ECAP

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Architectural policies in Europe: an up-to-date overview

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Architecture Policies in Europe

A panorama of the actors, policies and tools promoting high-quality Architecture and Baukultur as the new political ethos in Europe

2nd Edition

Architects' Council of Europe
Conseil des Architectes d'Europe

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Architecture Policies in Europe

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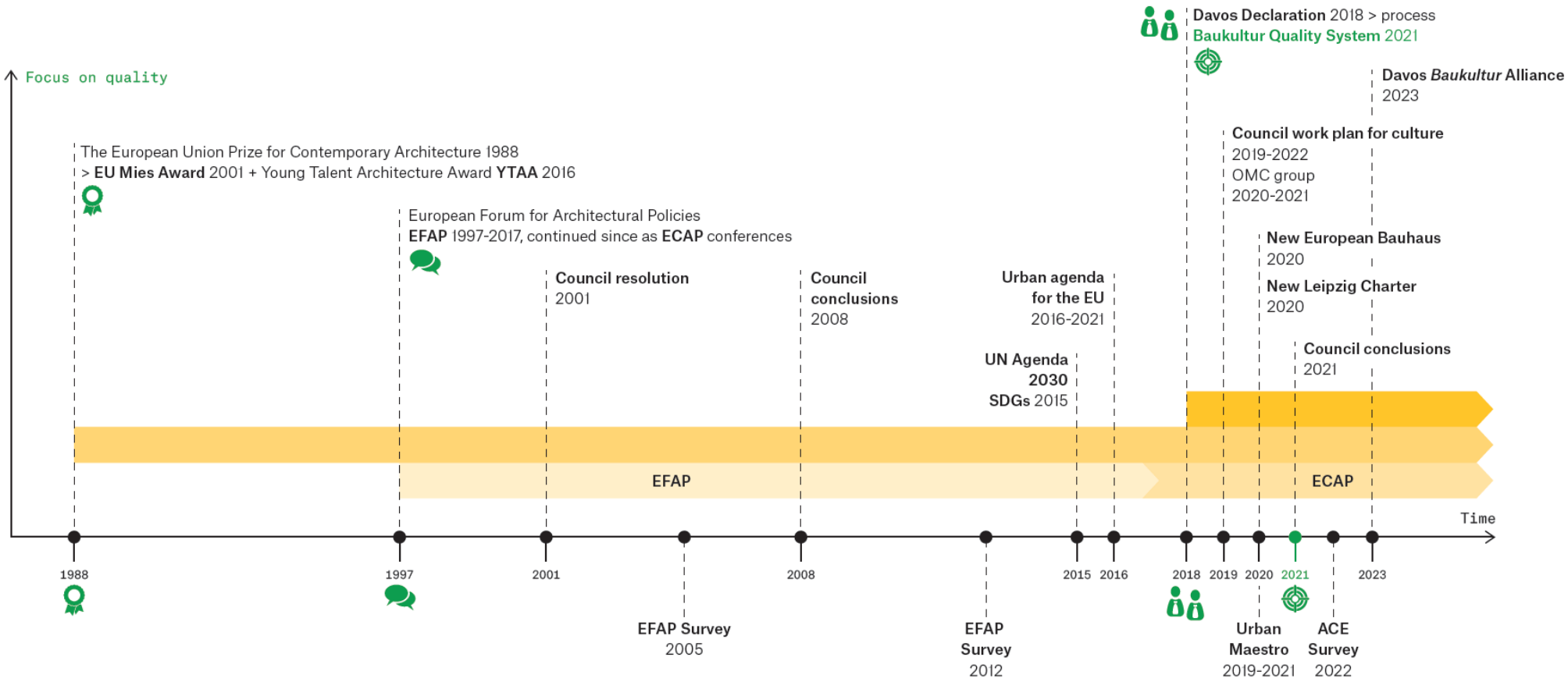
1.1 - Diversity of terms / concepts used by architectural policies across Europe (the distribution of the terms may not correspond to its location) (image: João Bento).

2 EUROPEAN POLICIES

EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE POLICY



3 RESEARCH APPROACH

4 INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS

Institutional actors

Ministries responsible for architectural policy

	Austria	BE Brussels-Capital	BE Flanders	BE Wallonia-Brussels	Bulgaria	Cyprus	Croatia	Czechia	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	UK England	UK Scotland	UK NorthernIreland	UK Wales	Iceland	Norway	Serbia	Switzerland
Culture [(a)]	●			●					●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				●
Environment [(b)]		●				●	●	●					●	●					●	●		●			●		●	●							●			
Public Works [(c)]																					●	●	●		●			●									●	
Other			●																	●	●														●			
No information					—										—															—					—			

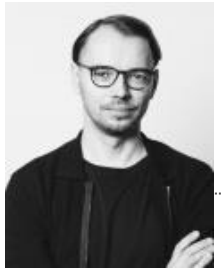
(a) Also designated as Ministry of Culture, Education and/or Arts.
(b) Also designated as Ministry of Environment and Urban Development and / or Regional Development.
(c) Also designated as Ministry of Infrastructures/Transports and/or Building / Housing.

NOTE: The present table is a generalization. In some cases, it does not correspond exactly to the name of the Ministry.

State Architects (Chief Government Architects) | 2023

State/Region	Position	Ministry/Institution	Unit/Office	Staff	Position
Brussels-Capital (BE)	Government Architect	Perspective Brussels	Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA)	17	Outside (office)
Flanders (BE)	Government Architect	Presidency of Ministers	Flemish Government Architect Team	22	Outside (office)
Hungary	Chief Architect	Ministry of the Interior	National Chief Architect's Office	-	Inside (department)
Ireland	State architect	Office of Public Works (OPW)	Architectural Services	90	Inside (department)
Netherlands	Government Architect	Central Government Real Estate Agency (RVB)	Board of Government Advisers	40	Inside (Office)
Scotland	Chief Architect	Built Environment Directorate	Architecture & Place division	8	Inside (division)
Sweden	State Architect	National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	State Architect	2 (25)*	Inside (division)

