

INTRODUCTION

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I am very pleased to introduce a new journal, *Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning*. A first question may arise to the reader: is there a need for another planning journal? Indeed, although the planning discipline developed in the twentieth century, it remains rather young, and today there is a number of very good journals. However, after vivid discussions, AESOP has come to the conclusion that the project of *Transactions*, developed with a remarkable dedication by Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe, Andrea Frank, Nikos Karadimitriou and Olivier Sykes, is to provide our community with something complementary to existing journals: unique and precious.

First, *Transactions* is really AESOP's journal. Its editorial line incorporates papers derived from our most valued activities, papers distinguished in our annual congresses by the Best Congress Paper Prize, offshoots of our Thematic Working Groups and seminars, invited contributions of prominent AESOP figures... Putting our "bests" at the core of the new journal means much more than showing off. During its 30-year existence, AESOP has developed a vision of planning and of planning values – in other words, a discourse that *Transactions* shares with our community and with a wide audience, fostering scholarly debate. And, because openness is one of AESOP's values, the journal is open to all submissions.

Secondly, such an endeavour makes sense only if it meets the highest academic standards. To ensure this, the editors have organised a thorough, double-blind, peer review process, to which all papers are submitted.

Thirdly, *Transactions* offers our community a truly independent publication channel. In recent years, the world of scientific publications has been deeply affected by several changes. Publishing companies experience consolidations and concentrations. The development of open access journals gave birth to economic models requiring financial contributions from authors. In planning, as well as in other disciplines, we are concerned by issues of access to publication for researchers from universities that do not provide financial support for publishing, or possible biases induced by the dominance of papers addressing issues related to the agenda of those institutions financing large research programmes such as Horizon 2020, etc.

In this changing environment, it was AESOP's duty to provide the community with an open access journal clearly built on a non-profit model, where the quality of the paper will always be the sole condition for being published. In this model, AESOP has first acquired experience with its journal *Planning Education*, focusing on didactic issues. With the birth of *Transactions*, we are broadening our scope to the diversity of planning research. The first issue, which we have in hand, is promising, with its opening essay by Rachelle Alterman and its diverse, critical, and stimulating five papers.

I would like to express our gratitude to the editors and to the authors, as well as to the colleagues who have accepted the call to contribute to the demanding task of reviewing. Long live *Transactions*!

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