

# Toward a National Core Curriculum in Urbanism: The Case of Serbia

*Na poti k nacionalnemu temeljnemu učnemu načrtu za področje urbanizma: primer Srbije*

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## Izvleček

V zadnjih treh desetletjih so razvojni kontekst Srbije zaznamovali družbena in gospodarska tranzicija, vojni konflikti in vstop v Evropsko unijo (EU). Ti trije dejavniki so spremenili prevladujočo ideologijo in vrednostni sistem, vključno s koncepti, modeli vključevanja, vrstami rešitev, spretnostmi in znanjem na vseh področjih človekovih prizadevanj, vključno z urbanizmom. Zaradi kompleksnosti teh sprememb in vse večjih teženj, da bi urbaniste izključili iz lokalnih in nacionalnih razvojnih politik in projektov, bo treba ponovno oceniti njihovo trenutno vlogo in položaj v urbanističnem upravljanju kot tudi ustreznost njihove usposobljenosti, pristojnosti in modelov izobraževanja. Prispevek predstavlja predlog za uvedbo nacionalnega temeljnega učnega načrta za področje urbanizma kot strateško pomembnega instrumenta z večjim številom ključnih vlog: (a) povečati zmogljivost strokovne skupnosti za soočanje z razvojnimi cilji in tako zagotavljati vzdržnost, (b) oceniti kakovost in usmerjati razvoj (novih) študijskih programov in (c) strokovnjakom v Srbiji omogočiti, da postanejo konkurenčni na evropskem/svetovnem trgu. Prispevek je razdeljen na tri dele. Prvi del obravnava prednosti temeljnega učnega načrta za področje urbanizma, s pregledom mednarodnih pobud, izkušenj in praks na tem področju. Drugi del predstavlja ključne dokumente, pomembne za razvoj temeljnega učnega načrta, ki so razvrščeni v tri kategorije: (i) agende ali razvojni koncepti in direktive EU, (ii) listine združenj šol za prostorsko načrtovanje ter (iii) pravni okvir na lokalni ravni in javne politike. V sklepu predlagamo metodološki postopek za institucionalizacijo temeljnega učnega načrta ter obravnavamo potencialne prednosti/koristi in slabosti/pomanjkljivosti tega instrumenta.

**Ključne besede:** urbanistično upravljanje, postsocialistična tranzicija, visokošolsko izobraževanje, strokovna usposobljenost, Srbija

## Abstract

Over the past three decades, Serbia's development context has been marked by social and economic transition, war conflicts, and accession to the European Union (EU). These three factors have altered the dominant ideology and value system, including concepts, models of engagement, types of solutions, skills and knowledge across all fields of human endeavor, urbanism included. The complexity of these changes, and the growing tendency to exclude urbanists from local and national development policies and projects, require a re-assessment of their current role and position in urban governance, as well as of the adequacy of their competences and models of education. This paper presents a proposal for introducing a National Core Curriculum in Urbanism (NCCU) as a strategically significant instrument with a number of key roles: (a) to build capacity of the professional community for facing developmental challenges and so ensure ongoing sustainability; (b) to evaluate the quality and guide the development of (new) study programmes; and (c) to allow Serbian professionals to become competitive in the European/global market. The paper comprises three main parts. The first section discusses the relative merits of an NCCU, together with an overview of international initiatives, experiences, and practices in this area. The second part presents key documents relevant for developing the NCCU, grouped into three categories: (i) 'agendas', or development concepts and EU's directives; (ii) charters of associations of planning schools, and (iii) the local context's legal framework and public policies. The conclusion section introduces a possible methodological procedure for institutionalising the NCC and discusses potential advantages/benefits and disadvantages/drawbacks of this instrument.

**Key words:** urban governance, post-socialist transition, higher education, professional competences, Serbia

# 1. INTRODUCTION

After the year 2000, with democratisation and the shift to a market economy, Serbia embraced a new socio-economic framework that radically altered attitudes towards development management and policymaking. A good governance concept was adopted that entailed a move away from 'government' to 'governance' and a focus on effectiveness and efficiency in the use of available resources, as well as the involvement of the private and civil sectors in shaping policies (Le Gales, 1998; DiGaetano, Strom, 2003; Hajer, Wagenaar, 2003; Hyden, Samuel, 2011). The general acceptance of this approach has required comprehensive structural reforms to ensure the rule of law, clear standards, transparent procedures, a free market, and the provision of high-quality services to both private individuals and businesses and the re-definition of relationships between public authorities, businesses, and members of the public (RRPPIS, 2016).