State Architects (Chief Government Architects) | 2025



State/Region	Position	Ministry/Institution	Unit/Office	Staff	Position
Brussels-Capital (BE)	Government Architect	Perspective Brussels	Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA)	17	Outside (office)
Estonia	State architect	Land and Spatial Development Board	Strategic Spatial Planning Service	-	Inside (department)
Flanders (BE)	Government Architect	Presidency of Ministers	Flemish Government Architect Team	22	Outside (office)
Hungary	Chief Architect	Ministry of the Interior	National Chief Architect's Office	-	Inside (department)
Ireland	State architect	Office of Public Works (OPW)	Architectural Services	90	Inside (department)
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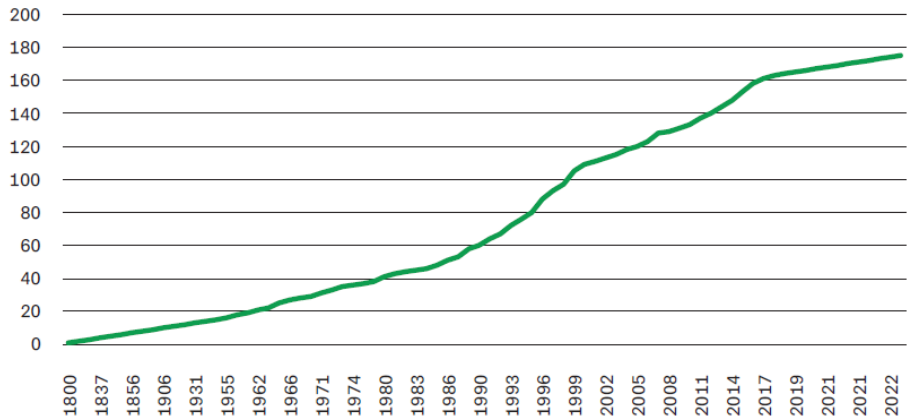
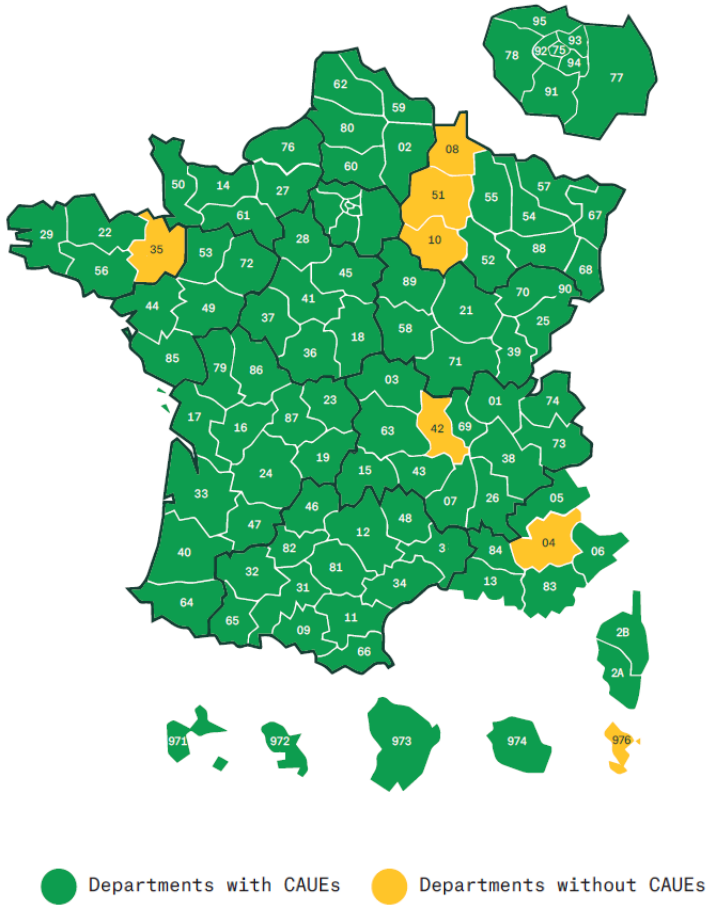
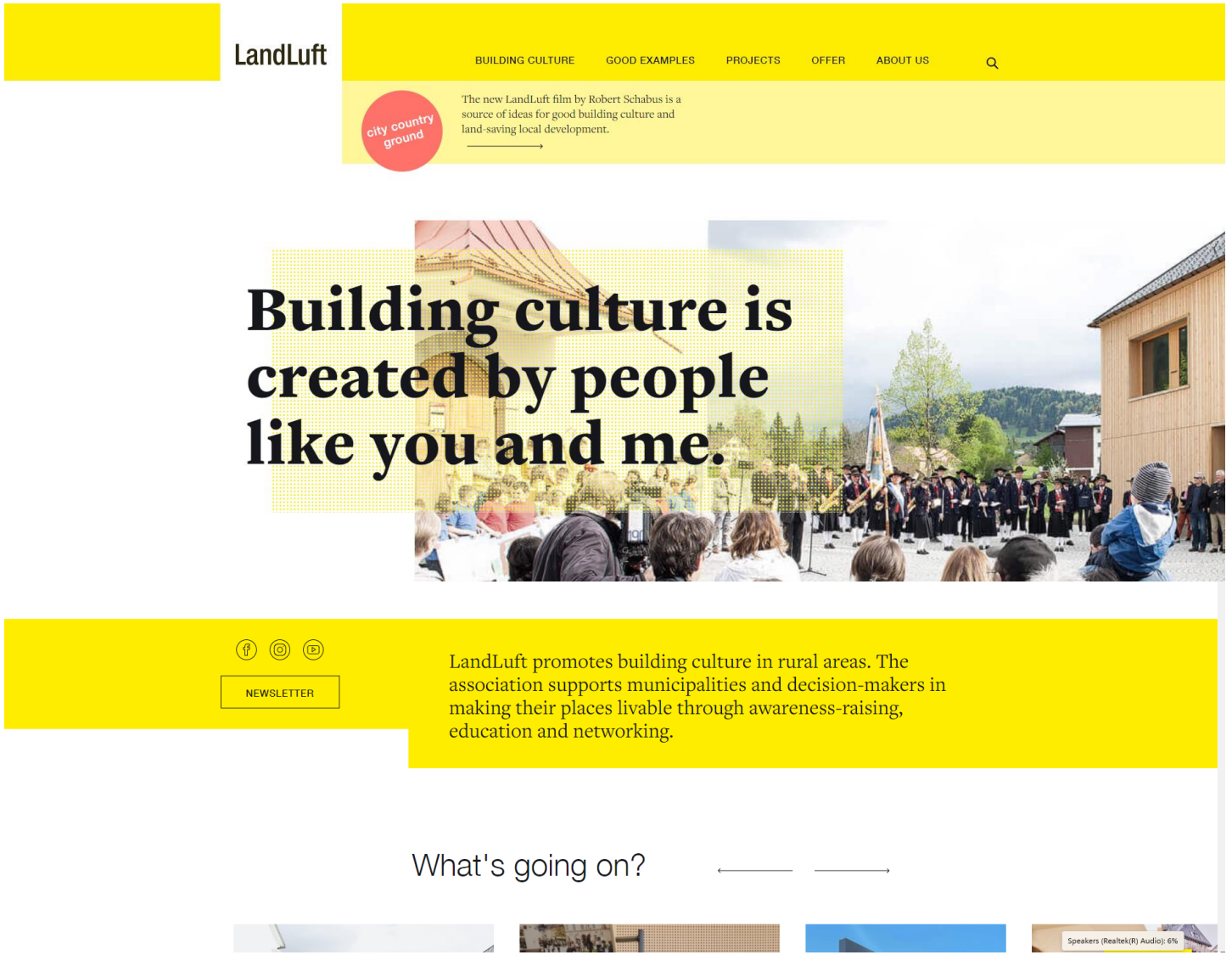
Number of architectural cultural organizations in Europe



