quality. We must be leaders in building a more resilient, democratic and competitive Europe.

Let us remember that architecture and urban planning are not just technical challenges – they are acts of responsible leadership. It is about building the future we believe in – a future that reflects European values and aspirations.

Let us rise to the challenge and make our voices heard. Let us work to ensure that the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU understand that quality and resilience are non-negotiable. Let us stand up for policies that allow us to innovate, compete in the global market and build fairly.

To counteract the pathological phenomena that threaten the achievement of these goals, Europe must once again appreciate the value of architecture and its creators. This means not only strengthening education and research, but also restoring the prestige of the profession through fair remuneration and the protection of working standards. In response to these challenges, the **Architects Movement Against the Depreciation of Architecture (AMADA)** was formed, whose mission is to fight for decent working conditions and proper recognition for architects in Europe. That is why the movement's motto is: **'Architecture – not only a passion, but also a profession'.**

8. Actual salaries of architects in Europe

Actual salaries of architects in Europe are not keeping pace with rising construction costs and increased responsibilities.

In order to meet the challenges facing architects in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century, it is necessary to follow the example of other professions at the forefront of change in Europe and create the basic conditions for the safe practice of the architectural profession. The profession must not be associated solely with a passion for creating high-quality built environments, but must also guarantee legal and economic security.

The profession of architect is widely regarded as elite and lucrative. However, the reality is different. In 2024, the average gross annual income of a full-time employee in the European Union was, according to statistics published by the European Commission (data.europa.eu), **€37,900**, while the average income of an architect, according to the ACE Sector Study, was **€43,437**. As these figures show, architects' incomes are 12.74% higher than the average income in Europe, but significantly lower than the higher incomes of other liberal professions (e.g. lawyers and doctors earn on average about one and a half times more than architects).

€	average (median) pre-tax earnings 2024	
	€ adjusted for PPP	€ unadjusted for PPP
Austria	55 452	65 000
Belgium	34 447	40 000
Croatia	30 694	21 950
Cyprus	32 266	30 000
Czechia*	45 286	55 782
Denmark*	71 278	96 530
Estonia*	24 696	23 000
Finland	47 465	60 000
France	31 468	35 000
Germany	58 858	68 500
Greece	23 420	20 000
Ireland	52 536	65 000
Italy	35 028	35 000
Latvia	25 810	21 540
Lithuania*	30 026	24 000
Luxemburg	54 134	70 000
Malta	48 485	44 750
Netherlands	57 225	70 000
Norway	55 047	67 594
Poland	32 167	23 111
Portugal	19 864	17 000
Romania	18 866	11 046
Serbia*	20 175	12 808
Slovakia	35 780	30 000
Slovenia	29 312	26 250
Spain	42 229	40 000
Sweden	38 504	46 244
Switzerland	73 644	119 149
United Kingdom	43 475	56 126
2024 EUROPE-29**	43 461	49 353

***Sources**: ACE Sector Study 2024 - https://ace-cae.eu/publication/ace-2024-sector-study/*

Financial comparison of legal professions with architectural professions

Compared to architects, lawyers in countries such as Switzerland, Germany and France have a higher financial status, which is reflected in higher average salaries in the legal profession. In countries such as Spain, the financial status of both professions is comparable. In Eastern European countries such as Poland and Romania, there is a lack of specific data on lawyers' salaries, which makes an accurate comparison difficult.

Country	Lawyer Earnings (€)	National Avg (€)	Lawyer Status Index	Architect Earnings (€)	National Avg (€)	Architect Status Index
Switzerland	**240 000**	85 500	2.81	**119 149**	85 500	1.39
Germany	**82 606**	50 988	1.62	**68 500**	50 988	1.34
France	**71 400**	39 110	1.83	**38 650**	39 110	0.99
Spain	**40 000**	35 774	1.12	**40 000**	35 774	1.12

High financial status of lawyers

- **Switzerland**: The average annual salary of a lawyer is approximately 260,739 USD (approximately 240,000 €), which significantly exceeds the national average. However, the high cost of living in this country should be taken into account. afterschoolafrica.com
- **Germany**: The average annual salary for a lawyer is approximately €82,606, with a national average of approximately €50,988, giving a financial status index of approximately 1.62. Leverage Edu
- **France**: The average annual salary for a lawyer is approximately €71,400, with a national average of approximately €39,110, giving a financial status index of approximately 1.83. euronews
- **Spain**: The average annual salary for a lawyer is around €40,000, with a national average of around €35,774, giving a financial status index of around 1.12. euronews

Financial comparison of engineers and architects

Country	Engineer Earnings (€)	Architect Earnings (€)	National Avg Earnings (€)	Engineer Status Index	Architect Status Index
Switzerland	100 000	119 149	85 500	1,17	1,39
Germany	65 000	68 500	50 988	1,27	1,34
France	42 000	38 650	39 110	1,07	0,99
Spain	35 000	40 000	35 774	0,98	1,12
Poland	22 740	23 111	18 054	1,26	1,28
Portugal	25 331	17 000	20 000	1,27	0,85
Romania	22 348	11 046	17 739	1,26	0,62
Bulgaria	17 461	15 360	15 000	1,16	1,02

Conclusions from the comparison:

- **Switzerland**: Both professions have high financial status, but architects (1.39) exceed engineers (1.17) in relation to the national average salary.
- **Germany**: Architects (1.34) have a slightly higher status than engineers (1.27), indicating that both professions are competitive.
- **France**: Engineers (1.07) outrank architects (0.99), suggesting better salaries relative to the national average.
- **Spain**: Architects (1.12) have a higher status than engineers (0.98), which may indicate a greater demand for architectural services.
- **Poland**: Both professions have similar financial status, with a slight advantage for architects (1.28) over engineers (1.26).
- **Portugal**: Engineers (1.27) have a significantly higher status than architects (0.85), which may be due to differences in demand for these professions.
- **Romania**: Engineers (1.26) significantly outrank architects (0.62) in terms of financial status.
- **Bulgaria**: The financial status of both professions is similar, with engineers (1.16) slightly ahead of architects (1.02).

Sources of Salary Data for Lawyers and Engineers (2024):
architects: ACE Sector Study 2024 - https://ace-cae.eu/publication/ace-2024-sector-study/
Switzerland - lawyer: https://www.afterschoolafrica.com/56147/top-10-countries-with-the-highest-salary-for-lawyers/
Germany - lawyer: https://leverageedu.com/learn/career-abroad-lawyer-salary-in-germany/
France - lawyer: https://www.afterschoolafrica.com/56147/top-10-countries-with-the-highest-salary-for-lawyers/
Spain - lawyer: https://www.euronews.com/business/2024/12/24/average-earnings-rankings-in-europe-which-countries-pay-the-high
Switzerland - engineer: https://ch.talent.com/en/salary?job=engineer
Germany - engineer: https://www.stepstone.de/gehaltsreport/ingenieur/
France - engineer: https://www.payscale.com/research/FR/Job=Mechanical_Engineer/Salary
Spain - engineer: https://www.salaryexplorer.com/salary-survey.php?loc=205&loctype=1&job=13&jobtype=1
Poland - engineer: https://www.paylab.com/pl/salaryinfo/inzynieria
Romania - engineer: https://www.tradingeconomics.com/romania/wages
Bulgaria - engineer: https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/bulgaria-engineer-salary-SRCH_IL.0,8_IN33_KO9,17.htm
Portugal - engineer: https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/portugal-engineer-salary-SRCH_IL.0,8_IN195_KO9,17.htm

Traditionally, the remuneration of architects and designers in other industries has been linked to the construction sector. However, it should be noted that in most European countries, it is the architect, as the representative and leader of the entire design team, who negotiates the terms of the multidisciplinary contract with the investor. In this regard, the strong link between architects and engineers should be emphasised. Low salaries for architects also result in low salaries for other participants in the design process.

According to an ACE sector study, the average annual salary of an architect in Europe (before tax) rose from EUR 29,014.00 to EUR 37,461.00 between 2012 and 2022, an increase of **29%**. At the same time, according to data from the European Central Bank (ECB), cumulative inflation in the euro area between 2012 and 2022 was around **21.84%**. This means that the price level in 2022 was approximately **21.84%** higher than in 2012. This means that, with the increase in the scope of services required from architects, their price increased by only **7.16%** over ten years.

During the same period, according to a study conducted by the German federal government to amend the HOAI **'Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure' (**regulation on remuneration for architects and engineers), construction output prices rose by **60%** in real terms and by approximately **70%** (Sachverständigengutachten zur Überarbeitung der Honorarberechnung in der Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure (HOAI) Endbericht per 17.01.2025 - https://files.vogel.de/infodienste/smfiledata/2/1/7/4/6/7/247315.pdf). A similar increase in costs in the construction sector was observed across Europe.

We can assess this from several perspectives:

- **Actual increase in architects' salaries**

• The average salary of an architect in Europe increased **by 29%** between 2012 and 2022.
• Inflation during the same period was **21.84%**.
• This means a real increase in architects' salaries of **7.16%** (29% – 21.84%).

The conclusion is that the purchasing power of architects has increased, but only to a very limited extent, despite the rise in living costs and new industry requirements.

- **Comparison with the construction sector**

- During the same period, construction output prices rose by **60%** in real terms (and even by **70%** if standards are taken into account).
- This means that the real value of architectural services is growing much more slowly than the value of construction output itself.
- Architects are earning more, but their services are becoming relatively cheaper in relation to construction costs, with an increasing range of services required by law.

- **Consequences for the architectural profession**

- **The decline in the relative value of architectural services** means that architects **are not adequately remunerated** for their increased responsibilities and growing legal and administrative requirements.
- The 60-70% increase in construction costs suggests that **the architect's margin in the total project budget is decreasing,**
- This leads to a deterioration in architects' working conditions, greater pressure on productivity and a potential decline in the quality of designs.
- Those who do not see a future in the profession will leave, creating a generation gap in this professional group. This situation will lead to an increase in the price of services in the future.

- Possible conclusions and actions

- **Change in fees**: As the architectural value of buildings increases with rising standards, **fee rates should be adjusted** to reflect the actual amount of work involved.
- **Greater role for regulation**: Countries that regulate minimum salaries for architects (e.g. Germany with HOAI) can prevent a decline in the value of the profession.
- **Better communication of the value of architecture**: Architects should actively emphasise the **added value of their services** so that clients understand that their work is not limited to drawings, but includes coordination, compliance with standards and optimisation of

investment costs.

It can only be concluded that the fact that architects‘ salaries have increased by **only 7.16% in real terms**, while construction costs have risen **by 60-70%**, suggests a **weakening of architects’ position in the investment chain**. This may also mean that remuneration systems need to be reviewed, rates renegotiated or awareness of the value of architects' work in society increased.

Continuing to celebrate low prices will discourage innovation and encourage standard/mass solutions that do not guarantee the quality of the final product.

Further measures to reduce the cost of services may also contribute to a decline in interest in the profession. As mentioned above, architects in Europe are self-employed and must complete at least seven years of study after secondary school (often culminating in a qualifying examination). These are people who, as part of their work, make decisions that have a direct impact on the safety and physical and mental health of society. At the same time, they currently earn around 12.74% more than the average salary in individual countries (the standard minimum salary is around 20% above the average salary in the liberal professions). The report of the European Economic and Social Committee entitled „The State of Liberal Professions Concerning their Functions and Relevance to European Civil Society” discusses the role and importance of the liberal professions in European society. Although the report does not specify specific remuneration standards, it emphasises the need to ensure adequate working conditions and remuneration for members of these professions so that they can effectively fulfil their social and economic functions. European Economic and Social Committee . Therefore, although there is no clear source confirming the claim that salaries in liberal professions are 20% higher than the average, there is consensus on the need to adequately remunerate these professions, given their importance to society. In the case of liberal professions such as architects, doctors and lawyers, it is often assumed that their remuneration should be higher than the national average to reflect the level of responsibility, specialist knowledge and costs associated with the performance of these professions. In practice, various industry organisations and reports may suggest certain salary thresholds, but these are not legally binding standards. It is clear that people in liberal professions should at least belong to the ‘middle class’. As regards the definition of the middle class, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and some think tanks (e.g. Bruegel, Brookings, CASE) use the following definitions: income of 75-200% of the median (OECD); paying taxes in the second or third bracket as an indicator of economic independence and stability.

