

02 August 2006

Commissioner Margot Wallström  
200 rue de la Loi  
B-1049 Brussels

Dear Commissioner Wallström

We have recently become aware of the competition that the EU has launched to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. This is an auspicious moment in the history of Europe.

As the only design organisation established at the European level, (in 1969), we fully support the Commission's desire to communicate this happy fact, both externally to the citizens of Europe as well as internally to the people of the Commission, Parliament and other institutions of the EU through the creation and implementation of a special, commemorative logo.

### **The Bureau of European Design Associations**

With 32 member organisations including national design promotion centres and professional design associations from 23 of 25 Member States plus Norway and Switzerland, BEDA works to communicate to the institutions of the EU the value of design to the European economy. To this end, BEDA has run high-level, cross-DG, briefing meetings in La Bibliothèque Solvay in Brussels, published reports and taken part in EU projects to proactively promote and foster awareness of design, wherever possible, as a strategic tool for European competitiveness.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April 2005, our Vice President Michael Thomson, along with other invitees, attended a private lunch with you in the Berlaymont building during which design and brand and its potential contribution to your strategy for communicating Europe were discussed.

BEDA also works to protect the interests of the design professions at the European level and it is in this context that we write to you now.

### **Failure to meet accepted guidelines**

We wish to draw to your attention the fact that the competition for a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo, as launched by the communications agency, unfortunately falls far outside the industry guidelines for design competitions. Our concern is on two levels. Firstly, that the scheme as constructed is counter to accepted best practice and works against the progressive growth of the design industries in Europe and secondly, that it makes clear to thousands of designers across the EU that the EU itself is not aware of accepted guidelines and best practice in this area.

For example, to take one point, with regard to the Jury, in accordance with the European design community, most European guidelines recommend that a jury consist of 5 jurors or more, the majority of which should be practicing, professional designers. Moreover, the names of the jurors must be published in the call for entries, thus ensuring the transparency of the competition. There are also issues regarding copyright and intellectual property which we feel go against EU principles.

### **Guidelines**

Over the past four decades or so, the international design organisations, Icsid, Icograda and IFI<sup>1</sup>, along with the professional associations of Member States, have developed a broadly aligned set of guidelines for good practice in the running of design competitions both within the context of local or regional student competitions, as well as for national design awards. Efforts are made where

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<sup>1</sup> Icsid, the International Council for Societies of Industrial Design ([www.icsid.org](http://www.icsid.org)), Icograda, the International Council of Graphic Design Associations ([www.icograda.org](http://www.icograda.org)) and IFI, the International Federation of Interior Architects/designers, ([www.ifeworld.org](http://www.ifeworld.org)).

possible by our members to generally align these with each other. Some Member States have regulations on design and architecture competitions and some EU governments willingly follow these guidelines such as, for example, Belgium. The Flemish government frequently turns to BEDA member Design Flanders for advice when organising a design competition. This approach ensures that the processes that are set in place do not undermine the professional practice of design.

When the guidelines are followed, the whole design community, (and we include graduate and undergraduate students of design in this community), is then able to understand the requests and expectations of the competition organiser, who in return, can count on a constructive outcome that is in line with good professional practice and agreed standards of conduct.

We are happy therefore to attach some examples of guidelines for design competitions that we feel sure your communications agency might find helpful. Our hope is that in future, EU design-oriented competitions can follow industry standard practice. BEDA would welcome an opportunity to offer the knowledge and experience of its members to the Commission in this regard.

### **Concluding comments**

In upholding and promoting the professional conduct of design competitions in Europe, we have regretfully taken the step of making our members aware of the current shortcomings of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary scheme and have suggested that in the profession's best interests, for now and for the future – and particularly in the minds of young designers who may not know better – that their members do not participate in this scheme, except in the event of a late revision of the rules and regulations.

In taking this course of action, we wish to stress that this falls in line with our objectives to help the EU use and utilise design across the disciplines to improve our competitiveness in global markets. We wish to maintain, and indeed grow and deepen, our relationship with the Commission and we hope that our approach in this matter is both understandable and reasonable.

We thank you for your attention on this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Massimo Pitis  
President

PS: We understand that Icoграда's Secretary General has already written directly to the communications company Media Consulta.