Non-profit organizations / associations



The 93 French CAUE, 2017
(Source: FNCAUE, 2023)



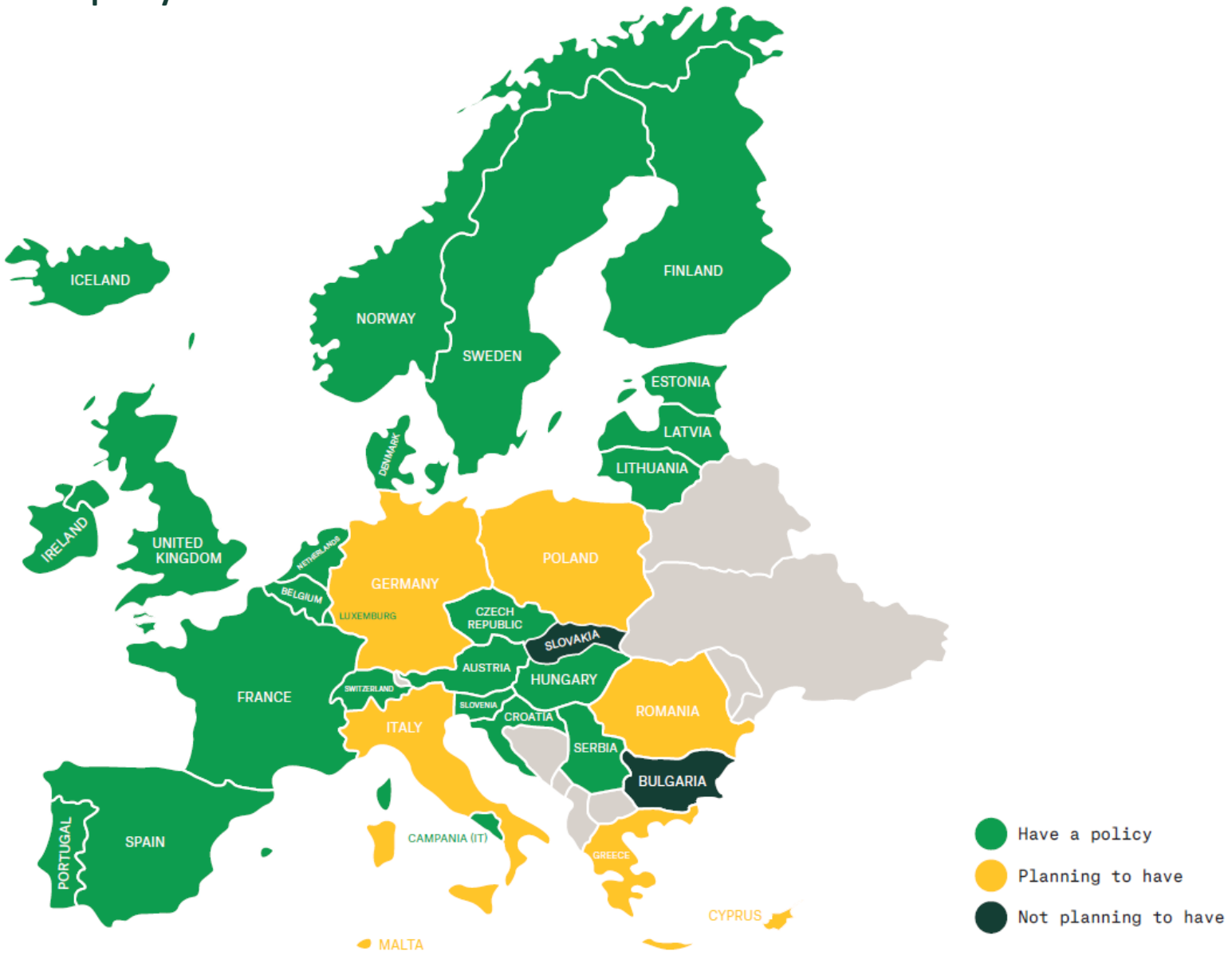
Policy committees / advisory boards

Regional Observatory for the Quality of Architecture and Urban Planning, Campania / Italy (2020)