The table below presents data on architects in 13 European countries, including actual hourly rates, annual salaries, differences from the national average and the percentage of architects' salaries in relation to the national average.

Column:	*Description:*
Hourly Rate (Unadjusted)	Average hourly rate for architects (gross, without PPP adjustment).
ACE Reported Annual Earnings	Average annual salary of an architect according to the ACE 2024 survey.
National Average Earnings	Official national average salary for all employees.
Earnings Difference	The difference between an architect's earnings and the national average.
% of Architect Earnings vs National Avg	Status indicator: how many times the architect's earnings exceed the national average.

	Country	Median hourly rate for architects - ACE Sector Study - unadjusted for PPP	Hourly Rate (Unadjusted, Architect Employee €)	ACE Reported Annual Earnings (2024, pre-tax €- Sector Study 2024)	National Average Earnings (official national statistics for 2024, €)	Calculated Annual Earnings (Hourly rate × 1920 hours annual)	Earnings Difference (ACE - National €)	% of Architect Earnings vs National Avg
1	Bulgaria	n/a	**13,00 €**	15 360,00 €	14 251,00 €	24 960,00 €	1 109,00 €	**107,78%**
2	Croatia	40,00 €	**40,00 €**	21 950,00 €	21 324,00 €	76 800,00 €	626,00 €	**102,94%**
3	Czech Republic	n/a	**43,00 €**	*55 782,00 €*	24 930,00 €	82 560,00 €	30 852,00 €	**223,75%**
4	Estonia	35,00 €	**35,00 €**	23 000,00 €	23 772,00 €	67 200,00 €	-772,00 €	**96,75%**
5	Germany	85,00 €	**85,00 €**	68 500,00 €	55 608,00 €	163 200,00 €	12 892,00 €	**123,18%**
6	Italy	50,00 €	**50,00 €**	35 000,00 €	42 356,00 €	96 000,00 €	-7 356,00 €	**82,63%**
7	Latvia	30,00 €	**30,00 €**	21 540,00 €	20 436,00 €	57 600,00 €	1 104,00 €	**105,40%**
8	Poland	23,00 €	**17,00 €**	23 111,00 €	22 117,00 €	32 640,00 €	994,00 €	**104,49%**
9	Portugal	35,00 €	**35,00 €**	17 000,00 €	18 336,00 €	67 200,00 €	-1 336,00 €	**92,71%**
10	Romania	20,00 €	**15,00 €**	11 046,00 €	22 800,00 €	28 800,00 €	-11 754,00 €	**48,45%**
11	Slovenia	35,00 €	**35,00 €**	26 250,00 €	29 172,00 €	67 200,00 €	-2 922,00 €	**89,98%**
12	Spain	35,00 €	**35,00 €**	40 000,00 €	27 000,00 €	67 200,00 €	13 000,00 €	**148,15%**
13	Switzerland	140,00 €	**137,00 €**	119 149,00 €	85 500,00 €	263 040,00 €	33 649,00 €	**139,36%**
							Average to National Avg.	**112,74%**

Sources of national data:

- **Poland**: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS) Free Time Tracking Software - TimeCamp+2SeeNews+2Free Time Tracking Software - TimeCamp+2
- **Bulgaria**: National Statistical Institute (NSI) nsi.bg
- **Croatia**: Državni zavod za statistiku (DZS) Državni zavod za statistiku+1Državni zavod za statistiku+1
- **Czech Republic**: Český statistický úřad (CZSO) The Dubrovnik Times+25Statistika+25Prague Daily News+25
- **Estonia**: Statistikaamet Statistika Estonia+1Deloitte Italia+1
- **Germany**: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) UE+2Istat+2Statistisches Bundesamt+2
- **Italy**: Early.app SeeNews+18EARLY+18Wikipedia+18
- **Latvia**: Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) Baltic News Network+2Statistikas portāls+2Statistikas portāls+2
- **Portugal**: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpgid=ine_main&xpid=INE&xlang=en
- **Romania**: Institutul Național de Statistică (INSSE) insse.ro+1insse.ro+1
- **Slovenia**: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije (SURS) ceicdata.com+2stat.si+2OECD+2
- **Spain**: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) https://www.ine.es/en/
- **Switzerland**: Federal Statistical Office (FSO) https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home.html
- **Information about architects** ACE Sector Study 2024 - https://ace-cae.eu/publication/ace-2024-sector-study/

Even a brief analysis of the table shows that:

1. Architects have the highest financial status in:
   - The Czech Republic: index 2.24
     - Architects earn more than twice the national average (€55,782 compared to €24,930).
     - This is the highest professional status in the ranking.
   - Spain (1.48) and Switzerland (1.39) also have high financial status.

2. High nominal incomes, but questionable reality
   - Switzerland: calculated annual earnings (€263,040) are more than twice as high as ACE data (€119,149), which suggests:
     - the effective number of working hours is overestimated,
     - the assumption of 1,920 hours per year for an architect in this country is unrealistic.

This also applies to Germany (€163,200 compared to €68,500) and Italy (€96,000 compared to €35,000).

3. Consistency with national data – realistic cases
   - Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia and Croatia have similar calculated and reported earnings.
     - Example: Poland – €23,111 (ACE) compared to €22,117 (national average)
     - Status indicator: 1.04 → slight advantage for architects.

4. Countries where architects earn less than the national average
   - Romania (0.48) – lowest status: architects earn 52% less than the national average.
   - Italy (0.83), Slovenia (0.90) and Portugal (0.93) are also below average.

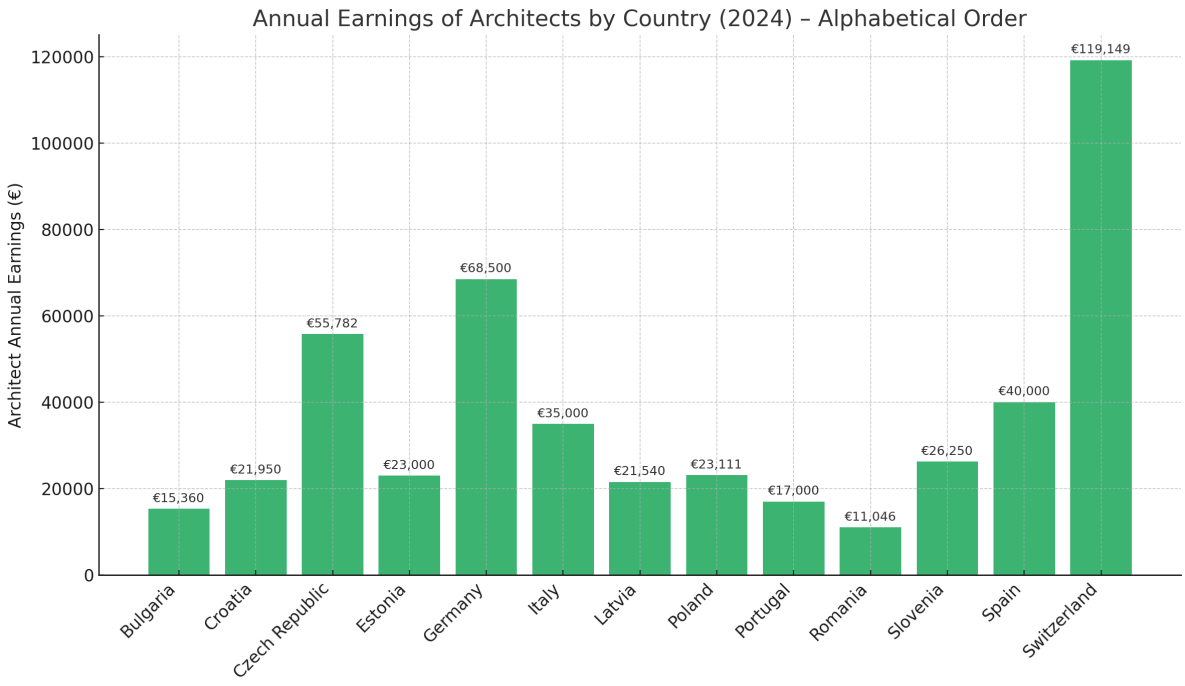
5. **Average financial situation of architects in Europe**
   - Average status index for the countries surveyed: **1.13** → Architects earn on average **12.74%** more than the average employee.

This analysis also points to a possible discrepancy in the data contained in the ACE sector study with regard to architects' earnings and salaries. In some cases, this may be due to the fact that the data may be underestimated or overestimated due to a small sample size – e.g. there are few active architects in a given country, which affects the averages, or the data is provided by architects in the survey and is not verified by the authorities – so it may include, among other things, work for foreign clients. However, it should be emphasised that the ACE sector survey is the only professional survey on the architectural profession in Europe and a unique source of data compared to other professions.

9. The financial situation of architects

Data from the ACE sector survey indicate significant differences in the gross annual income of architects before taxation in European countries. However, when making any comparisons, it should be taken into account that these differences are also influenced by:

- **Living costs**: It should be noted that higher salaries in Germany are also associated with higher living costs compared to Poland and Bulgaria.
- **Taxation**: Tax systems vary from country to country, which affects net salaries.
- **Experience and specialisation**: Salaries can vary significantly depending on the professional experience and specialisation of the architect.



After conducting all analyses, we have concluded that a reliable comparison would be to compare architects' incomes with average earnings in a given country.
Below is a comparison of average gross annual salaries in euros for selected European countries for 2024, combining Eurostat data (adjusted for inflation) and official national data:

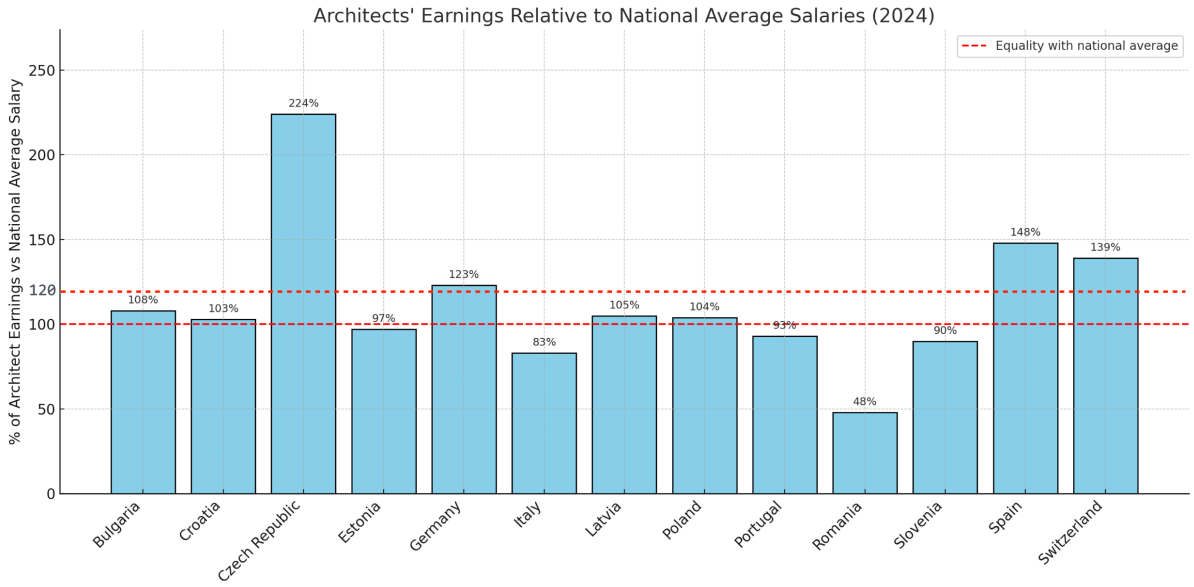
	Country	Eurostat (2022) + Inflation (€)	Official National Data (2024) (€)	Difference (%)	Source of National Data
1	**Bulgaria**	11 183	14 251	27%	NSI
2	**Croatia**	18 980	21 324	12%	DZS
3	**Czech Republic**	23 451	24 930	6%	CZSO
4	**Estonia**	22 924	23 772	4%	Statistikaamet
5	**Germany**	47 388	55 608	17%	Destatis

6	**Italy**	31 831	42 356	33%	Early.app
7	**Latvia**	18 441	20 436	11%	CSB
8	**Poland**	17 170	22 117	29%	GUS
9	**Portugal**	21 319	18 336	-14%	INE
10	**Romania**	11 167	22 800	104%	INSSE
11	**Slovenia**	28 062	29 172	4%	SURS
12	**Spain**	29 548	27 000	-9%	INE
13	**Switzerland**	86 338	85 500	-1%	FSO

- **Eurostat (2022) + inflation:** 2022 data updated with cumulative inflation for 2023 and 2024**.**
- **Official national data (2024):** Average annual gross wages according to national statistical offices.
- **Difference (%):** Percentage difference between national data and updated Eurostat data**.**

This table, showing the percentage difference between inflation and the average national salary in a given country, also indicates the dynamics of salary growth. It should be noted that, without taking inflation into account, the average income of architects in 2012-22 was slightly over 29% (over a 10-year period) and, as can be seen in the table, over a 10-year period, the growth in average national salaries in countries such as Romania, Poland and Italy was higher for architects.

