

I understand the New European Bauhaus as a tool for encouraging the natural human tendency for cooperation and helping each other. The New European Bauhaus is oriented toward '(...) diffusing good ideas and concepts to a broader audience, not only in Europe but also beyond (...)'¹. The aim of the initiative should be to reach the objectives of the New European Bauhaus on a global scale. It can be achieved if people in the whole world are convinced not only to these objectives, but also to the ways of bringing them into reality. Thus, it is important to develop the rules in a way which makes them universally regarded as fair. People all across the globe need to feel that they are partners in the process. It is a tremendous task. Especially in a world where the most basic needs are not fulfilled. The COVID crisis eclipsed the refugee crisis which is still there and part of the Green Deal has to be devoted to solving its underlying problems. The New European Bauhaus pilot implementations are to be distributed in various EU Member States. But what remains vital at the core of the initiative is to make the New European Bauhaus also a tool for partnership with people outside the EU.

The European Union has long experience in creating partnerships. As a student, I personally took part in the Erasmus Exchange Programme even before my country (Poland) joined the EU. As a teacher, I witness students who share the same background coming into the framework of the Erasmus Programme from outside the EU to Poland. I also encounter a lot of students from Ukraine and Belarus who enter the country to pursue their regular studies. And for many of them, the Polish experience connected with joining the European Union is a highly valuable reference. Other example is the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award which is open also for the countries outside the EU or even outside Europe. I have contributed to the establishment of co-operation between Mies van der Rohe Foundation and architects from Armenia. For its part, this project has let me experience the strong will of the connections with the EU. There are also many other, in some cases even more crucial, positive examples of EU engagement worldwide. Nevertheless, the European Union still needs to create more tangible perspectives for countries aspiring to experience joining the EU and people from around the world who want to enjoy the level of quality of life which is standard in the EU. Of course, the New European Bauhaus alone cannot change the situation in that field, but it can be a significant step on the way toward that goal.

Partnership with people outside the European Union must mean that they will not be regarded only as receivers of standards developed within the EU but also as respectable teachers, experts and sources of inspiration. It is not only the question of their dignity and opening them to bringing the Green Deal into reality. In fact, what we can learn from people living in poorer conditions are the solutions they have developed which are more sustainable both socially and environmentally and which are more inclusive than the solutions used in richer parts of the world.

The philosophy of focusing "(...) 'beyond building' (...)" may also mean that in many cases just letting plants grow, using solutions which are less sophisticated technologically, or just using existing buildings may be a better answer than the investments based on sophisticated technical standards. For example, it is worth mentioning that when we apply energy-efficient standards counted per square meter, not per user, then the solutions used in developed countries, which fulfill all the standards, often generate more energy use than the solutions applied in ordinary old buildings. I live in a multifamily brick house built in 1927, without the need for installing air conditioning. Over the years, the building proved that in many cases between April and October there is also no need to use heating. The structure of the house buffers the amplitude of temperature. At the same time, in a richly glazed building, completed in 2013, where I used to teach, the standard is that between April and October air-conditioning is frequently alternated with heating periods, depending on the weather changes.

The above mentioned reflections follow the statement that '(...) The New European Bauhaus wants to connect different realities. (...)'². I fully share the opinion that '(...) breaking silos (...)'² is what we need. From my experience as an architect, teacher, member of committees in the field of architecture and urban planning, but also from common life and observation of the world, I know that finding proper solutions applicable to all circumstances is a crucial

¹ <https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/system/files/2021-01/New-European-Bauhaus-Explained.pdf>

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challenge and very hard to reach. I must also confess that in spite of my awareness of the social and environmental questions I personally also contribute to the problems our planet and its inhabitants face. As an architect, I had designed of the houses built of renewable materials, but their locations encourage their inhabitants to use the cars. I must also confess that unfortunately I have the feeling that I am good in at talking, but not in at really acting and solving problems – much as I would like the reality to be on the contrary.

A bit more than four and a half decades of my lifetime have lent me the insight into some historical breakthroughs, breakthroughs in lifestyles, and breakthroughs in thinking. Nowadays, holding a mobile phone in the pocket is standard also for many inhabitants of the areas discriminated in terms of infrastructure and quality of life. From my childhood in 1970s and 1980s in Poland, I remember localities with only one phone per village, long queues to public phone booths on new large housing settlements in big cities and paying visits to friends or relatives, who did not have a phone, just to pass them information. On the other hand, the development of infrastructure does not always mean changes for better – investments in this field are often too much oriented at big cities and cars. Both these trends mean that many people in smaller communities are forced to own a car and commute to big cities. Today, rivers and seas in many countries, including Poland, are much cleaner than in my childhood. The forests killed by acid rains in the 1980s have grown back again. But, on the other hand, we produce much more waste. In my country the air is no more as dramatically polluted in industrial areas as it used to, but the quality of the air is still far from being proper.

One of my most vivid childhood memories is the hope cherished by my parents and other adults connected with the rise of the Solidarity movement in 1980, and then the ensuing disappointment and fear which came along with the martial law. I also remember the strong support for Poland at that time which came from abroad which I experienced as a child in form of goods sent in parcels directly to my home as well as distributed in the church. In 1988 and 1989, I experienced the hope connected with Solidarity coming out of the underground and the advent of the fall of communism and the joy and pride, when it finally took place. Also, I could feel the hope stemming from the economic reforms introduced in Poland soon afterwards. Then, I have noticed that the newly gained freedom and getting rid of the problems of obtaining basic consuming goods was connected with big costs incurred by many members of society. Our, also my personal, enthusiasm for the free market was excessive and, in fact, I realized that the market is freer for the bigger players than for the smaller ones. Later, I learned that the ideas developed by Solidarity did not only include providing hope for freedom and better life in the countries dominated by the Soviet Union, but it was also a model observed by many intellectuals from the West who regarded it as proper to implement around the world. However, what followed for Poland, after the fall of communism, was the adoption of neoliberal doctrines, instead of the ideas of Solidarity developed in 1980-1981, which proved to be a strong disappointment for these intellectuals. David Ost, one of the American political scientists in question, has deeply researched the matter in his book *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe*³. Later came a reorientation of that trend, but still there is a lot to change. Both in Poland and in the whole world.

The statement behind the New European Bauhaus brings hope that it can become one of the tools of making the world richer in solidarity.

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³ David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2005. I read this book in the Polish edition: David Ost *Kłęska Solidarności: Gniew i polityka w postkomunistycznej Europie*, MUZA SA, Warszawa 2007.