5 ARCHITECTURAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

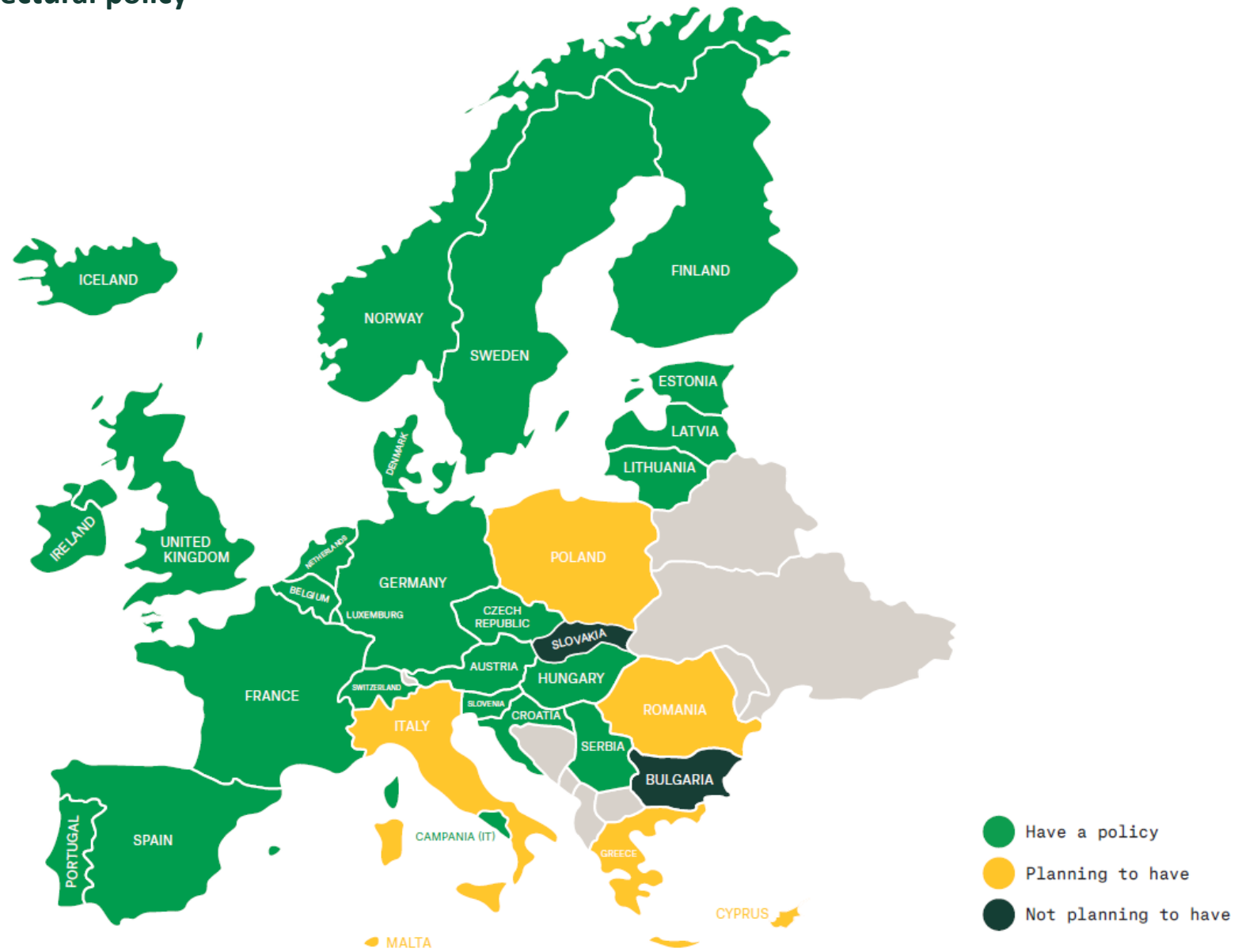
Official documents on architectural policy

[2023]



Official documents on architectural policy

[2025]



Policy documents on architectural policy

Types of official documents on architecture policy:

a) **Legislation** (France, Lithuania, IT Campanian, ES Catalonia, Spain, Sweden)

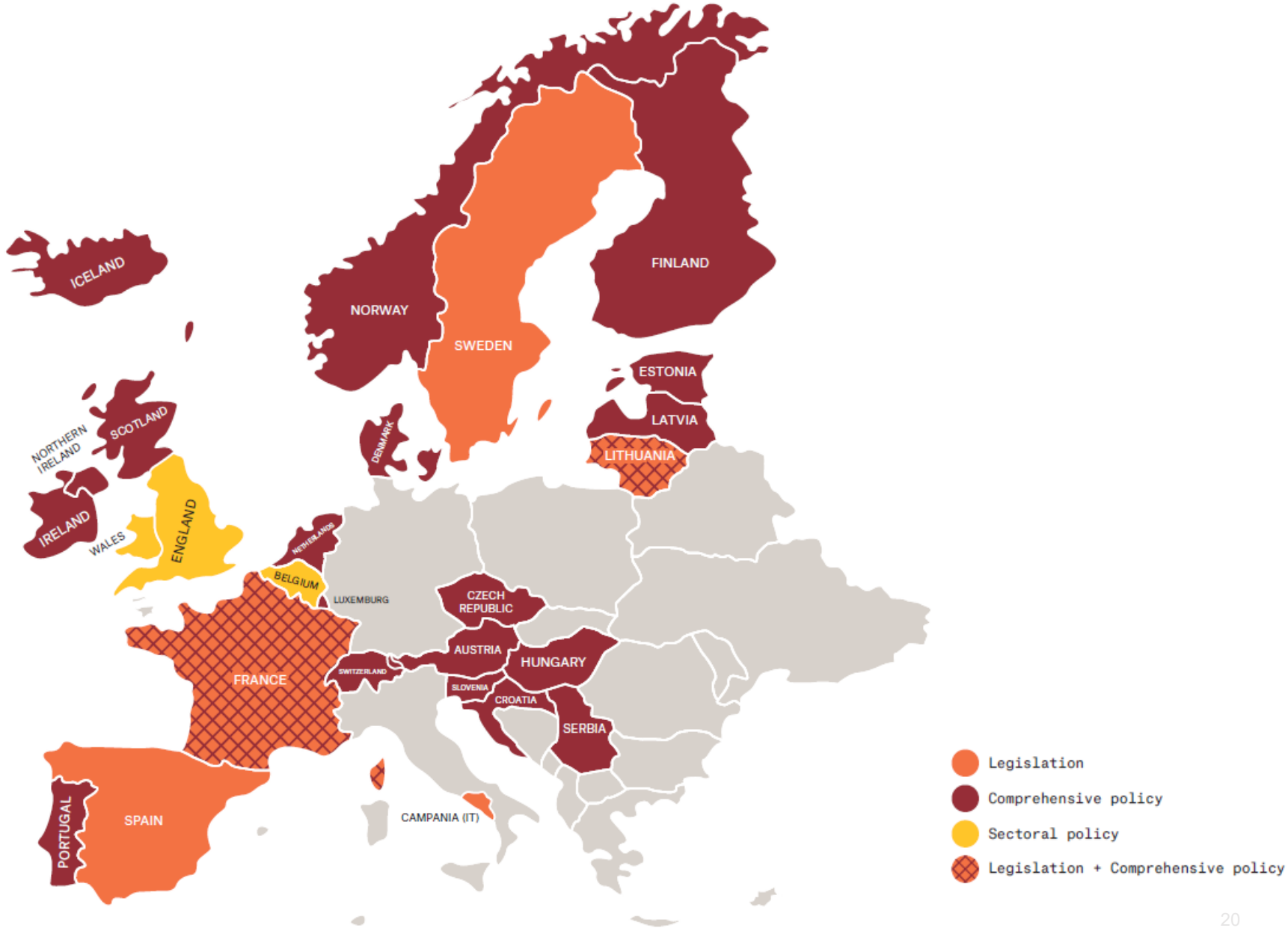
b) **Comprehensive policy**

(Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, FI Eastern Finland, FI Häme, FI Helsinki-Uusimaa, FI Satakunta, FI Southwest Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, UK Scotland, UK Northern Ireland, Iceland and Norway)

c) **Sectorial policy** (BE Brussels-Capital, BE Flanders, BE Wallonia, UK England, UK Wales)