Urbanism<sup>1</sup>, one of the key activities of urban governance, is a major component of the public policy system and is directly determined by the quality of overall structural reform (RRPPIS, 2016). In the absence of an appropriate regulatory structure, the practice of planning urban development has to date produced a myriad of mutually inconsistent documents and uncoordinated actions by stakeholders at various levels of governance, with dominant influence by political parties, which has resulted in unsustainable use of resources and created spatial conflicts such as the proliferation of unplanned construction, uncontrolled re-allocation of public resources, opaque decision-making in spatial development (Lazarević Bajec, 2002; Vujošević, 2003; Lazarević Bajec, 2004; Vujošević and Petovar, 2010; Bajić Brković, 2012; Milovanović Rodić, 2015). During this time of structural reform, institutions have revealed themselves to be particularly weak: on the one hand, they have been unwilling to relinquish their governing position, and, on the other, they have not been able to embrace new knowledge needed to establish that status (Serbia 2013 Progress Report, 2014).

The key regulatory changes in urban development concern the legitimization of hitherto concealed and latent individual inter-

ests and their consequent inclusion into the decision-making process by the introduction of a wholly new governance structure and mechanisms (Vujošević and Petovar, 2008). Urban development became the target of direct regulatory reforms with the enactment of the 2003 *Planning and Construction Law*, which laid the foundations of a new statutory framework. This law was subsequently amended on numerous occasions, especially with regard to domain of property rights over key city resources – land zoned for construction (Planning and Construction Law, 2003; 2009; 2014).

Nevertheless, in spite of frequent changes to legislation, the key problems in this area were only partly addressed through regulation. A major cause for criticism of the current law is the inefficient enactment of planning documents, considered a direct obstacle to investment that entails property development (Law on Amendments to the Law on Planning and Construction – Draft, 2018). The latest changes to this law have tended to deprecate or even completely do away with urban planning at various levels, with the apparent aim of reducing the entire planning system to a zoning facility responsible only for providing services required for efficient construction. The current trend in amending legislation in this field seems to be leading to the exclusion of strategic decision-making from the urban planning system, restricting urban plans to standardised technical documents developed in routinized procedures.

Urban development in Serbia has also been indirectly affected by a number of systemic laws designed to comprehensively reform the regulatory system. The principal piece of legislation in this regard has been the *Planning System Law* (2017), which governs the public policy system in Serbia and includes urban development as a major component (Čolić et al., 2017; Maruna et al., 2018). Also, the de-centralisation of public administration and strengthening of local authorities has brought about wide-ranging changes to the status and role of planners in urban governance through the *Local Government Law*<sup>2</sup> (2014), which devolved authority for long-term planning to local authorities and introduced new units, such as Local Economic Development Offices and City Planners. This caused public enterprises tasked with planning to lose their traditionally dominant positions in the urban governance context. The changes were accelerated after the enactment of the *Budget System Law* (2012): intended to streamline and downsize public administration, including numerous public urban planning enterprises.

Clearly, comprehensive structural reforms of urban development call for new professional knowledge and new qualifications. With its first reform-oriented *Higher Education Law* (2005), Serbia joined the European education space, which then led to a number of systemic changes. First and foremost, a new three-cycle education structure was adopted that directly correlates with qualifications obtained and students' ability to apply the knowledge acquired, and second, the country introduced the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), a uniform system for quantifying competences acquired through a study programme.

1 In the Serbian context, the term 'urbanism' means 'the activity of planning urban development'. In Serbia's Regulatory Reform and Improved Policy Management Strategy, the concept is referred to as part of 'Urbanism, spatial planning, and construction', one of the 19 key public policy areas (RRPPIS, 2016). In the broader European setting, the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP) provides a clear definition of 'planning', which is seen as an activity that 'embraces all forms of development and land use activities. It operates in all social strata and on several inter-related spatial levels – local, rural, suburban urban, metropolitan, regional, national and international. It is concerned with the promotion, guidance, enhancement and control of development in the constantly changing physical environment in the interest of common good but respecting the rights of the individual. It makes provision for the future; helps reconcile conflicts of interest, projects physical and social change, facilitates the harmonious evolution of communities and initiates action for the optimum use of resources. It is both a management and creative activity. It is a catalyst in conserving and developing the present and future structure and form of urban and rural areas. It contributes to the creation of the present and future character of social, physical, economic organisation and environment quality' (ECTP, 2003 in Frank, 2014, p. 35). The terms 'urbanism' and 'planning' will therefore be used interchangeably in this paper.