A reference to average earnings in individual countries allows us to compare how much the current earnings of architects differ from the average earnings in a country:



The financial status of an architect in a given country will be determined by a simple calculation showing whether the architect earns more or less than the average citizen in that country.

$$\text{Status Index} = \frac{\text{Architect's Earnings}}{\text{Average National Earnings}} \times \text{Purchasing Power Index (optional)}$$

When interpreting status, it should be understood that earnings above average (and *de facto* we should assume **120%** of the average, which should be characteristic of liberal professions) are earnings that determine the average financial status of an architect.

The actual financial situation of architects (national level)

	Country	Architect Status Index	Real Financial Status Interpretation on national level	ACE Reported Annual Earnings (2024, pre-tax €- Sector Study 2024)
1	**Czech Republic**	**2,24**	Architects have a **very high real financial status** compared to national average	55 782,00 €
2	**Spain**	**1,48**	Architects have a **clearly above-average real financial status**	40 000,00 €
3	**Switzerland**	**1,39**	Architects have a **clearly above-average real financial status**	119 149,00 €
4	**Germany**	**1,23**	Architects have an **above-average real financial status**	68 500,00 €
5	**Bulgaria**	**1,08**	Architects have a **comparable real financial status** to national average	15 360,00 €
6	**Latvia**	**1,05**	Architects have a **comparable real financial status** to national average	21 540,00 €
7	**Poland**	**1,04**	Architects have a **comparable real financial status** to national average	23 111,00 €
8	**Croatia**	**1,03**	Architects have a **comparable real financial status** to national average	21 950,00 €
9	**Estonia**	**0,97**	Architects have a **moderately lower real financial status**	23 000,00 €
10	**Portugal**	**0,93**	Architects have a **moderately lower real financial status**	17 000,00 €
11	**Slovenia**	**0,9**	Architects have a **moderately lower real financial status**	26 250,00 €
12	**Italy**	**0,83**	Architects have a **significantly lower real financial status**	35 000,00 €
13	**Romania**	**0,48**	Architects have a **very low financial status compared to national average**	11 046,00 €
Architect Status Index expressed as:			$\text{Status Index} = \frac{\text{Architect's Earnings}}{\text{Average National Earnings}}$	

As can be seen from the table:

1. The threshold of 1.20 should be maintained as the minimum status for liberal professions

Public trust professions (e.g. doctors, lawyers, architects) should have a financial status of at least 120% of the national average wage (index 1.20).

- Only 4 out of 13 countries meet this threshold:
  - Czech Republic (2.24)
  - Spain (1.48)
  - Switzerland (1.39)
  - Germany (1.23)

The rest are below this minimum, which means that architects are not remunerated in line with their expected professional status.

2. Nominal earnings ≠ actual financial status
Example:

- Italy: €35,000, but status index = 0.83 (well below average).
- Romania: only €11,046, and status = 0.48 (drastically low).

This means that high earnings in euros do not necessarily translate into a high socio-economic position if the cost of living is even higher or the work is undervalued in relation to the rest of society.

3. Architects with earnings comparable to the national average (1.00–1.10)
Values for countries such as Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland and Croatia
suggest a lack of financial recognition for the profession of architect despite its responsibilities, education and licensing requirements.

In addition, there is a group of countries where architects have a particularly low status (below 1.00) – in these countries, architects earn less than the average citizen, which undermines the attractiveness of the profession.

Country	Status indicator	Assessment
Estonia	0,97	moderately low
Portugalia	0,93	moderately low
Słowenia	0,90	moderately low
Włochy	0,83	significantly low
Rumunia	0,48	worryingly low

The above data and assessment of the financial situation of architects, probably compiled **for the first time,** are not optimistic. Therefore, AMADA's goal is and will continue to be **to standardise the work of architects in individual countries and maintain the dignified status of architects in Europe**, as well as to support ACE in its activities at the European level.

We are aware that the current transformation and redefinition of the profession requires the following issues to be taken into account when determining the financial future of the architectural profession:

- Increased use of artificial intelligence tools (such as BIM and generative design) may reduce the demand for traditional design tasks.
- The profession may shift towards coordination, strategy and communication, which requires new skills.

- In countries where the profession is less protected by law (e.g. there are no compulsory professional associations), the social and financial status of architects is deteriorating, as is the social recognition of the profession.
- Architects can regain their importance if they become key advisors on sustainability, urban resilience and quality of space in urban planning and climate transformation processes.

Therefore, clear tasks for the future should be defined, aimed at:

1. Harmonising the financial status indicator for architects at EU level as a benchmark (e.g. **min. 1.20**).
2. Better protection of the profession and a statutory requirement to perform key design functions.
3. Promoting the role of architects as leaders in sustainable design (New European Bauhaus, Davos quality system).
4. Access to financing and public procurement exclusively for certified professionals (qualifications and quality > price) – in line with the ACE's ambitions as set out in the Planning Directive.
5. Stronger representation of the profession in urban and regional policy.

Adjusting salaries according to PPP (purchasing power parity) takes into account differences in the cost of living between countries, allowing for a more meaningful comparison of salaries. For example, although the nominal hourly rate in Poland may be lower than in Germany, when the lower cost of living in Poland is taken into account, the real purchasing power of earnings may be comparable. However, the use of PPP does not provide a reliable assessment of an architect's financial situation in the country where they live and provide services. The use of PPP can only show the 'purchasing power' of an architect's income in different countries (the financial situation of an architect using PPP):

The actual financial situation of architects in terms of purchasing power (PPP)

	Country	Architect Status Index	PPP Correction Factor	PPP Adjusted Status Index	Real Financial Status Interpretation	ACE Reported Annual Earnings (2024, pre-tax €-Sector Study 2024)
1	**Czech Republic**	2,24	1,15	**2,58**	Architects have a very high real financial status compared to national average	55 782,00 €
2	**Spain**	1,48	1,08	**1,60**	Architects have a clearly above-average real financial status	40 000,00 €
3	**Bulgaria**	1,08	1,22	**1,32**	Architects have a very high real financial status compared to national average	15 360,00 €
4	**Switzerland**	1,39	0,92	**1,28**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	119 149,00 €
5	**Poland**	1,04	1,2	**1,25**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	23 111,00 €
6	**Germany**	1,23	1	**1,23**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	68 500,00 €
7	**Croatia**	1,03	1,1	**1,13**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	21 950,00 €
8	**Latvia**	1,05	1,05	**1,10**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	21 540,00 €
9	**Portugal**	0,93	1,18	**1,10**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	17 000,00 €
10	**Estonia**	0,97	1,05	**1,02**	Architects have a comparable real financial status to the national average	23 000,00 €
11	**Slovenia**	0,9	1,03	**0,93**	Architects have a moderately lower real financial status	26 250,00 €
12	**Italy**	0,83	1,02	**0,85**	Architects have a moderately lower real financial status	35 000,00 €
13	**Romania**	0,48	1,3	**0,62**	Architects have a significantly lower real financial status than national average	11 046,00 €

Architect Status Index (PPP adjusted) expressed as:

$$\textbf{Status Index} = \frac{\text{Architect's Earnings}}{\text{Average National Earnings}} \times \text{Purchasing Power Index}$$

As can be seen, high incomes in euros do not necessarily translate into purchasing power at the

national level. The table should be treated as informative only, as the social perception and professional status of architects are assessed from a national perspective.

10. Principles for calculating architects' work

According to the ACE Sector Study, the main tools for pricing services are becoming a percentage of construction costs (**35% of contracts concluded** in 2012 - 43%), agreement on a lump sum remuneration for services (**27% of contracts concluded** in 2012 - 36%), and hourly billing (**15% of contracts concluded** in 2012 - 15%), with the remaining contracts concluded on other terms.

HOW CHARGES ARE CALCULATED

per cent current jobs	method of calculating charge				
	per cent of contract value	lump sum	hourly charge	no charge agreed (effectively "at risk")	other method**
Austria	54	22	20	2	2
Belgium	52	28	16	2	2
Croatia	22	28	18	2	31
Cyprus	53	43	4	0	0
Czechia*	25	35	38	0	2
Denmark*	20	41	39	0	0
Estonia*	7	62	10	3	18
Finland	4	52	38	1	5
France	61	29	8	1	2
Germany	3	23	22	2	51
Greece	24	50	12	8	7
Ireland	45	35	13	1	5
Italy	52	29	6	2	11
Latvia	13	43	22	2	19
Lithuania*	57	20	2	10	12
Luxemburg	61	24	10	1	4
Malta	30	30	32	1	7
Netherlands	18	44	33	1	4
Norway	6	30	57	2	4
Poland	24	27	27	4	19
Portugal	38	39	11	3	8
Romania	26	39	13	1	22
Serbia*	0	17	15	2	66
Slovakia	38	28	22	3	10
Slovenia	33	37	16	5	9
Spain	57	21	8	2	11
Sweden	1	30	62	2	4
Switzerland	52	26	19	1	2
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2024 EUROPE-29	35	29	15	2	19

***Sources**: ACE Sector Study 2024 - https://ace-cae.eu/publication/ace-2024-sector-study/*

It should be noted that no organisation representing architects and engineers may impose the use of price lists for services, but should (for convenience) propose to its members a method of calculating the cost of services in order to achieve high quality.

Any actions by organisations of architects and engineers aimed at introducing mandatory price lists for services are prohibited, and in many countries such attempts have been prosecuted by antitrust

authorities in EU Member States. Until recently, the only exception was the HOAI **'Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure'** applied in the Federal Republic of Germany. This is a **regulation on the remuneration of architects and engineers** in Germany, which sets minimum and maximum fees for design services and has been the subject of proceedings before the European Court of Justice initiated by the European Commission on the grounds that its mandatory application restricts the freedom of service providers from outside Germany to provide services.

HOAI **'Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure'**, applicable in the Federal Republic of Germany, describes the scope of services at each stage of an investment and is based on calculations as a percentage of the construction costs of a building.

In its judgment of 4 July 2019 (Case C-377/17), the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that the German provisions on mandatory minimum and maximum remuneration rates for architects and engineers, laid down in the **Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure** (HOAI), are contrary to Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market. The CJEU found that such provisions may restrict the freedom of service providers from other Member States to provide services.

However, in a later ruling of 18 January 2022 (Case C-261/20), the CJEU ruled that in disputes between private parties, national courts are not required to disregard national provisions that are contrary to a directive, unless those provisions have direct effect. This means that the HOAI provisions may apply in such cases unless they have been amended by the national legislature.

In practice, this means that if the parties to a contract have not agreed otherwise on the remuneration for architectural or engineering services, the relevant HOAI provisions apply unless they have been amended to bring them into line with EU law.

In its judgment of 4 July 2019 in Case C-377/17 concerning the German HOAI regulation, the Court of Justice of the European Union addressed the issue of the quality of architectural and engineering services. It stated that mandatory minimum remuneration rates may contribute to ensuring high-quality services, but they are not the only means of achieving this objective. The Court noted that there are other, less restrictive measures that can equally effectively guarantee the quality of services without restricting the freedom to provide services.