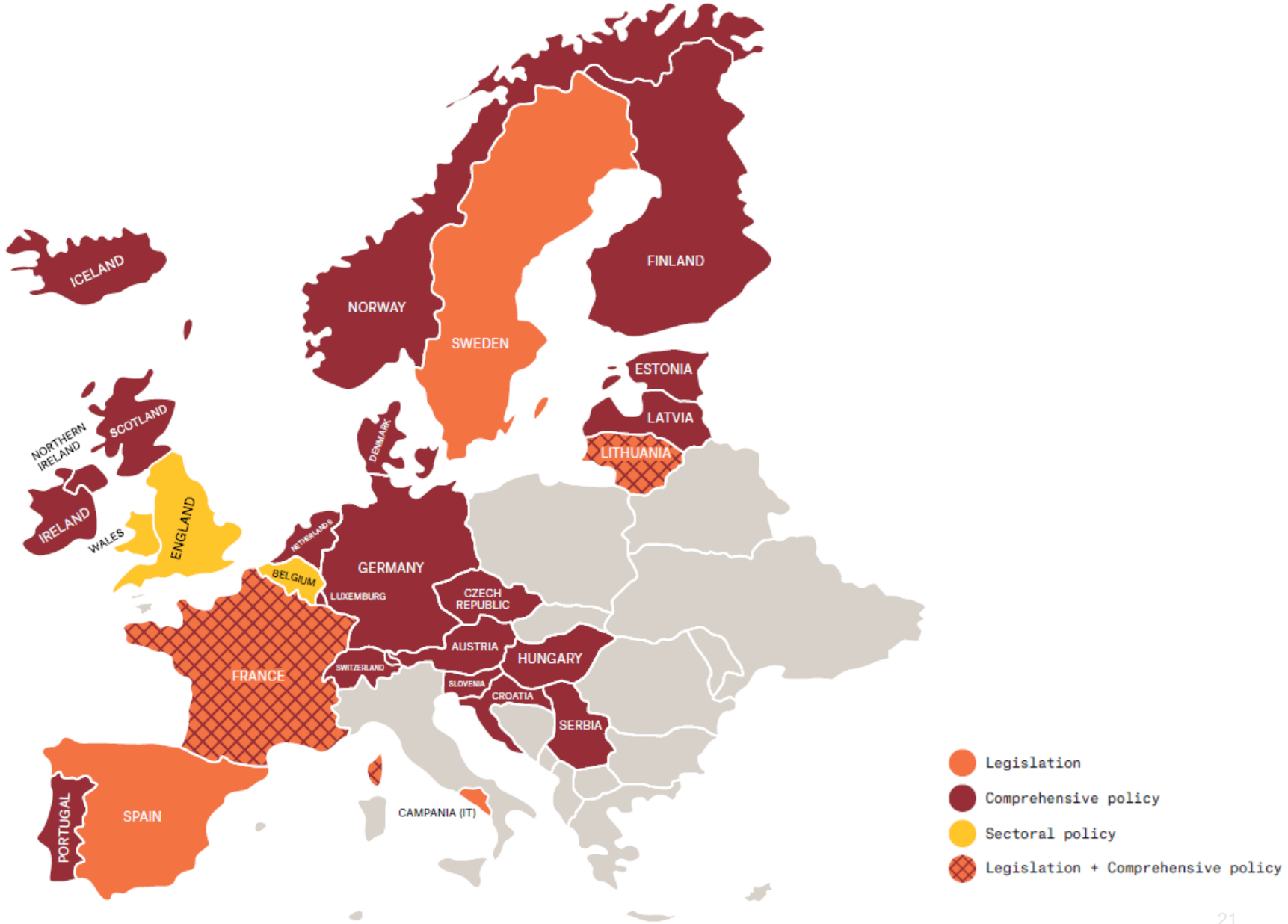
Types of official documents on architectural policy

[2023]

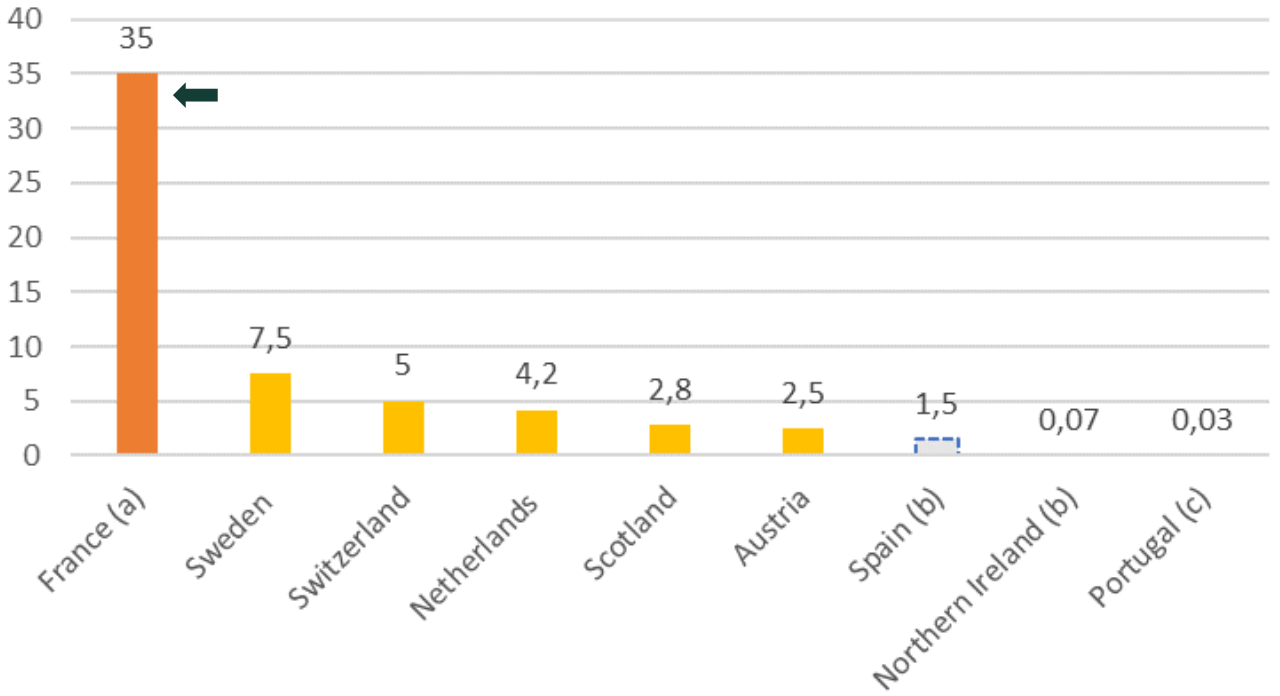


Types of official documents on architectural policy

[2025]



