
Zoom On: Simona Agger Ganassi, Chairman, EuHPN - European Health Property Network

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Dr Simona Agger Ganassi, Architect and Urban Planner, is the Chairman of the Board (2015-16) of EuHPN - European Health Property Network, in which she represents SIAIS, the Italian society of Architecture and Engineering in Health. EuHPN (www.euhpn.eu) is a foundation based in The Netherlands, created in 2000 by representatives of Health Ministries and Public Institutions of seven EU Countries, The European Investment Bank and other stakeholders from around Europe. The aim of EuHPN is to promote better standards and more effective investment in and management of health property throughout the EU by using a pool of cutting edge member knowledge.

What are your key areas of interest and research?

My interests are concentrated in two major areas. The first concerns the issues of hospitals and community health facilities planning, including their physical location appropriateness and design, the development of tools such as ex-ante evaluation of programmes, regional plans and projects, and especially ex-post evaluation to measure the results compared to the objectives of the investments.

The second area regards the development of the full potential of healthcare to contribute to environment challenges facing us in at least three ways: in their own daily activity with the application of renewable energy systems and of efficient methods in the use of energy, in the pressure they can input for more sustainability through innovation to their supply chain and in the diffusion of awareness and correct behaviour's examples to staff, patients and communities.

I am aiming to extend the EuHPN membership to Central Eastern and Southern EU Countries and increase the collaboration with networks and associations working in health and environment issues.

What are the major challenges in your field?

Regarding the planning of health facilities, it is the intrusion in the policy-making process of spurious criteria, coming from other than general

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common community goals. With regard to the energy issues it is the still low awareness of facility managers for the relevance of the matter.

In general, there is a widespread push for quick results that is combined with a tendency to take into account partial aspects of important issues, without considering the system that influences them and/or in which they will have an impact.

What is your top management tip?

Never be tired of explaining the reasons behind your strategy, evaluations and decisions. Nothing is well explained until it is well understood. In the meantime do not act as if only you have “the truth in your pocket”. Have strong leadership, but be open to listen to people who work in the field, no matter what their level in the hierarchy of management.

What would you single out as a career highlight?

At the beginning of my career, it was the favourable reception of my first book: “Urban self management – Planning for a new Society”. In recent times, my appointment as Chairman of EuHPN.

If you had not chosen this career path what do you think you would have become?

Without having concentrated my career in health structures and planning at a regional and community level, I would have developed my activity in urban planning. This means understanding the essence of the city, what makes “a city” and how to improve the physical layout for all the segments of city’s people to produce an urban socially healthy community.

What are your personal interests outside of work?

I read a lot, both essays and novels, but I also dedicate time outside work to cooking. To cook for me is a way of contributing to the wellbeing of my family but also gives me the sense of respecting the great legacy left to me by great women like my grandmother, my mother and my aunts.

Your favourite quote?

It’s Latin and from Venetian peasant wisdom: *ignoranti quem portum petat, nullus suus ventus est* (Seneca – lt. 71). In English: to him who does not know to which port he is steering, no wind is favourable.

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