However, it should be borne in mind that the final interpretation and application of this ruling depends on the legal context and practice of the individual federal lands of the Federal Republic of Germany. Legal work on the regulation of HOAI in the Federal Republic of Germany is still ongoing.

In addition to the principle represented by the HOAI (percentage-based remuneration for design services in relation to construction costs), remuneration methods based on calculating a price linked to the number of hours needed to complete a high-quality project are becoming increasingly popular. For years, the Czech Republic has been using a calculator to determine the number of hours that a studio should allocate to each stage of a project, the scope of which is described in service standards. In addition, the Romanian Chamber of Architects has taken similar steps by collecting information from its members on the number of hours spent on specific types of projects. A similar mechanism was developed several years ago by the Spanish insurance company ASEMAS (Mutua de Seguros y Reaseguros a Prima Fija), which specialises in civil liability insurance for architects.

ASEMAS, founded in 1983, is a leading insurance company in Spain, offering policies tailored to the specific professional needs of architects, civil engineers and other construction industry professionals. This tool is used in practice by architects in Spain.

During the course of its work, AMADA found that tools for estimating the number of hours needed to complete a given project also exist in Portugal, France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Poland, Estonia and other countries.

The method based on the number of hours is becoming popular because it refers to the time needed to perform a service, which is easier for investors to understand than a reference to construction costs. The proposed calculation method should be supplemented by a basis for calculating the cost of an hour of office work, which makes it possible to offer different prices for a service depending on the costs incurred by the company performing it.

In order to examine how different calculation systems work in different countries, AMADA undertook an evaluation of design proposals for three buildings of different types in different countries. The results of this exercise and the conclusions are described later in this report.

11. Harmonisation of architectural education

PQD (Professional Qualifications Directive) or **Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications** has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the profession of architect. It is worth noting that the PQD contains the only international legal definition of this profession that fully emphasises its social importance, as described in the introduction to this report. It states that: *architectural design, the quality of buildings, their harmonious integration into their environment, respect for the natural and urban landscape and for the collective and private heritage are matters of public interest. Mutual recognition of qualifications should therefore be based on qualitative and quantitative criteria ensuring that those with recognised qualifications are able to understand and express the needs of individuals, social groups and authorities in relation to spatial planning, design, organisation and construction of buildings, conservation and use of the architectural heritage and protection of the natural environment (preamble (28) of the PQD)*.

In light of this provision and the efforts to implement the Davos Declaration, architecture must respond to social, cultural, economic and environmental needs and play a fundamental role in improving the quality of the built environment. Good architecture contributes to a high quality of life and provides attractive, functional and aesthetically pleasing buildings and surroundings; it expresses a common culture and identity, as well as the characteristics of a given place; it supports the preservation of social values and their development.

In addition, the Directive has had a significant impact on the education of architects in Europe. It established **minimum standards for education and professional qualifications** that architects in EU countries must meet, ensuring a uniform level of qualifications.

Thanks to the PQD:

- Architectural study programmes in Europe are consistent – they cover similar content and requirements, which facilitates the professional mobility of architects between EU countries.
- The quality of education is maintained – programmes must meet specific criteria, including a minimum duration of 5 years or its equivalent in terms of studies and professional practice (at least 4 years of studies and 2 years of practice).
- Architects use a common 'language of architecture' – this means that their way of thinking, understanding of space, user needs and ability to communicate through technical drawings are standardised.

The PQD guarantees that architects trained in accordance with its requirements have a similar approach to design and are able to read and interpret design drawings in a uniform manner, regardless of the country in which they were trained.

As practice shows, the legal provisions governing the construction of buildings do not differ significantly between EU Member States. The differences result from local (national) regulations arising from such regulations as earthquake prevention or fire safety, etc. This has been confirmed by the work of the ACE Working Group on the Scope of Services. The final document containing the table of services (describing all phases of services required in the life cycle of a building) is universal and can be used in any EU Member State.

AMADA's task was to carry out a preliminary check of differences in the hourly workload of architects in individual countries (participating in the movement) in order to ensure a uniformly high quality of services.

12. Responsibility for provided services - Fulgencio Aviles (S)

Architects operating as freelancers have been classified as a regulated profession. This means, among other things, that they are directly responsible for public health and safety. All European Union countries require that all work carried out under public contracts be insured. Therefore, architects are required to have insurance against errors in the services they provide.

In the opinion of the Bulgarian Chamber, there is a link between the price of the service offered and the quality of the design and the safety of the structure based on that design. Offering a dumping price means that the number of hours allocated to the design is limited and often insufficient. This increases the risk of errors.
As practice in the Federal Republic of Germany shows, there have already been cases where an insurer has refused to insure a project on the grounds that the price offered is too low and the amount of work that can be allocated to its implementation significantly increases the risk of design errors.

AMADA's action consisted of checking whether the safety of the project's implementation could be linked to the price for which it was carried out. The aim was also to determine the dumping price threshold that increases the risk of error.

To this end, AMADA collaborated with Fulgencio Aviles, an expert in architecture, president of the Spanish insurance company **ASEMAS** (Mutua de Seguros y Reaseguros a Prima Fija) and former president of the **European Association of Architects and Engineers Liability Insurers (EAIACE).**

Unfortunately, our expectations regarding the link between the dumping price and a clear risk threshold for errors that would be reported to the insurer did not yield a clear answer. It cannot be clearly stated that, for example, offering a price 30% lower than the price resulting from independent calculations automatically implies errors. However, it can be said that such a risk clearly exists due to the costs of design or quality errors. In such a case, the designer is unable to devote the required amount of time due to low remuneration in relation to the actual labour costs of his company.

However, it has become apparent that another risk has emerged that needs to be addressed. Architects in EU countries are often legally required to have insurance for services provided in the investment process, while other participants may or may not be legally required to have such insurance.

PRACTICES WITH PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE (PII)

per cent	have PII cover	of those who have PII cover				
		mandatory for private work	mandatory for public work	mandatory in some regions	client require-ment	own choice
Austria	95	39	51	12	19	60
Belgium	91	89	66	20	7	28
Croatia	77	47	22	15	8	33
Cyprus	97	86	46	4	18	29
Czechia*	83	40	40	0	40	60
Denmark*	95	67	62	5	33	57
Estonia*	50	18	55	0	73	64
Finland	96	40	46	8	48	70
France	94	85	69	5	2	13
Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Greece	6	43	0	0	29	43
Ireland	98	80	56	12	25	36
Italy	83	80	50	2	6	37
Latvia	96	83	70	13	9	23
Lithuania*	100	64	82	18	27	27
Luxemburg	95	79	76	24	9	26
Malta	100	38	38	13	31	69
Netherlands	77	27	34	6	28	74
Norway	87	60	73	19	31	58
Poland	91	63	48	33	22	51
Portugal	57	61	42	5	7	42
Romania	34	15	27	4	22	58
Serbia*	71	67	33	33	0	33
Slovakia	95	47	46	16	12	51
Slovenia	97	22	16	81	5	25
Spain	89	77	49	8	1	41
Sweden	95	35	44	2	23	70
Switzerland	96	31	53	8	20	69
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2024 EUROPE-29	82	52	38	62	9	32

This situation creates a pretext for forcing architects to take out insurance covering the amount of the guarantee, which often equals the entire construction cost. The cost of insurance must be included in the architect's remuneration, which increases the cost of the design service.

For example, we can cite data provided to us during AMADA's operation, as shown in the table below:

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	GARANTIA	BUDGET WITHOUT TAXES	FEES WITHOUT TAXES
PARQUE CIENTIFICO Y TECNOLOGICO DE GIPUZKOA	600.000,00 €	132.000,00 €	
AYUNTAMIENTO DE ALTEA	600.000,00 €	63.090,98 €	
Sociedad Municipal Zaragoza Vivienda	1.000.000,00 €	263.070,00 €	
Región de Murcia. Consejería de Educación y Formación profesional	600.000,00 €		61.170,89 €
JUNTA DE CASTILLA Y LEON	1.370.000,00 €	1.370.000,00 €	
MINISTERIO DE LA PRESIDENCIA, JUSTICIA Y RELACIONES CON LAS CORTES	1.600.000,00 €	1.917.276,58 €	
JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA	300.000,00 €	26,904,84	
IRTA	500.000,00 €	57.000,00 €	
Generalitat de Catalunya - Departamento de cultura	1.209.139,00	1.209.139,00	957.711 €.
Junta de Castilla y Leon	1.059.171,00	1.059.171,00	14.559,00
Ministerio de Hacienda y Función Publica - Junta de contratación de los servicios centrales	1.071.162,00	Desconocido	2.142.324,00
Dirección general del servicio salud de las Islas Baleares dependiente de la Conselleria de Sanitat del Govern de les Illes Balears	1.174.405 €	Desconocido	1.174.405 €
Comunidad de Madrid.	6000000€ RCP 7000000€ RC GENERAL	Desconocido	2.000.000 €

The issue of setting a maximum guarantee amount when concluding contracts with designers in public procurement should be regulated in the modernised public procurement directive.

The issue of guarantees and ensuring symmetry of contracts and quarterly or monthly payments to service providers should be strictly regulated in the Directive. The use of different practices in different EU countries on these issues seriously restricts the freedom to provide services in the single market. The inability to make reliable calculations in the case of monopolistic practices by a contracting authority can be considered a greater restriction on the free movement of services than the allegations made against the application of the HOAI in the Federal Republic of Germany (excessive guarantee requirements make it difficult to clearly determine the costs of guarantees, and the lack of regular payments means that the cost of financing the contracting authority until payment for the work performed is received is an additional cost that is difficult to estimate – this is a common method used in public procurement for design work in Poland).

13. Comparative methodology

It is relevante to underline the importance of the Sector Study carried out by the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE-CAE), this biennial survey, co-funded by the EU programme Creative Europe, that collects and analyses statistical, sociological and economic data on European architects, on the architectural market and on architectural practices. The 2022 edition, based on responses from 30,700 architects in 26 European countries, highlights a steady increase in the number of professionals. Therefore, the ACE-CAE survey shows the diversity of the situation, but, despite the quality of this survey, its often referred the lack of specific studies providing accurate data on remunerations, namely on salaries, that can conducted using a consistent methodology that allows for easy comparison and immediate conclusions.

It is important to emphasize the significance of the Sector Study conducted by the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE-CAE). This biennial survey, co-funded by the EU's Creative Europe program, gathers and analyzes statistical, sociological, and economic data concerning European architects, the architectural market, and architectural practices. The 2022 edition, drawing on responses from 30,700 architects across 26 European nations, highlights a consistent rise in the number of professionals. Consequently, while the ACE-CAE survey illustrates the diverse landscape of the profession, and despite its quality, there is often a noted absence of specific studies providing precise remuneration data, particularly on salaries. Such studies would ideally help the architects across Europe to employ a consistent methodology, enabling straightforward comparison and immediate conclusions.

Our challenge was to conduct this survey using a simple, direct, measurable and comparable methodology. The aim was to obtain comparative material that would allow conclusions to be drawn.

For this reason, we decided to implement a dual approach, one with a more quantitative framework and the other with a more qualitative foundation. Consequently, a collaborative effort was undertaken among the various institutions or their representatives to produce two studies: one concerning national public procurement and its relationship with construction values (Study 1 – Public Tender), and another regarding benchmark labor values derived from three paradigmatic case studies (Study 2 – Building Typologies). In both studies, we sought to establish clear and precise parameters.

Regarding Study 1:

We area asking all organisations wishing to participate in the AMADA movement to carry out the same analysis as the movement's initiator, Ordem dos Arquitectos Portugal.

The data is based on official data from contracts for architectural and engineering services (complete design) registered/published in official databases/public procurement platforms (government or publicly licensed). Data was collected on design contracts that were similar in terms of subject matter and quantity, and then the base price (awarded by the investor for the project) was compared with the price of the service contract after the procedure was completed (after selection by the

investor) and the estimated value of the construction works.

The expected result by country is a percentage of the architecture fees over the construction value

The collected data will be analyzed to answer the question: are dumping prices being offered? And how many countries in Europe are severely affected by this problem?