Architectural policy budget



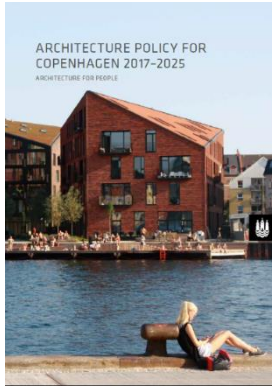
a) Including architectural and cultural heritage policy.

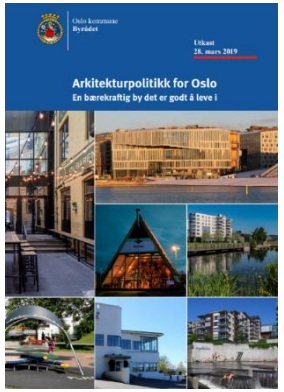
b) Estimated annual budget for architectural and design promotion.

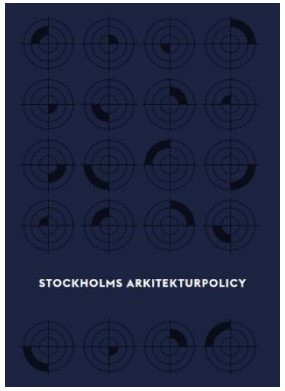
c) Annual budget for a policy educational project (2023-25)

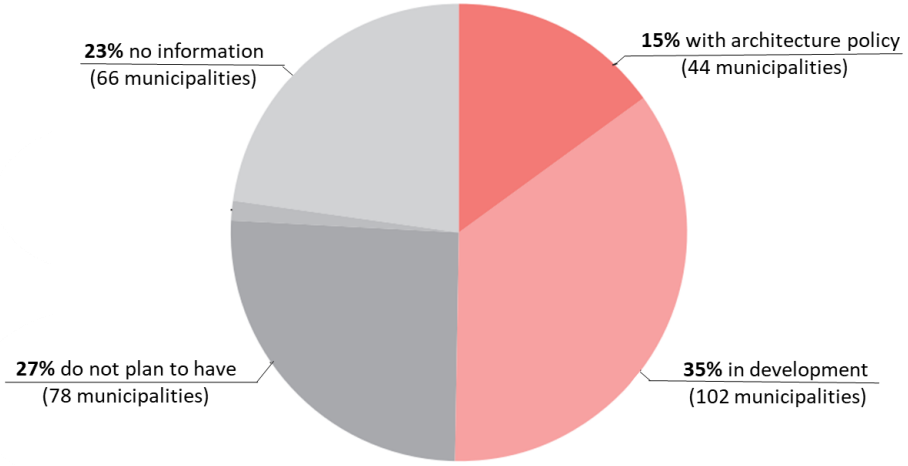
Davos (2018)
Resolution (2001)
Conclusions (2008)
Conclusions (2021)
Germany
Serbia
Spain
AT Carinthia
Switzerland
IT Campania
ES Catalonia
Austria
Slovenia
Czech Republic
Portugal
Hungary
FI Satakunta
Croatia
FI Helsinki-Uusimaa
Latvia
BE Brussels-Capital
FI Hame
Iceland
BE Wallonia
FI Southwest Finland
UK Northern Ireland
Lithuania
Luxembourg
UK Wales
Ireland
Estonia
BE Flanders
UK Scotland
UK England
Finland
Sweden
Denmark
Norway
Netherlands
France
1977
1990
1995
2000
2005
2010
2015
2020