2 The first Local Government Law was enacted in 2002 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 9/2002), with a second Local Government Law following in 2007 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 129/2007).

However, in practice, there has been no institutional co-ordination between structural reforms in urban planning and those in higher education. Wide-ranging changes introduced in the *Planning and Construction Law* (2003) included the creation of the Serbian Chamber of Engineers, an institution tasked with overseeing professional qualifications for planning, design, and construction practitioners by establishing licensing criteria (Šumarac, 2013). Nevertheless, although these professional licensing requirements have changed over time, the Chamber of Engineers has failed to consistently alter its licensing framework to reflect changes to the higher education system. Crucially, it has neither recognised the three-cycle structure of education nor included the ECTS as a criterion for evaluating knowledge obtained through formal study programmes.

Another piece of legislation important for reforming the education system has recently come into effect. The *Law on the National Qualifications Framework* (2018) has regulated qualification arrangements so as to link them more closely with the labour market and facilitate the mobility of workers throughout Europe. It has created a single integrated national qualifications system aligned with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), and defined types and levels of qualifications and how they are obtained, descriptions of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes, and the organisational structure responsible for their application, development, and linkage with the European Qualifications Framework.

The position of urbanism as a scientific discipline poses an additional problem with planner education in Serbia. According to the *Higher Education Law* (2017) and the *Science and Research Law* (2015) and their associated by-laws, the discipline of 'urbanism' is categorised as part of the field of 'engineering and technology'. As such, standards for evaluating scientific and research achievements, requirements for appointment to teaching positions, and prerequisites for obtaining academic titles are identical to those that apply to other engineering disciplines. This ignores the peculiarly inter-disciplinary nature of urbanism, which relies on knowledge from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering; any evaluation of the results of work in this field should therefore reflect this characteristic. Moreover, this categorisation of scientific fields is at odds with the internationally recognised methodology for collecting and using research and development statistics, which places urbanism predominantly within the field of social sciences (Frascati Manual, 2015).

The above summary leads to the conclusion that the latest structural reforms to planning in Serbia in all three key areas – practice, education, and science – have been pursued independently and without mutual co-ordination. It is, therefore, not only sub-optimal solutions in each area that have jeopardised and limited the development of the entire field: an additional challenge has been posed by the lack of alignment between them. As such, the authors believe that, to promote this discipline and revive its ability to improve the life of cities, a common understanding of the subject ought to be established within and between key institutions in all three fields at the national level. This is the only option for ensuring harmonised and synchronised development of the field and

so bring about wide-ranging improvements to it. This paper proposes the creation of a National Core Curriculum in Urbanism (NCCU) as an instrument to regulate the area of planning education. The key objective of this paper is to initiate discussion about the need for an NCCU and its content, development, and institutionalisation. This paper does not aim to propose an NCCU for Serbia: its intent is, rather, to sketch its key characteristics by setting out the questions and challenges it ought to answer. In that sense, this paper will provide an overview of theoretical papers and international initiatives, experiences, and practices in this regard. Its central portion will outline a selected set of key documents relevant for formulating an NCCU. Depending on their level and type of impact on the NCCU, these documents have been grouped into three categories: (i) current agendas and charters of global significance that constitute the relevant value framework and delineate development concepts; (ii) European Union (EU) Directives and other regulatory mechanisms applicable to the planning profession; and (iii) the local legislative framework and policy documents of significance for urbanism. The concluding chapter will summarise some recommendations for establishing and institutionalising the NCCU and discuss the potential strengths and weaknesses of this instrument.