Regarding Study 2:

This study focuses on acquiring data related to the costs, with a particular emphasis on the number of work hours allocated to different phases and types of services provided by architects and engineers throughout the entire construction process. The data collection aims to cover the complete lifecycle of a project, from its inception to the final completion of construction, encompassing all stages of design, management, and supervision. To carry out this exercise, three typologies were selected:

a) Typology A – describes a multi-branch project for a new, simple single-family house (approximately 150 m² usable area, 600 m³ volume, flat roof, no basement) on a 0.25 ha suburban plot surrounded by existing houses.

b) Typology B outlines a multi-story residential building with 11 floors and 3 staircases, featuring a commercial ground floor, located on a 0.25 ha downtown plot surrounded by dense urban development. A parking lot for residents is planned at the rear. All necessary utilities are accessible from the adjacent street. The building has a total area of approximately 6,600 m² and a volume of around 20,000 m³, with a simple spatial layout and a flat roof.

c) Typology C describes the design of a four-story office building (3,500 m² usable area, 700 m² building area, 15,000 m³ volume) with training and storage facilities, located on a 0.25 ha flat city plot at the intersection of two busy streets. The project includes the building itself, parking for 40 cars with an access road, land development (using excavated soil for landscaping), utilities connections, and greenery design. The site will be fenced (with sliding gates and wickets), lit, and equipped with CCTV surveillance and a supervision point.

This made it possible to assess whether it can be concluded that a similar number of working hours should be allocated to a given type of high-quality project in Europe.

14. Conclusions from the analysis of tenders submitted under public procurement procedures in European Union countries participating in the AMADA initiative -

Avelino Oliveira (P),

1. The Challenge: European public procurement of architecture in large numbers

Study 1 aims to present an analysis of public procurement using large-scale data, structured in a clear and accessible format, providing informal yet systematic information that any citizen can understand. To ensure the comparability of findings, all organizations participating in the AMADA movement were invited to carry out the same analysis.

2. Why study public procurement of architectural (and engineering) services using simple, general economic frameworks?

Architecture is a public service with deep social, environmental, and spatial consequences. Yet, in public procurement, its value is often reduced to monetary terms, with little regard for the qualitative and cultural dimensions of design. In order to critically assess how architecture is commissioned through public procedures, it is essential to work with quantitative data—not only to measure the scale of investment, but to evaluate how consistently and fairly architectural services are valued across different contexts.

Using simple economic frameworks enables the application of the concept of large numbers, a statistical principle that states that as the number of independent observations increases, their average tends to converge toward the true mean. In practice, this means that analysing a large dataset of architecture-related procurement procedures allows us to identify systemic patterns, detect outliers, and better understand the real behaviour of procurement systems.

Large numbers simplify complex realities, making them appealing for political messaging and public accountability. However, this communicative power comes with risks. Without proper context, large numbers can distort perceptions, obscure diversity, and conceal inequalities. Used carelessly, they may mislead rather than clarify. While large-scale data is essential for understanding procurement systems—especially in architecture—its use must be critical, transparent, and responsible. That is the purpose of this study.

3. Analytical Framework: Public Fee Research Matrix

a) Timeframe of Analysis

The study focuses on current trends, specifically the post-COVID period (2023 and beyond).

Note: In future phases, we may consider a retrospective analysis of how the architectural procurement landscape evolved in response to the national transposition of Directive 2004/18/EC (free competition), which marked the end of fixed fee tables and market-regulating mechanisms in many EU countries.

b) Data Collection

Only procurement procedures that have been formally published via national channels and/or

in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) are considered valid. These must also be listed on the official national public procurement platforms.

c) Contracting Authority Type

We distinguish between three types of contracting entities:

1. Central Administration (state, public agencies, or national-level public companies)
2. Local or Regional Administration (regional governments, municipalities, or dependent public entities)
3. Other public sector bodies when applicable.

d) Territorial Distribution

The study analyzes procedures by country, and also applies the European NUTS II territorial classification. The NUTS II scale is recommended because it allows for meaningful regional comparisons, including archipelagos or geographically distinct areas.

e) Types of Procedures

The analysis categorizes each procedure based on the type of procurement method and contract model used by the contracting authority. Each case is classified according to the standards defined in Directive 2014/24/EU, taking into account its national transposition, which varies across Member States.
The use of CPV (Common Procurement Vocabulary) codes ensures harmonization and comparability across jurisdictions.

f) Project Typologies

The categorization of building types follows the EPBD Typology (Energy Performance of Buildings Directive), which defines standard building categories:

Residential Buildings:

- Single-family houses
- Apartment blocks

Non-Residential Buildings:

- Offices
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Hotels and restaurants
- Sports facilities
- Wholesale and retail buildings
- Other building types

g) Estimated Value of the Procurement (Estimated Contract Value)

The estimated value of the procurement refers to the total projected financial value of a public contract, as calculated by the contracting authority prior to the launch of the procedure. It includes all expected costs over the duration of the contract, including options, renewals, or extensions—but excludes VAT.

h) Estimated Value of Construction Work Execution

This is the total estimated cost of executing the construction phase of a project, as assessed before procurement begins. It typically includes:

- All work-related activities required to complete construction
- Labor, materials, equipment, site management, and subcontracting
- Provisional sums and contingencies defined in the design
- Excludes VAT unless otherwise noted.

i) Contractual Price (Services)

- The contractual price is the final agreed amount in the contract, resulting from a competitive public procurement process.
- It reflects the winning bidder's offer, which may or may not match the initial estimated value set by the contracting authority.

4. Data Analysis Phase – Public Contract Data Processing

Based on the collected data, we are currently conducting an in-depth study focused on fees paid by the public sector for architectural and engineering design services. The analysis is limited to cases where all three critical values are present:

1. Estimated Value of the Procurement (Estimated Contract Value)
2. Contractual Price
3. Estimated Value of Construction Work Execution

Initial Findings Focus On:

a) The relationship between Estimated Value of the Procurement and the final Contractual Price (for services).

b) The relationship between both, Estimated Value of the Procurement and Contractual Prices in relation to the Estimated Construction Value.

Governance Distinction

The analysis differentiates between central and local administration to explore governance-specific

procurement behaviors.

Current Status (Study 1)

- Ongoing (work in progresso)
- Expected completion: July 2025
- Countries included: Portugal, Germany, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Switzerland, Romania, Slovenia.
- We are open to expanding the sample by including additional countries in future phases.

15. Conclusions from a study involving the valuation of buildings by various - Damir Mance (HR),

How to Illustrate European Diversity in Architectural Practice: A Comparative Exercise

15.1 Introduction

Although Europe's architectural market aims to be open, promoting easy mobility and cooperation across borders, architects frequently face operational challenges because of major differences in cultures, regulations, and economic conditions across member countries. This diversity creates practical inconsistencies and contradictions, complicating efforts to harmonize professional practices across borders.

Collaborating with various national organizations responsible for regulating and promoting architecture, we conducted a practical study examining how European countries approach three distinct project types. The goal was to identify common patterns, notable differences, and key barriers affecting European integration in the architectural profession.

We selected three representative case studies to illustrate the range of challenges in architectural practice across Europe:

- A simple single-family dwelling, representing the domestic and individual scale;
- An urban apartment building, reflecting the complexities of collective housing;
- A mixed-use building — combining services, offices, retail, and storage — highlights multifunctional architecture's technical and regulatory complexities in urban settings.

This sample allowed us to compare real-world conditions and identify variations in the scope of services, regulatory requirements, design procurement models, supervision procedures, and related workload, even among countries sharing core European Union principles.

The findings offered valuable insights, clearly revealing methodological differences in defining the scope of services, variations in legal frameworks, the structuring of project phases, stakeholder roles and interactions, and approaches to coordinating design disciplines.

After completing initial data collection, we standardized the information harvesting using a simple Excel form, a common analytical framework with data grouped into comparable sets of services. Not all countries submitted the revised data structures, and those countries are grayed out in our diagrams. This approach harmonized methodologies across countries by leveling the essential differences, isolating the data most important for this study, and making the data easier to interpret.

The findings presented here reflect an intensive collaborative effort, offering a glimpse into the realities of European architectural practices. They demonstrate that substantial structural differences persist despite ongoing efforts toward regulatory convergence, profoundly impacting architects' professional practice and mobility. Highlighting both fundamental differences and commonalities,

these insights underline the urgent need for targeted policy interventions and ongoing collaborative analysis among European architectural institutions to support informed decision-making and foster coherent, effective public policies in the architectural sector.

15.2 Methodology Overview

The study concerned the valuation of three buildings by various ACE member organisations operating within AMADA on the basis of specific parameters:

AMADA Example A:

New single-family house (simple requirements) - multi-branch project with author's supervision at the construction site

Output data

1. Land development, equipment and utilities

The building is designed on a 0.25 ha suburban plot, surrounded by existing single-family housing. All networks necessary to supply the building with utilities and sewage (water, sewage and rainwater, heating, gas, electric cable, telephone and cable television) run in the street adjacent to the plot.

2. Building

The building with a total usable area of approx. 150 m2 and a cubature of the entire building approx. 600 m3 - with a simple spatial arrangement, with a flat roof. Brick building structure, monolithic reinforced concrete ceilings. The building has no basement. The building will be equipped with the following general installations:

a) water,
b) hot water with circulation,
c) sanitary sewage system,
d) central water heating,
e) electrical, teletechnical and telecommunications installations,

The scope of the services:

Preparation works, concept design, preliminary design, developed design, technical design, author's supervision at the construction site.

AMADA Example B:

Residential building - 11 floors, 3 staircases, with commercial function on the ground floor - urban seal

Output data

1. Land development, equipment and utilities

The building is designed on a 0.25 ha downtown plot, surrounded by existing, compact buildings. In the back of the building a parking lot was designed for its residents. All networks necessary to supply the building with utilities and sewage (water, sewage and rainwater, heating, gas, electric cable, telephone and cable television) run in the street adjacent to the plot.

2. Building

The building with a total total area of approx. 6,600 m2 and a cubature of the entire building approx. 20,000 m3 - with a simple spatial arrangement, with a flat roof. Reinforced concrete structure, monolithic cast, only partially skeletal on the ground floor. On the residential floors above the ground floor there are apartments of various sizes. The basement building for economic purposes. The ground floor provides services with a total commercial area of 400 m2. The building with a total service area of 4,000 m2

The building will be equipped with the following installations:

- water,
- water fire protection installation,
- hot water with circulation,
- sanitary sewage system,
- central water heating,
- electrical, teletechnical and telecommunications installations,

The building provides additional installations:

- mechanical supply and exhaust ventilation in services on the ground floor,
- support of mechanical gravitational ventilation.

The scope of the services:

Preparation works, concept design, preliminary design, developed design, technical design, author's supervision at the construction site.

AMADA Example C:

Design of an office building with training and storage facilities, together with parking, land development and utilities.

Output data

1. Land development, equipment and utilities

The plot for development with an area of 0.25 ha is located at the intersection of two busy streets (in the city). The plot is flat, with slopes not exceeding 2%, unarmed, with rare trees to remove. The plot requires a landform design using land from the excavation for the building, a parking project for 40 parking spaces together with an access road to the parking lot, and a greenery design. The whole

area, according to the investor's assumptions, requires fencing (with sliding gates and wickets), lighting and supervision by means of television cameras, with a supervision position. The streets have networks: water, sewage (sanitary and rainwater), heating and electric cable n.n. and telephone from which connections to the building will be taken.

2. Building

The building with a total cubic capacity of 15,000 m3, usable floor area 3,500 m2 (building area 700 m2). 4 floors - office function. A car park will be located in the underground storey, and also a storage facility.

A block of building with an irregular, medium complex shape, founded in normal conditions, with a flat roof. Reinforced concrete building structure - frame designed individually, with curtain walls.

The building will be equipped with the following installations:

- water,
- water fire protection installation,
- hot water with circulation,
- sanitary sewage system,
- central water heating,
- electrical, teletechnical and telecommunications installations,

The building provides additional installations:

- substation for central heating needs and hot water,
- ventilation and air conditioning installations,
- power, control and automation electrical installations,
- specialized installations: access protection to the building and telephone with Internet access.