Municipal architectural policies



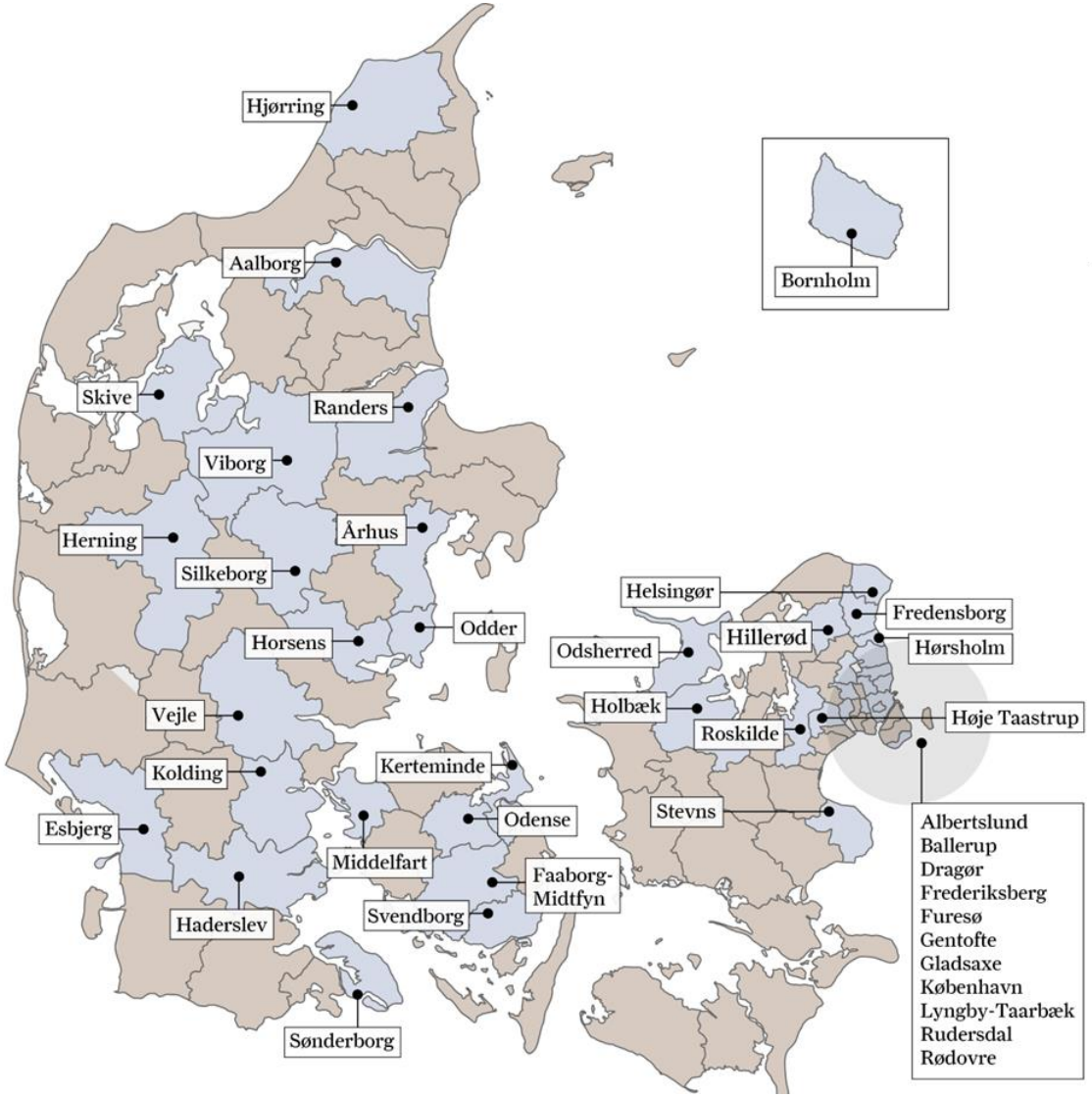






Swedish municipalities with an architectural policy (44)

or developing one (102)



Danish municipalities with an architectural policy (41)

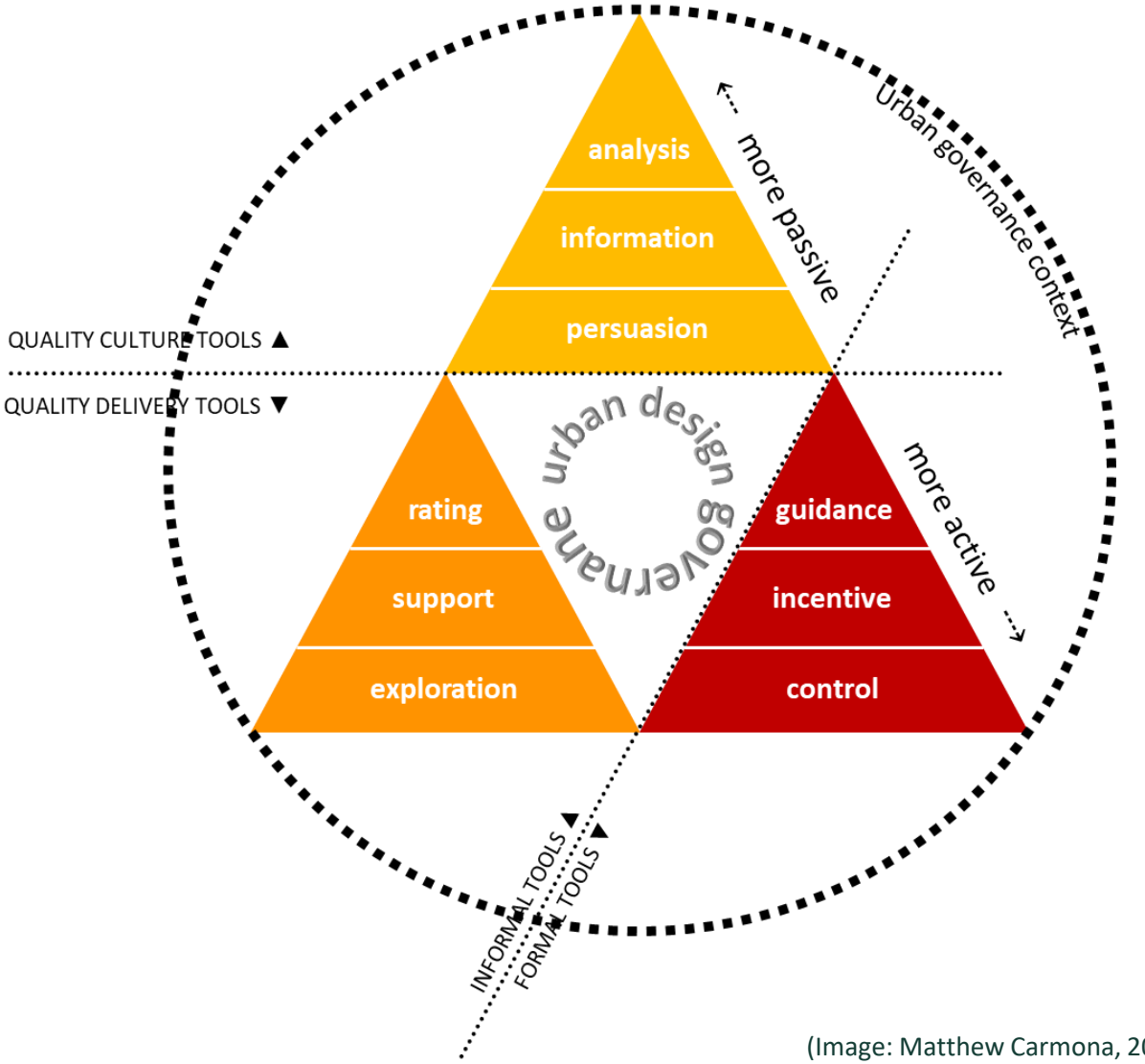
6 INSTRUMENTS AND INITIATIVES

Specific initiatives and actions

What specific initiatives / actions have been undertaken in support of the policy and/or Council Resolution on architecture quality in urban and rural environments (2001/C 73/04) objectives in terms of:

- **Improving knowledge and promotion** of architecture, urban design, landscape and cultural heritage (e.g. publications, practice guides, cases studies, web portals)?
- **Promoting awareness among the general public** in appreciation of architectural, urban and landscape culture (e.g. exhibitions, events, festivals, financial support to cultural organizations, programmes grants)?
- **Promoting awareness and training among contracting authorities** (e.g. conferences, workshops, design support, specialized training)?
- **Fostering a culture of best practice in procurement** of architectural projects (e.g. awards, support for organizing design competitions, design advisory boards)?
- **Fostering exchange of information and experience** in the field of architecture and architectural procurement (e.g. advocacy, meetings, design awards, partnerships)?

