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Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Guests,

Good morning, welcome to today's conference on architectural policies!

The other day I saw Daniel Libeskind on TV talking about the esthetic obligation that architecture has in his eyes.

Does such an obligation exist and is there on the other hand also a right to ugliness?

How to balance esthetic goals, functional needs and costs?

Does architecture have an influence on our well-being beyond the simple satisfaction of our primary needs for housing, for privacy and for comfort?

These are some of the questions that concern architectural and cultural policies today.

With regard to culture and cultural policies, the creativity, the uniqueness and the beauty of architectural design, as well as the quality of life and wellbeing, in a human scale built environment with a good social mix of the population, are of first importance.

Other factors as costs; room and prices have a strong influence on architecture and must be taken into account. But they cannot be the only reference and the optimization of cost and space cannot be the only goal because we can tell when somebody does something for a quick buck.

To say it with Daniel Libeskind: "we can feel that carelessness and the silence it produces".

Yes, I do believe that the environment around us has a considerable emotional impact on us because I can feel it. Some buildings lift me up emotionally and some drag me down. It does something to me, even if sometimes I do not know what exactly, but it moves me. And I certainly feel good when I look at buildings which belong to our cultural heritage and which reflect our identity.

In order to achieve quality in the built environment that adds to the quality of life of the citizens, we need good architectural policies. Luxembourg has established its architectural policies in June 2005 during its last Presidency of the European Council of Ministers.

Going through the documents, I have noticed that some countries, like the Nordic countries, have started decades earlier and have a long tradition in architectural policies.

But even if we are late we try to do well. In the eyes of the authorities, public buildings need to show quality in architectural design and construction.

Architectural competition is organized for the construction of new public buildings and for the renovation of old ones. More and more this is also the case for municipalities.

Local authorities formulate their own architectural policy. This process is essential for a country like Luxembourg featuring a strong immigration in a small territory. This causes a strong demand that leads to soaring prices of land for construction.

The Ministry of Culture hopes that today's conference will give us a similar inspiration and insight like the one 10 years ago during our last Presidency.

Thank you!

Bob Krieps