## 2. EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF URBANISM

### 2.1 Overview of urban planning education in Europe

In recent decades, urban planning education in Europe has changed and expanded substantially, primarily under the influence of common EU policies, such as pan-European higher education reforms according to the Bologna principles and European integration policies, as well as due to the demise of Communism and the liberation of Central and Eastern European nations, which led to the creation of a common labour market and re-orientation of planning research and teaching on European matters (Frank et al., 2014). The development of planning education at the international level was contributed to by the processes of globalisation and massification, transcending traditionally nation- and context-specific courses of study, in particular among developing and transition countries, especially in Asia, which is undergoing rapid urbanisation (Alterman, 2017).

From a historical perspective, planning can trace its roots to architecture: most planners of the first half of the 19th century were architects (Frank, 2006), and planning education was oriented toward mere aesthetical, technical concerns. In the early 20th century, in response to the evolving needs for development of the cities of the day, planners received education through post-professional programmes that built upon their training as architects, surveyors, and engineers (Frank et al., 2014). Today, planning curricula are usually located in one of two broad types of academic environments: either a social science environment (as a spatial, economic, or management science) or a design one (as part of architecture or civil engineering) (Berolini et al., 2012, p. 465).

Planning education is, nevertheless, considered a relatively new field of education. It is inter-disciplinary in nature and draws widely on knowledge and approaches of closely related professions such as (landscape) architecture, surveying, engineering, management, geography, social sciences, and economics (Frank et al., 2014, p. 36). As such, depending on the original discipline, different schools have developed differing models of planning education, including a knowledge-based social science model, a design-oriented physical planning approach, and, most recently, radical critique and advocacy (Frank, 2006, p. 16). Accordingly, planning education programmes can be found at various universities, with significant differences in programme foci, degree structures, titles, and curricula (Berolini et al., 2012; Frank et al., 2014; Alterman, 2017). Nonetheless, contemporary planning education has kept pace with changes to the professional paradigm and has shifted from a rather narrowly focused technical design-based field to include a wide range of other dimensions such as policy and processes of governance (Frank et al., 2014, p. 34)

## 2.2 International initiatives to create Common Core Curricula

Although planning practice is context-dependent, initiatives to create a universal or one-world approach to planning education are increasingly numerous. Their main arguments follow the premise that planners need to be prepared for the challenges of a globalising world in which boundaries between nations, the north and the south, and developing and developed countries rapidly decline in importance (Frank, 2006, p. 18). This is further supported by the growing recognition of the planning field and of planning as a key profession in overcoming challenges to the development of sustainable communities, cities, and regions (Berolini et al., 2012; Alterman, 2017), as the multi-disciplinary nature of planning might be just what is needed in the contemporary world (Berolini et al., 2012, p. 489). Planning must evolve from a historically locally-grounded profession to one that is capable of synthesising local knowledge with global transferability (Alterman, 2017, p. 2).

The debate on planning universalism and universal approach to planning education has raised questions about the discipline's core, status and purpose. Although the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) established universal criteria and learning outcomes, better known as AESOP's Core Curriculum, as early as 1995, there is still no consensus as to the definition of what constitutes appropriate planning education and relationships with other disciplines or professions that could lead to common core curricula, or even universally agreed guidelines for planning education (Frank et al., 2014; Alterman, 2017). In recent years, a new initiative has been launched under the leadership of the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP) to establish a common set of criteria, skills and knowledge in an effort to facilitate free professional mobility and cross-national recognition of planning qualifications in Europe (Frank et al., 2014, p. 87). This scheme has established what are termed the eight components of curricula: (a) planning theory, (b) planning techniques, (c) socio/economic environment, (d) built environment, (e) natural environment, (f) planning products, (g) planning instru-

ments, and (h) thesis (Study on the Recognition of Planning Qualifications in Europe, 2016). Academia is seen as being able to play a major role here: its task is, first and foremost, to "develop new (mixed) methods that support inter- and transdisciplinary working and research cutting truly across the boundaries of the traditional discipline silos to extend understanding and science" (Berolini et al., 2012, p. 469).

## 2.3 Higher planning education in Serbia

Higher education in Serbia underwent thorough reform in 2005 with the enactment of the *Higher Education Law*, which aimed at creating a more flexible and efficient education system that could compete in the global knowledge market. A major innovation over the education system in place to date was the introduction of a new three-cycle structure (undergraduate, master's, and doctoral studies) and the ECTS, a uniform system for quantifying the work invested by a student into acquiring knowledge, abilities, and skills (i.e. learning outcomes) envisaged by both the entire study programme and each individual course.