European typology of urban design governance tools



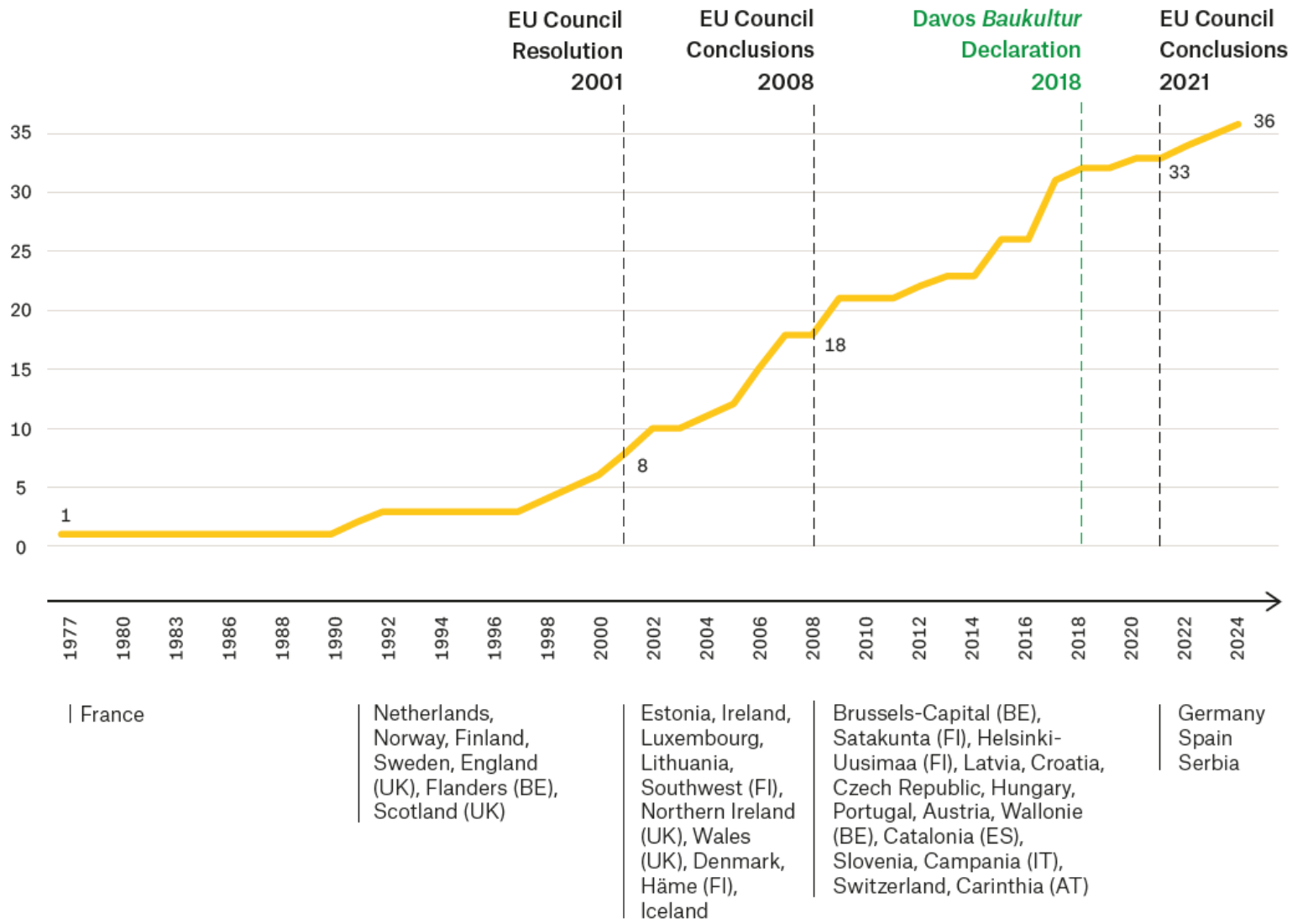
1. **Analysis tools** – evidence about how and with what consequences the built environment is shaped.
2. **Information tools** – dissemination of knowledge about good (or poor) design practices and processes.
3. **Persuasion tools** – actively make the case for particular design responses in a proactive manner.
4. **Rating tools** – allow judgements about design quality to be made in a systematic and structured manner.
5. **Support tools** – directly assisting or enabling design / development teams with particular projects.
6. **Exploration tools** – hands-on design investigations and community engagement.
7. **Guidance tools** – formally set out operational design parameters to direct the design of development.
8. **Incentive tools** – direct and indirect economic stimulation by the state.
9. **Control tools** – development- and construction-related regulation and decision-making

(Image: Matthew Carmona, 2023)

EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES ON ARCHITECTURE	INFORMAL TOOLS						FORMAL TOOLS		
	Analysis	Information	Persuation	Rating	Support	Exploration	Guidance	Incentive	Control
Resolution on Architectural Quality in Urban and Rural Environments (2001)									
Hereby encourages the Member States to:									
• intensify their efforts to improve the knowledge and promotion of architectural and urban design, and to make contracting authorities and the general public more aware of and better trained in appreciation of architectural, urban and landscape culture;	◉	◉	◉		◉				
• take into account the specific nature of architectural service in the decisions and measures which require it;							◉		
• promote architectural quality by means of exemplary public building policies;			◉	◉	◉		◉	◉	
• foster the exchange of information and experience in the field of architecture.		◉	◉						
Conclusions on Architecture: Culture's Contribution to Sustainable Development (2008)									
Calls on Member States and the Commission (…), to:									
• help develop the economic growth and employment potential of architecture, as a creative, cultural industry,								◉	
• promote education in architecture and heritage, and in the living environment, in particular through artistic and cultural education,		◉	◉						

7 IMPACT OF ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES

Implementation progress of architectural policies in Europe



8 CONCLUSIONS

Study on architectural policies in Europe

Key insights:

The importance of **governmental leadership** for creating the conditions within which a high quality built environment can flourish

Architectural polices are having substantial impacts on design governance processes, namely **improving policy coordination, facilitating cross-sectoral collaboration** across and beyond public administrations, and **enabling a diversity of tools and initiatives** promoting best practices and fostering a placemaking culture

There is a need of better **policy integration**. Sectors keep having difficulties in leaving behind their own silos and making use of spatial visions

The **lack of funding** of most policies reduces/limits their impact extent in design governance processes

Difficulties in implementing initiatives and actions without appropriate level of resources

Please do not hesitate to contact the ACE Secretariat to request hard copies of the study.

ACE will be happy to send them to you by post:

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Council des Architectes d'Europe

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Thank you
for your attention

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