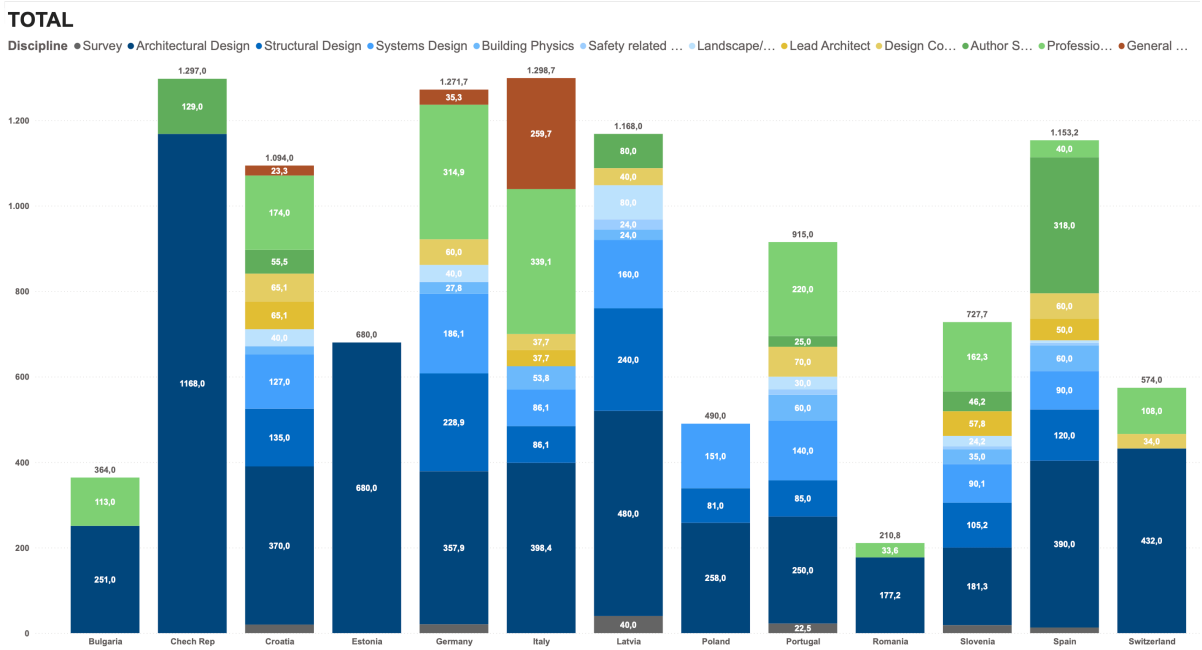
The scope of the services:

Preparation works, concept design, preliminary design, developed design, technical design, author's supervision at the construction site.

AMADA received responses from 13 organisations containing quote material.

The data was collected in two separate queries. We based the first query on a description of building types presented previously. The data received at that point was unstructured and incomparable between countries. After the detailed analysis and comparison, we prepared a predefined form with a structured data set query and additional instructions for the workload distribution according to national methods for calculating workload. The respondents were instructed to enter their best professional estimate if no specific national time norms or calculation method exist.

Not all countries provided the workload for services other than architecture, so we grouped several types of services in the table into Design, Management, and Supervision of construction works.



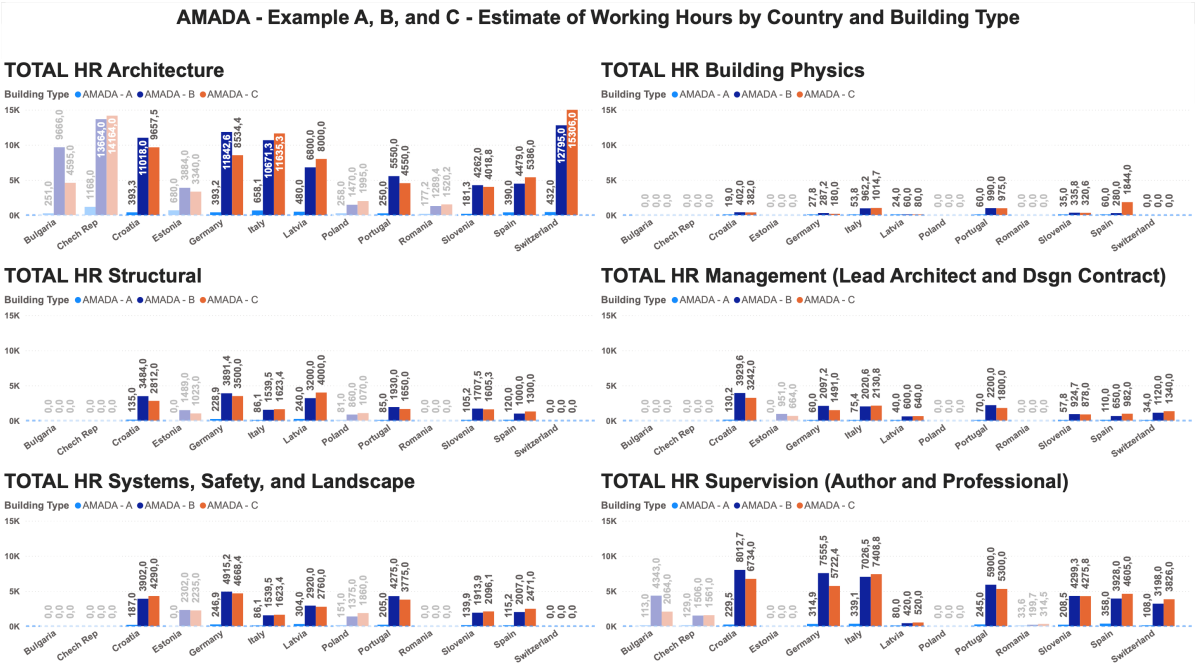
AMADA TYPE A 150 m2 - Estimate of Working Hours by Country and Building Type - !!!! Not final !!!!

Further, the Design group is divided into Architectural, Structural, Systems, Building physics, Safety, Landscape Design, and Survey. Architectural Design was highlighted as the most important field for our analysis. The respondents were asked to provide the estimated work hours for all the basic design phases and services (analysis, conceptual Design, preliminary Design, main Design, detailed Design, bill of quantities, specifications…). In calculations, the General expenses group was included in the Design Services.

The management group is divided into Lead Architect and Design contract management, reflecting the workload in the Design phase. The Lead Architect is described as the person legally responsible for coordinating different specialists and architectural design documentation. Design Contract Management reflects the workload for managing subconsultants, e.g., contracts, responsibilities, scheduling, and offices for coordination meetings, if and when the architect subcontracts other specialist design services (such as structural, systems, safety, building physics, or landscape design). The supervision group reflects the workload during the construction phase and is divided into Author/Designer Supervision and Professional Supervision. Author Supervision represents the architect's typical presence on site: coordination meetings, visual checks, confirmation of materials, and shop drawings review. Professional supervision represents legally defined supervision of construction works, including all professional supervision services (lead supervisor/architect, structural, systems, safety, etc).

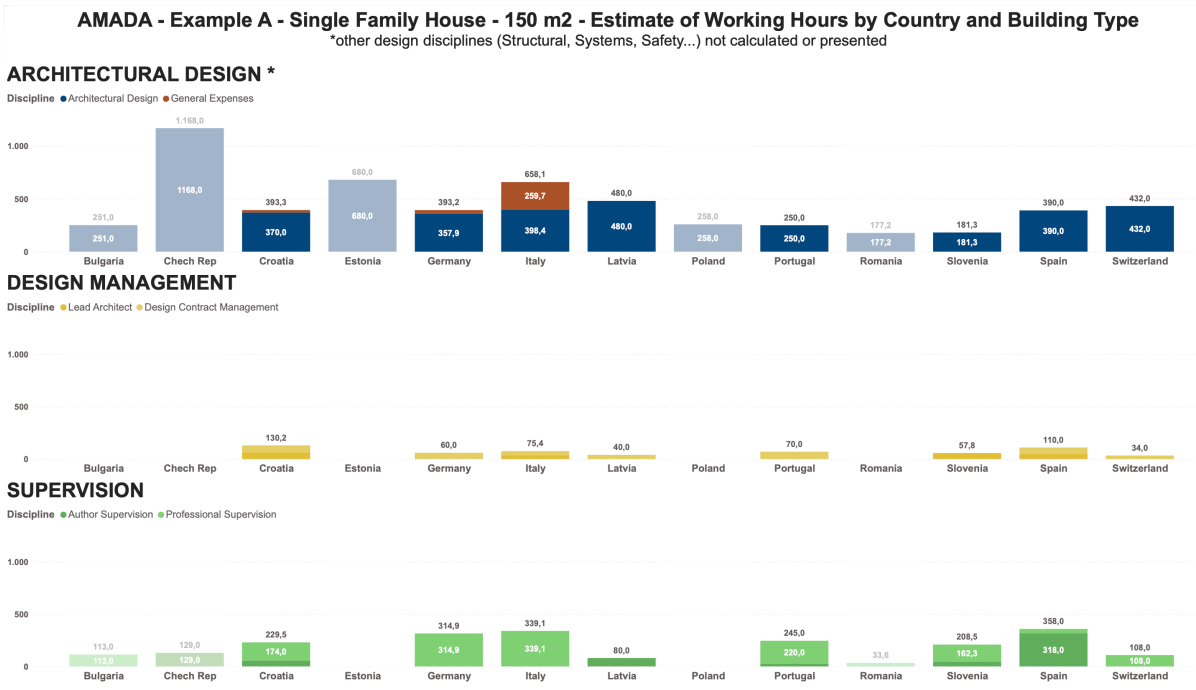
In the presented diagrams, lighter columns represent the countries that did not respond to the second survey with adjusted workload distribution, but were kept in the diagrams for reference and further research.

15.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation



Grayed-out countries in presentation diagrams (Bulgaria, Chech Republic, Estonia, Poland, and Romania) did not respond to the second survey with additional data, so there may be a chance that in those countries, some other services are also included, as they present a significant deviation when compared to other countries.

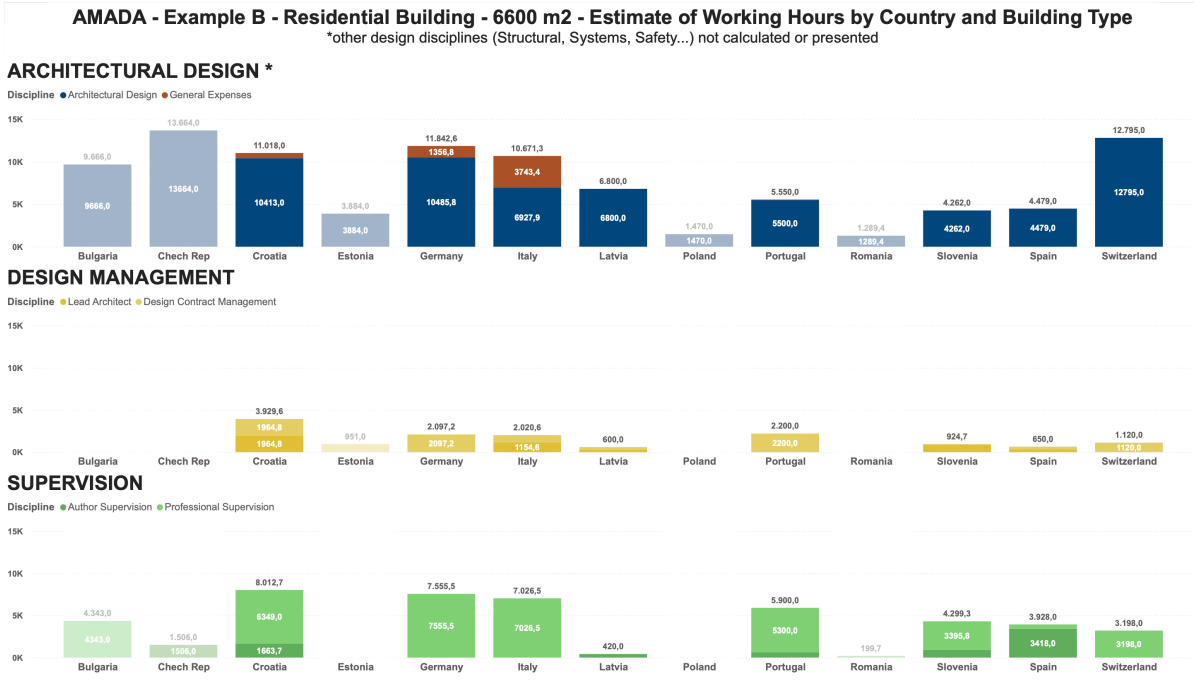
It must be noted that some countries calculate the workload based on construction cost estimates, and some countries calculate it based on the gross area. Without the application of corrective factors, these results might demonstrate higher workloads in a world of constant changes in construction costs.