This assessment mechanism has provided a means to address the current lack of precision in assessing professional competencies with reference to the prevalence of courses in a particular field in any given semester. In addition, the ECTS score allows gauging to what extent a particular type of training allows a professional to perform particular work in urban development or planning.

The National Higher Education Council, tasked with ensuring excellence in higher education, was created under the law, which also provides clear quality control standards. The *Regulation on Standards and Procedure for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes* (2006) was adopted to enhance the competitiveness of students' knowledge and key competences, whereas the *Regulation on the List of Professional, Academic, and Scientific Titles* (2017) was enacted to ensure that academic titles correspond to the appropriate cycle of studies.

The *Regulation on the List of Professional, Academic, and Scientific Titles* places 'Urbanism' in the area of 'Architecture', part of the field of 'Engineering and Technology'. Professional, academic, and scientific titles defined by the Regulation, as shown in Table 1, are linked to the number of ECTS credits accumulated.

By contrast, according to the 2018 *Law on the National Qualifications Framework*, qualifications may be general, professional, academic, and vocational. Of these, academic qualifications are significant for planner education: in the classification system,<sup>3</sup> 'Urbanism' is listed under 'Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction' (broad field 07), 'Architecture and Construction' (narrow field 073), 'Architecture and Urban Planning' (detailed field 0731).

According to the 2003 *Planning and Construction Law*, the Serbian Chamber of Engineers, the formal institutional authority charged with controlling qualifications for practising in the fields of planning, design, and construction, admits as members professionals with training in a variety of engineering disciplines, such as architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, transportation engineering, and the like, as well

<sup>3</sup> Based on ISCED 2013-f (under the 2018 *Law on the National Qualifications Framework*).

English title	Serbian title	Qualification level	Serbian abbreviation	English abbreviation
Bachelor in Architecture	<i>Inženjer arhitekture</i>	Three-year undergraduate studies, 180 ECTS	<i>Inž. arh.</i>	B. Arch
Bachelor with Honours in Architecture	<i>Diplomirani inženjer arhitekture</i>	Four-year studies, 240 ECTS	<i>Dipl. inž. arh.</i> <i>Dipl. inž. urb.</i>	B. Arh (Hons) B. Urb (Hons)
Bachelor with Honours in Urbanism	<i>Diplomirani inženjer urbanizma</i>			
Master in Architecture	<i>Master inženjer arhitekture</i>	Master's studies, 180 + 120 = 300 ECTS	<i>Mast. inž. arh.</i>	M. Arch
Master in Urbanism	<i>Master inženjer urbanizma</i>	or master's studies, 240 + 60 = 300 ECTS	<i>Mast. inž. urb.</i>	M. Urb
Architect Specialist	<i>Specijalista inženjer arhitekture</i>	Specialist studies, 300 + 60 = 360 ECTS	<i>Spec. inž. arh.</i>	Arch. Spec
Urban Renewal Specialist	<i>Specijalista urbane obnove</i>		<i>Spec. urb. obnov.</i>	Urb. Spec
Doctor of Science in Architecture	<i>Doktor nauka – arhitektura</i>	Doctoral studies, 300 + 180 = 480 ECTS	<i>Dr.</i>	PhD

Table 1: Types of professional, academic, and scientific titles in the area of 'Architecture' in Serbia by qualification level and number of ECTS credits, according to the *Regulation on the List of Professional, Academic, and Scientific Titles*, 2017.

as spatial planning. The Serbian Chamber of Engineers issues four basic types of licences: Responsible Planner, Responsible Urban Planning Engineer, Responsible Designer, and Responsible Constructing Engineer. All licences are based on educational qualifications and professional experience (Decision on Types of Licences Issued by the Serbian Chamber of Engineers, 2012).

In Serbia, planners are primarily trained at faculties of architecture<sup>4</sup> (70 percent of all licensed planners are coming from faculties of architecture), as well as other engineering schools (Figure 1): planner licences can be obtained by all engineers and spatial planners provided that they attended two semesters of courses in urbanism, with no specific requirements as to the content or type of these courses or the number of ECTS credits.

The requirement for separate academic education for planners was first formally met in 2012, when the first students enrolled in the new Integrated Urbanism Master's Programme at the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Architecture (Maruna and Milojković, 2014; Maruna and Čolić, 2015; Maruna et al., 2018). Nevertheless, even after the creation of this special master's programme, planning has remained the first choice for very few students (Milovanović et al., 2013). Academic training for urban planners is therefore yet to be recognised as particularly

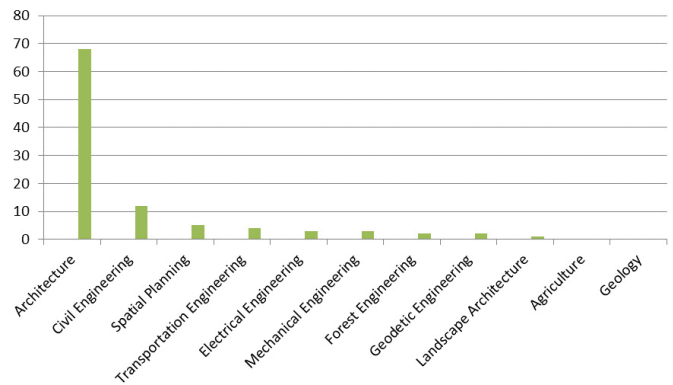


Figure 1: Distribution of planners by professional qualifications in Serbia.

Source: Serbian Chamber of Engineers. <http://www.ingkomora.org.rs/urbanisti/strukovnaRaspodela.jpg> (Accessed on 21 April 2018).

significant both by the state and by students intending to take up the profession.

### 3. SHAPING THE NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM IN URBANISM: KEY INSTITUTIONS AND DOCUMENTS

This chapter will provide an overview of major institutions and their documents that have the most significant bearing on the definition of the scope and content of the field of urbanism, and, in the context of this paper, hold particular importance for formulating an NCCU. These institutions differ greatly in terms of purpose, character, significance, scope of work, mode of operation, and the like: here they will be grouped by how they contribute to and affect the three key dimensions of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme. Figure 2 gives a breakdown of these institutions and impacts on the dimensions of the ESD, whilst Table 2 lists their key documents and relationships with the fields of planning education, science, and practice.

4 There are five state-run and two private universities/faculties in Serbia that offer studies of architecture at various levels. The state-controlled ones are the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture (Undergraduate Studies, 180 ECTS; Master's Studies, 120; Specialist Studies, 60; Integrated Studies, 300; Doctoral Studies, 180); University of Niš, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture (Integrated Studies in Architecture, 300 ECTS); University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Engineering (Undergraduate Studies, 240 ECTS); University of Novi Pazar, Department of Engineering (Undergraduate Studies, 240 ECTS); and the University of Priština (currently located in Kosovska Mitrovica), Faculty of Engineering (?). The private schools are Belgrade Union Nikola Tesla University, Faculty of Construction Management, Department of Architecture (Undergraduate Studies, 240 ECTS; Master's Studies, 60; Doctoral Studies, 300), and Megatrend University, Faculty of Arts and Design, Department of Interior Design (Undergraduate Studies, 240 ECTS).