- **Building Type A (Single-family house):**

This type resulted in the most even results among countries, with Portugal and Slovenia presenting deviations with significantly lower total work hours in the Architectural Design phase, Portugal 30% and Slovenia 50% lower.

Only three countries presented included General Expenses: Croatia, Germany, and Italy, where Italy exhibits a significant deviation.



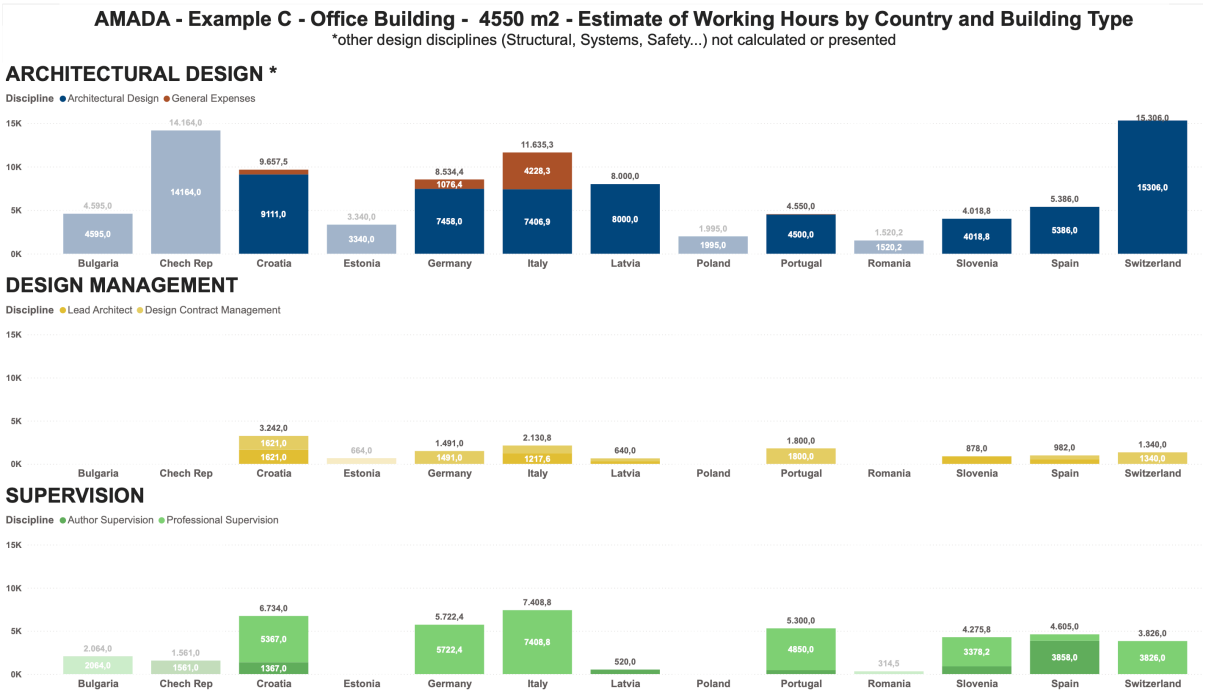
- **Building Type B (Multi-story residential building):**

Here we see significant deviation with higher workloads in Croatia, Germany, and Switzerland, with other countries presenting significantly lower total work hours in the Architectural Design phase, by some 30% to 55% lower.

Again, only three countries presented included General Expenses: Croatia, Germany, and Italy, with Italy again exhibiting a significant deviation.

Here we can see significant differences with design management services, where Croatia is well above the Median, and Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland are below.

In the Supervision group, the workload distribution is unequal between countries, with Croatia, Germany, and Italy on the high end.



- **Building Type C (Mixed-use office building):**

Again, the data shows similar patterns as with Type B, with two significant deviations – Germany being in line or slightly lower compared to others, and Switzerland being much higher.

In the Supervision group, the workload distribution is unequal between countries, with Croatia, Germany, and Italy on the high end.

15.4 Summary of Key Findings

- An analysis of data collected as part of the AMADA study, covering three types of projects (A – single-family house, B – multi-family residential building, C – office building with additional functions), reveals significant differences in the approach to the valuation and distribution of architects' work in individual European countries.

Differences between countries:

- The design phases (conceptual, construction, execution) and activities distribution show similarity among countries, suggesting that the scope and expectations of an architect's work in design stages are more uniform across Europe.

- However, despite the similarities in the legally defined scope, significant differences in the workload allocated to the same project types were identified. These differences might be due to different detailed understandings of the scope of architectural services, different design activities methodologies, and the design management and supervision phases.

Countries with consistent patterns:

- Croatia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, and Switzerland show a systemically larger workload in Architectural Design services.
- Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain show systematically lower workload. Other countries were not evaluated here due to the lack of data from the second survey.
- It is to be further analyzed why these countries exhibit such differences in workload calculation. The results might reflect the differences in the scope of architectural responsibilities, coordination and management phases, the influence of tradition, or some other indicators.
- Most countries, except for Switzerland and Germany, exhibit the architect's role as the general contractor who subcontracts the other services.

Implications for mobility and quality:

- This level of diversity makes it challenging to compare architectural services between countries and, consequently, to achieve absolute professional mobility for architects within the EU single market.
- The lack of a common standard may lead to a decline in service quality if the criterion of competitiveness is limited to price, without considering the actual workload.
- Insufficient transparency and the lack of a common workload framework may limit the sustainable economic development of the architecture sector, which may adversely affect the efficiency of public procurement and private investments

15.5 Recommendations Based on Findings

1. The need to specify the scope of architectural services

To address the differences in the number of working hours across countries, a shared European mechanism for pricing architectural services is strongly recommended to be developed, clearly defining the scope of responsibilities and the corresponding workload in hours. This mechanism should account for national variations, but enable transparent comparison and evaluation. Such a tool is essential not only for benchmarking but also for supporting informed negotiations and policy decisions.

2. Relative comparability of design phases

In some countries with a highly developed and long tradition of regulated scope of services, like Germany, there tends to be historical stability and protection of the profession, even supported by public authorities. This insight offers a unique opportunity to harmonize pricing practices, starting with the design phases, which we find most consistent across countries. Establishing standard

workload references here could form the basis for broader integration of professional standards.

3.Develop a detailed matrix of service components

To ensure full comparability of architectural remuneration across Europe, developing a standard and detailed matrix of phases and tasks covered by architectural services is essential. The current Excel template used in the AMADA study should be significantly expanded to reflect this matrix. It should include detailed phase breakdowns, task typologies, and role-specific time allocations (e.g., architect, coordinator, supervisor). Moreover, the tool should be formalised as a mandatory data collection instrument for national and European-level studies, enabling a high methodological consistency and comparability over time.

4. The study needs to be broadened

Given the limited number of countries covered and the simplified scope of services in some cases (e.g., the Czech Republic, Romania, or Switzerland – architecture only, without engineering disciplines), it is recommended to:

- Extend the study to include additional EU countries, especially France and the Nordic countries.
- Analyze also the remuneration models and employment forms of architects, as these can significantly impact the calculation and declaration of working hours

The extended use of a harmonised valuation and data collection framework would make it easier to incorporate new countries and contexts into the analysis. This would facilitate broader adoption across the EU and help inform policy at a supranational level.

5. Transparency as a precondition for effective harmonization

Only after defining a shared service vocabulary and establishing a unified pricing methodology (e.g., hourly rate based on experience level or responsibility scope) can we:

- Truly compare remuneration and work models across Europe,
- Provide consistent guidance for public procurement procedures,
- Support cross-border professional mobility and integrated markets.

A comprehensive communication and awareness strategy is needed to explain and promote the rationale behind standardised workload valuation. This strategy should tar

16. Final conclusions

Preliminary statement:

The aim of the AMADA movement was to prepare this report with conclusions and submit it for further work to the Council of European Architects at its General Assembly in Luxembourg on 15 May 2025.

The intensive work lasted 3.5 months and should be continued with the colaboration of more participants. That's is the plea that we make, come and join us, namely the ones that are directly or indirectly involved within the ACE member organisations.

This movement emerged from the shared concern of members and leadership within several architects' representative organizations across Europe. But more fundamentally, it was born from a widespread sentiment among architects: that we have not succeeded in uniting our profession as a collective force capable of exerting meaningful pressure on decision-making bodies.

In today's context, we believe it is urgent to bring architects into the conversation about their own profession — about their working conditions, their legal and institutional framework, and above all, about the need for fair and just remuneration for a type of work that is essential to society.

We cannot wait for others to define our future. We must take a step forward — together.

Unity in diversity has always been a guiding value of the European project. Within the architectural profession, European architects now need AMADA to translate that unity into concrete policies and systemic change.

Europe in the 21st century, strengthening democracy and unity

In a time of political, economic, and social transition, architecture stands at the heart of Europe's future. As a profession, it carries the responsibility not only of shaping physical environments but of reinforcing democracy, cohesion, and cultural identity. The challenges Europe faces today — from inequality and fragmentation to climate pressure and economic stagnation — demand a unified, forward-looking architectural response. Architects must help bridge the growing gap between ambition and reality, by championing inclusive, high-quality, and sustainable design as a public good.

This moment calls for renewed commitment to architectural excellence, even as construction methods evolve. Standardization and industrialization, while offering solutions to productivity challenges, must not compromise creativity or civic value. Architecture must remain a force for innovation, unity, and resilience — a discipline that builds not only structures, but communities and futures. In doing so, it can become a central pillar in Europe's path toward renewed competitiveness, social justice, and democratic strength.

Deregulation of liberal professions especially in architecture: a professional crisis

Over the past two decades, the liberal professions in Europe—including architecture—have undergone widespread deregulation, driven largely by economic goals such as increasing competitiveness, removing market barriers, and fostering innovation. While this process has improved access to services and reduced bureaucracy, it has also led to unintended consequences, including diminished service quality, weakened consumer protections, and the erosion of professional standards. In many countries, the lack of coordinated regulatory tools has contributed to job insecurity, downward pressure on fees, and challenges in maintaining ethical and technical benchmarks.

In the field of architecture, deregulation has created a professional crisis. The abolition of pricing frameworks and the prioritization of lowest-price criteria in public tenders have undermined working conditions, increased professional risk, and incentivized substandard project delivery. With no safeguards to ensure quality or prevent dumping, low-cost bids often compromise safety, sustainability, and resilience—impacting not only buildings, but also critical infrastructure. As price-based competition intensifies, architects face growing pressure to deliver more for less, while the public bears the long-term costs of cheap design.

Action: Protecting quality, values competitiveness in architecture,

Architecture in Europe today is at a critical juncture. The profession carries significant social, environmental, and cultural responsibilities, yet faces growing pressures from deregulation, undervaluation, and bureaucratic constraints. Architects are increasingly burdened with legal, fiscal, and technical obligations, while their creative and civic roles are being diminished. At a time when Europe must address urgent challenges—such as climate resilience, digital transformation, and social cohesion—architecture must be recognised not merely as a design discipline, but as a vital force for shaping sustainable, inclusive, and secure environments. Architects, with their multidisciplinary training and capacity to lead complex teams, are uniquely positioned to guide Europe through these transitions.

Public procurement plays a central role in this effort. It must shift from a price-driven process to one that prioritises quality, innovation, and long-term value. Current procurement frameworks often favour large corporations, sidelining small and medium-sized architectural firms that represent the majority of the profession in Europe. Excessive guarantees, asymmetrical contracts, and restrictive conditions exclude emerging talent and stifle innovation. This undermines not only the quality of public projects, but also Europe's competitiveness and ability to lead in sustainable development. Housing, too, must be addressed as a priority—affordable, sustainable, and regionally grounded models must replace short-term, cost-cutting approaches.