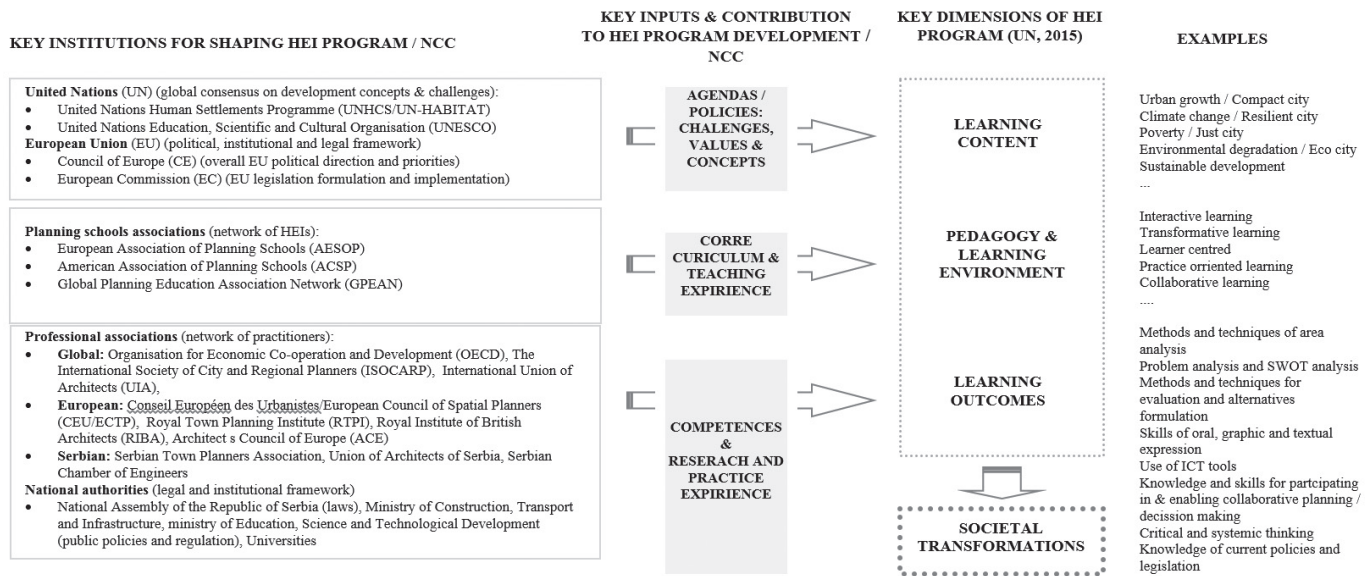


Figure 2: Key institutions for shaping HEI program / NCCU grouped according to their key inputs and contribution to the key dimensions of the ESD (*Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development*, 2014).

In 2005, the United Nations (UN) launched the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in order to enhance the role of education in promoting sustainable development. These efforts resulted in the development of a number of documents aiming to put into practice an education concept designed to prepare professionals from various disciplines to respond with more sustainable solutions to the grand societal, environmental, and economic challenges our cities and societies face. According to the *Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development* (2014b, p. 12), the key dimensions of the ESD are: (a) Learning content, (b) Pedagogy and the learning environment, and (c) Learning outcomes. The ESD aims to achieve (d) 'societal transformations': after receiving such education, learners will be able to "transform themselves and the society they live in, able to engage and assume active roles, to face and to resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world. It achieves its purpose by transforming society".

### 3.1 Learning content: Global agendas and EU Directives

These institutions are global authorities in the areas of (a) development management, and (b) education. They identify key developmental challenges and define value systems, desirable developmental concepts, and mechanisms for their implementation. The learning content of the HEI programme across all disciplines, planning included, relies on their documents, 'agendas', 'declarations', and 'directives'. These institutions include: *United Nations (UN)*, *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)*, *United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN HABITAT)*, and *European Union (EU) institutions*.

### 3.2 Pedagogy and learning environment: Planning schools' associations

This group is made up of networks of universities, their departments and affiliated schools that are engaged in teaching and research in the fields of urbanism – urban and regional planning and architecture. These planning schools' associations aim to promote the development of teaching curricula and research among their member institutions through mutual dialogue, communication, exchange, and dissemination of research practices. Particularly important in this regard are: *Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)*, and *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP)* as an institution that connects educators, researchers, and students, to advance knowledge about planning education and research.

### 3.3 Learning outcomes: Professional associations and national authorities

This group is composed of institutions whose actions are particularly important for the identification of learning outcomes. Two sub-groups can be identified here. The first group comprises the most significant institutions on the international level such as: *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, *International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)*, *International Union of Architects (UIA)*, *European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP)*, *Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)*, *Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)* and *Architects' Council of Europe (ACE)*.

Several of institutions at the national level are allocated as a second subgroup: *Serbian Town Planners Association*, *Union of Architects of Serbia*, and *Serbian Chamber of Engineers*. This sub-group comprises national institutions that make policies and construct the regulatory and institutional framework for planning in all three fields, education, science, and practice. Apart from the universities, faculties, and departments that teach urbanism, the key Serbian stakeholders in this regard are the Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infra-