To meet these challenges, Europe must reaffirm its commitment to architectural excellence and professional dignity. That means ensuring fair remuneration, promoting responsible procurement policies, and protecting working standards. The Architects' Movement Against the Depreciation of Architecture (AMADA) was created to defend these values. It stands for a profession that is not only

passionate, but essential—a profession that must be empowered to help build a resilient, democratic, and forward-looking Europe. The time to act is now, with courage, vision, and unity.

Financial situation of architects

The financial status of architects in Europe reveals a growing disconnect between their responsibilities and the remuneration they receive. Although architects earn, on average, 12.74% more than the national average salary in their respective countries, this margin is far below what is expected for liberal professions that require years of education, professional licensing, and significant legal responsibility. In most countries, architects fall short of the 1.20 status index that is widely considered a minimum benchmark for trusted public professions such as doctors or lawyers. In some regions, particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe, architects even earn less than the national average, undermining the perceived value and long-term sustainability of the profession.

While architects' salaries have seen a modest real increase of around 7.16% over the last decade, this growth pales in comparison to the 60–70% rise in construction costs across Europe during the same period. This imbalance highlights a dangerous trend: architects are taking on more responsibilities and delivering increasingly complex services, yet their share in the overall investment budget is shrinking. The pressure to deliver high-quality work at low cost threatens not only the financial stability of architectural practices but also the overall quality and safety of the built environment. If current trends continue, architecture may become increasingly unattractive to future professionals, leading to skill shortages and generational gaps.

The comparison with other professions further reinforces this concern. Lawyers and engineers typically earn significantly more than architects, even when adjusted for local cost of living. In countries like Switzerland, Germany, and France, the financial gap is especially pronounced. Additionally, the rise of new technologies such as BIM and artificial intelligence is shifting the role of architects towards more strategic and interdisciplinary functions, which require additional skills but are not yet reflected in fee structures or public procurement models. Without updated remuneration systems and stronger professional protections, architects risk becoming undervalued facilitators rather than recognised leaders in the design and planning process.

To address these structural issues, European institutions and national governments must take decisive action. AMADA advocates for setting a minimum status index for architects at EU level (e.g., 1.20), ensuring fair pay, strengthening regulation, and aligning public procurement with quality-based selection criteria. Architects should be supported as key contributors to sustainability, resilience, and spatial quality, especially through initiatives like the New European Bauhaus. Ultimately, the profession must reclaim its role not just as a creative discipline, but as a pillar of democratic, social, and environmental progress in Europe. Without this shift, the future of architecture — and the quality of life it helps shape — is at serious risk.

Calculation, Harmonisation and responsibilities of architects work

Establishing clear, transparent methods for calculating architectural fees is essential to ensure fair remuneration and high-quality design outcomes. While percentage-based pricing and lump sum agreements remain common across Europe, the growing popularity of hourly-based methods reflects a shift toward greater clarity and accountability in service delivery. Countries like the Czech Republic, Spain, and Romania have developed tools to estimate the number of hours required per project phase, promoting more realistic budgeting and workload assessment. AMADA supports these approaches, advocating for pricing models that accurately reflect the time and complexity involved in delivering safe, sustainable architectural solutions.

At the European level, efforts such as the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD) have successfully harmonised educational standards, ensuring that architects across the EU possess a consistent level of training and professional competence. This shared foundation opens the door to deeper regulatory alignment in service scopes and contract structures, as demonstrated by the work of ACE. However, national legal disparities—especially around pricing rules, insurance obligations, and contract guarantees—still hinder a unified internal market. A modernised public procurement directive must therefore address these inconsistencies, introducing fairer conditions for all service providers and ensuring predictability in cross-border project execution.

Finally, the responsibility borne by architects—particularly in public contracts—requires a balanced and consistent system of accountability. Architects are often legally required to carry extensive liability insurance, which can disproportionately increase their costs, especially when other project stakeholders are not subject to the same obligations. Based on insights provided to AMADA by industry experts and insurers, it is evident that while it is difficult to define a universal “dumping price” threshold that clearly increases project risk, underpriced services are frequently associated with reduced time allocation and a higher likelihood of errors. Ensuring contractual symmetry, fair guarantee limits, and regular payment schedules is not only a matter of economic equity—it is essential to protecting public safety, maintaining service quality, and preserving the long-term viability of the profession within the EU’s internal market.

Fees framework: the forbidden act

Just as Prometheus was punished for bringing fire—symbolizing knowledge and progress—to humanity, so too are conversations about fair remuneration in architecture often treated as taboo, as if speaking openly about money were a transgression against a higher order of “creative purity.” But should this be so? If Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden for seeking knowledge, is not the search for transparency in professional practice similarly cast out from polite discourse? Jonah’s journey suggests another path: recognition, reflection, and redemption.

The act of speaking about fees, far from being an act of rebellion or selfishness, should be understood as an ethical necessity. It is not merely about raising salaries or improving the architect’s comfort. Rather, it is a catalyst—a Promethean spark—for raising the quality of our built environment. When architects are no longer forced to undercut one another in a race to the lowest price, the emphasis shifts from survival to excellence. Innovation finds room to emerge. Public procurement becomes more robust, less vulnerable to poor design and construction flaws. Design

quality improves, which directly impacts long-term building performance, environmental sustainability, and user well-being.

Moreover, a common, open discussion on pricing practices enhances professional mobility across Europe. When the scope of architectural work is better understood and recognized from country to country, cross-border collaboration becomes smoother, expectations become clearer, and misunderstandings are reduced. A shared language around time, responsibility, and value strengthens both practice and policy.

In the end, avoiding the conversation around money does not elevate the profession—it weakens it. Just as the myths urge us to reconsider the moral weight of "forbidden" acts, so too must we reframe the dialogue about fees not as shameful, but as a step toward maturity, responsibility, and long-overdue fairness. Only through honest valuation of architectural work can we ensure that time is used wisely, mistakes are minimized, quality is maximized, and operating costs are consciously reduced—not through shortcuts, but through design excellence.

The behavior of the public entities:

Public entities play a decisive role in shaping architectural quality and professional standards across Europe. Their procurement behavior sets the tone for the entire market—rewarding either the lowest price or the best value. When public authorities prioritize price over substance, they inadvertently foster a culture of undercutting, accelerate professional burnout, and risk compromising long-term performance and sustainability. Conversely, when they adopt transparent, quality-driven selection criteria—based on clear scopes of work and realistic time allocations—they become agents of innovation, accountability, and architectural excellence. The responsibility of public clients is not merely administrative, but cultural and ethical: to create conditions in which public interest is truly served through well-designed, resilient, and context-sensitive architecture.

Determining the value of architects time: finding the "unit"

Finding a comparable data structure (of phases, work patterns) will be the key to any collective approach or action against declining architects' remuneration. Architects today are victims of an "explosion" of project complexity, for which they are not sufficiently rewarded in the old and rigid fee and public procurement systems. On the contrary, the real values of average fees are gradually decreasing in free market competition!

The time spent working on the (quality) design and delivery of the work/services is naturally a popular indicator among all architects. It is now again the preferred approach to calculating fees/ contract values within the profession. However, we must also consider that, in terms of economic theory, this classical relationship between value and the amount of labour input (workload) was abandoned already by the end of the 18th century. The main reason was the lack of consideration of the impact of innovation (industrial revolution) on the value, and the impact of the market itself.

This "labour theory of value" has had an unsuccessful revitalization in Marxist philosophy. Since then, there have been several economic theories of value, but none of them considers the expression of (market or social) value in direct proportion to labour input. Particularly in the age of emerging

superhuman artificial intelligence (AI revolution), this dependence between the time it takes to successfully complete a task, and the resulting value is difficult to defend. The used-up compute, the number of generated "tokens", or even the electricity consumed are now becoming the future "currencies" of work.

Determining the value of the architect's (and other consultants') contribution to the resulting work is indeed a challenging task. Our battle for the value of an architect's work will not be won on the basis of the amount of working hours put in. Although our efforts to synchronise this quantity across Europe can make a significant contribution to our success. Finding the basic “unit” that, when multiplied, expresses the value of an architect's work will likely require consideration also of other factors today.

17. Recommendations for ACE:

The Amada movement was established on the basis of ACE member organisations, and the results of its work would not have been possible without the exchange of good and bad practices. This confirms the role of horizontal cooperation within ACE between member organisations.

We are fully aware that our work has not yet provided a definitive answer to the initial question posed. However, we have taken a crucial step by testing how a pricing study on the architectural market can be carried out in practice. Through this pilot experience, we have identified key challenges and now have a much clearer understanding of how to refine and expand the methodology in future phases. We know where simplifications occurred and where specifications are needed to avoid methodological errors—this insight will allow us to move forward with greater precision and impact.

We believe that further joint work is necessary and that the only organisation that should take this on is the Architects' Council of Europe.

After gathering material for the report, AMADA's proposals for possible future ACE activities were formulated in the following conclusions:

1. The work of AMADA has not exhausted efforts to fully identify the problem and considers it necessary to take further action to ensure high-quality design services on fair terms. The submission of this report to the Architects' Council of Europe also constitutes a request for the establishment of a task force to supplement the material and propose a European system of fair remuneration for work as a basis for achieving high-quality design services. We would like the ACE to advocate for the implementation of this system in public procurement in Europe. AMADA members hope that more member organisations will join them in order to supplement the data.

2. We consider it necessary to revise and update the table of services to include activities required in architectural services and resulting from the challenges of the 21st century.

3. In our 3.5 months of work, we have relied on various data sources that are publicly available. It would be extremely useful for the professional position of architects to commission a professional scientific study on the issues addressed by AMADA.

4. We consider it necessary to take action to amend the Public Procurement Directive with regard to the symmetry of contracts, the definition of the maximum guarantee provided by the designer and the exclusion of any mechanisms in which price is a criterion in design services (e.g. price and payment conditions).

5. We appreciate the work of the ACE in preparing and presenting to the European Parliament a proposal for the adoption of a ‘planning directive’ relating to quality of life and stipulating that planning and design work should only be carried out by persons with the appropriate competences and knowledge.

18. Special thanks

Considering the possibility of achieving the AMADA effect in such a short time (3.5 months), we encourage ACE member organisations to be more active in direct contacts and in sharing good and bad practices, which will enable the assessment of further actions at national level.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the preparation of this report, in particular those who carried out the analyses and calculations as a substantive contribution to this study.

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Fulgencio Aviles - ASEMAS (Mutua de Seguros y Reaseguros a Prima Fija),

Ralf Niebergall - Federal Chamber of Architects BAK,

Reto Gmuer - Swiss Conference of Architects CSA,

Pavel Martinek - Czech Chamber of Architects CCA,

Łukasz Gorzyński, Borys Czarakcziew - Polish Chamber of Architects IARP,

Anda Kursiša - The Latvia Association of Architects LAA,

Andro Mand - Estonian Association of Architects EAL,

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Vladimir Milkov - Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria CAB,

Damir Mance - Croatian Chamber of Architects CCA,

Vlado Krajcar - Chamber of Architecture and Spatial Planning of Slovenia ZAPS.

We would also like to thank the following participants for attending our meetings: Kornel Kobak (SK), Jacques Timmerman (B), Marlene Roque (P), Carla Lima Viera (P), Dubravko Bacič (HR), and Ian Pritchard (ACE), who supported us with their knowledge and experience.

19. Key materials collected for the report

1. The value handbook - Getting the most from your buildings and spaces - prepared by CABE - London, 2006
2. REPORT FEES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN PORTUGAL - Order of Architects Portugal OA, National Council of Architects, 2024
3. ACE POLICY POSITION 2016 ACE POLICY POSITION ON PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE (PII)
4. RELEVANCE OF FEE OFFERS IN THE DISTRIBUTION - Bundes Arkitekten Kammer
5. The economic benefits of regulation in architectural services - ACE, 2021
6. Sachverständigengutachten zur Überarbeitung der Honorarberech-nung in der Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure (HOAI) Endbericht per 17.01.2025