Institution	National core curriculum sources: documents	NI	E	R	P
UN	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)	N	3	3	3
UNESCO	Education for Sustainable Development Goals Learning Objectives (2017)	N/I	3	1	0
	Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of ESD 2005-2014 (2014)	N	3	1	0
	Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on ESD (2014)	N	3	1	0
UNHABITAT	New Urban Agenda (2016)	N	3	3	3
EP/EC	Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005)	I	2	0	3
	Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the internal market (2006)	I	1	0	3
AESOP	Core requirements for a high quality European Planning Education (1995)	N/I	3	1	0
OECD	Frascati Manual (2015)	I	1	3	0
ISOCARP	Manual of Planning Practice (1996, 2000, 2002, 2015)	N	2	2	3
UIA	UIA Charter for Architectural Education (1996/2011)	N/I	2	3	3
ECTP	Charter of European Planning (1985, 2012)	N	3	2	3
RTPI	Policy statement on initial planning education (2012)	I	3	1	0
RIBA	RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria for UK and international courses and examinations in architecture (2011)	I	3	1	2
ACE	Quality Charter. European Deontological Code (2006, 2016)	N/I	1	0	3
SCE	Decision on types of licences issued by the Serbian Chamber of Engineers (2012)	I	1	0	3
SERBIAN LAWS	Planning and Construction Law (2014)	I	1	1	3
	Science and Research Law (2017)	I	2	3	0
	Law on the National Qualifications Framework (2018)	I	2	0	3
University BY-LAWS	Universities' and Faculties' Articles of Association	I	3	1	1
Faculty BY-LAWS	Faculties' accreditation documents	N/I	3	1	2

Table 2: List of institutions and their documents of relevance for an NCCU. In terms of their usefulness for designing an NCCU and the character of their relations with the NCCU, the source documents can be either normative (N) or instructive (I). As for their relevance for the three domains of education (E), research and development (R), and practice (P), there are four levels: not relevant (0), low relevance (1), relevant (2), and exceptionally significant (3).

structure and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

## 4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Planner education should empower future professionals to deal with the growing complexity of challenges faced by cities and societies (both globally and locally). The intricacy of the context in which they should act complicates and alters their role in society and, as such, the competences they obtain through education. The success of the profession greatly depends on alignment in the development of the discipline across all three domains: education, science, and practice. Misaligned and uncoordinated structural reforms in education, science, and practice have been the fundamental causes of problems with urban planning in Serbia. These issues have had tangible impacts on various levels and have ranged from terminological inconsistencies to disagreement about concepts and value frameworks.

This paper has discussed a possible solution for academic planner education that can contribute to enhancing not only its own

position and role in society, but also that of the planner profession: the creation of a National Core Curriculum in Urbanism (NCCU). In this paper, an NCCU is considered as a governance instrument for planner education at the national level. Although its primary objective is to regulate education, its motivation, goals, and effects are much broader and involve the desire to improve the overall performance of planning as a discipline.

The NCCU is envisaged as a national-level document defining the character and purpose of the discipline, stipulating the knowledge it is based upon, providing an overview of a broad range of qualifications and duties that constitute the planner's scope of work, and establishing relationships with the levels and types of education required to obtain these competencies. Its establishment is of special significance for halting further degradation of the planning profession and restoring its importance in society.

The NCCU is a national planner education framework that ought to comprise: (a) goals of this education (aligned with the understanding of the position and role of planners in society, as well as awareness of society as a whole and the desired concept of its development); (b) learning content (a thematic framework directly

dependent on the goals of education); and (c) learning environment and outcomes (pedagogical models and competences in accordance with the goals of education and the learning content). The NCCU ought to play a twin role by providing control, as the foundation for assessing the quality of current study programmes, and guidance, by supporting the development of existing and new courses. An NCCU should enhance the capacity of the entire professional community, both individuals and institutions, to face the challenges posed by the development of cities, but also improve their competitiveness in the European and global markets. For the NCCU to meet these objectives, its content, role, and institutionalisation should be determined in a deliberative process designed so as to promote consensus between key national academic and professional institutions in the field of urbanism.

When formalised by being enacted by the national institution tasked with developing and enhancing higher education (the National Higher Education Council), the NCCU will become a major instrument of (a) urban governance, (b) harmonisation of national regulations governing education, science, and practice, and (c) alignment with EU regulations and development concepts. This instrument can be successful only if it incorporates adaptability as a key principle that allows it to adjust to the changeable nature of its subject-matter: the development of the city and our knowledge and ideas about it. If the NCCU is to be effective, it must be linked with: (a) accreditation procedures and system; (b) the system for licensing / formal recognition of professional qualifications; and (c) the system of evaluating scientific and professional achievements and teacher competences.

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