Subject	**Update on ARB's Operational Activities**
Purpose	**For Note**
From	**ARB's Staff Team**

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1.   Summary

To update the Board on ARB's operational activities since the last Board meeting.

2.   Open Session

Open session. Any confidential matters will be discussed in a separate report in the confidential session.

3.   Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

- Protect the users and potential users of architects' services, and
- Support architects through Regulation

ARB's Operational Activities Report keeps the Board informed of activities which ensure that ARB meets its purpose and objectives, its statement of priorities and delivers against the Business Plan.

4.   Stakeholder Relations

Architects Council of Europe (ACE)

The ACE is composed of 43 member organisations which are the national regulatory and professional representative bodies in the EU Member States, the accession countries, Switzerland and Norway. Through its members, the ACE represents the interests of over 600,000 architects from 31 countries in Europe.

We will have attended a meeting of the Professional Qualifications Directive/Professional Practical Experience/Continuing Professional Development Working Group in late February 2020. The agenda is expected to cover the UK's exit from the EU, including ARB explaining the UK's position so far as the recognition of qualifications/registration of appropriately qualified individuals is concerned during the implementation period as well as discussions about the European Commission's proposed revisions to the guidance which underpins the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive. Further updates will be provided at the Board meeting on 5 March.

Black females in Architecture (BFA)

BFA is a network and enterprise founded to increase the visibility of black and black mixed heritage females within architectural industry and other built environment fields. In so doing, BFA aim to address issues of inequality and diversity within the industry.

On 13 February, staff heard a presentation from Selasi Setufe from Black Females in Architecture about the work and objectives of their organisation. Ms Setufe provided us with a copy of her presentation which is available to view. Following the presentation, there was a question and answer session which provided helpful information to assist with our communications, professional standards and equality work.

Climate Change Emergency

Climate change refers to a long-term change in the temperature and weather in an area. The term is often used to refer specifically to change between the mid-20th century and modern day. Given the established fact of rising global temperature and changing weather patterns and the virtual unanimity of climate scientists that the primary cause of these changes is human activity, many national governments and international agencies, including the UN, have declared that that humanity is facing an existential Climate Emergency.

We continue to consider the appropriate steps for ARB to take in respect of the Climate Change Emergency. We have already formed a Criteria working group to consider the skills architects will need in the future to meet this challenge. We are also taking steps to ensure that as an organisation we are as environmentally friendly as we can be. We are alive to the fact that we are a statutory body working to a government that has already declared a climate change emergency, so will need to investigate further whether it would be appropriate for ARB to make a declaration in its own right. It will, however, be appropriate for the Board to include this issue as part of its discussions for work to be included in the 2021 Business Plan.

Criteria Review

In July 2019 the Board decided that a targeted piece of work should be undertaken to consider the competencies required for those entering the Register in respect of fire/life safety design, and climate change.

Two working groups, one looking at fire/life safety competencies and the other looking at climate change competencies, were convened in late 2019 and commenced their work in early 2020. Work to develop competencies in this area is progressing well and it is anticipated that the recommendations of both groups will be made to the Board in May, before going out for consultation. The groups will then need to be reconvened to consider the consultation responses before making their final recommendations to the Board in Autumn 2020. Both groups will have then completed their work.

European Network of Architects Competent Authorities (ENACA)

The ENACA provides a forum for Competent Authorities with a view to improving administrative cooperation and exchanging best practice in the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (PQD). The work of ENACA also extends to the implementation of the Services Directive 2006/123 and exchanging information on legislation, procedures and standards for registration of architects in the

EU/EEA/Swiss area with a view to achieving a consistent approach across Europe.

We will have attended an ENACA meeting in late February 2020. The agenda is due to focus on the development of a common certificate for use by all competent authorities when confirming an individual's qualifications/eligibility for registration; the digitalisation of member states' registration processes and the UK's exit from the EU, which is likely to include discussions about the practicalities of operating during the implementation period. Discussions will also focus on the European Commission's revised guidance as referred to above. Further updates will be provided at the Board meeting on 5 March.

Equality & Diversity Training
Staff received equality and diversity training from Equality & Diversity UK. While all staff receive training on the law and on the expectations of ARB in this area, this was an opportunity to upskill key members of the team in key areas such as unconscious bias, recruitment, and the collection of E&D data. The Executive will be arranging for the Board to receive appropriate training this year.

Service Start
Service Start is an online intermediary for services – including architectural services.

We met with Service Start, which is a Sweden based company that provides data for online directories offering architects' services in the UK. We impressed on them the importance of only architects being included in this data, and how they could assist in the protection of title in the public interest.

Stakeholder Research
With support from a leading consultancy, we are in the process of conducting stakeholder research project to enable us to strengthen relationships, benchmark current impact, improve our activities and assess future performance. The project is focused on two main areas, awareness of ARB and views on how well we do what we do.

All field work was completed in January 2020. We have been working with the research agency to provide information to the Board on high level findings. The Board's feedback will be used to shape the final internal report. The findings of the research will be used to directly inform the Board's strategic considerations and ARB's future regulatory activity. A summary of the findings will also be published in due course.

5. **EU Exit**

Further to the UK's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020, we have reviewed and updated our Brexit website pages so that our information remains current and reflects our position during the implementation period.

We participated in the most recent EU Exit Roundtable meeting of a series which have been taking place around the UK and which were organised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; the most recent meeting took place in London and was organised specifically for institutions offering qualifications in architecture.

We have been continuing to provide technical advice and have made contributions to

Government discussions about the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

6. Communicating ARB's work

Publications
Earned media (content not directly created by ARB but by others without payment) is a highly trusted source of information. Earned press coverage enables us to inform and raise awareness of ARB and our regulatory activities with a range of stakeholders. In addition significant earned coverage in a national newspaper that will be seen by a large readership would cost thousands if the equivalent space was bought as advertising.

Since the last Board meeting on 27 January 2020, we have been referenced in a least 13 articles, published 3 news releases and responded to 4 press enquiries.

We reached out to 4 publications in order to coordinate the correction of factual errors in their content and/or educate them on the restrictions around the use of the title.

EBulletin
Our eBulletins remind the profession of their responsibilities and provide updates on decisions made by the Board as well as other information of interest and relevance to architects. Issues are published after Board meetings, which are usually held around five times a year.

The February eBulletin notification email, distributed 10 February 2020, was delivered to 41,674 architects and opened by 15,810 in the first week following publication. The February eBulletin microsite received 6,547 page views in the first week. The February eBulletin microsite was the second most popular edition since tracking began in 2015. The *Dear Architect* article was the most popular microsite article since tracking began.

To help ensure the Register is kept up to date, the eBulletin email prominently features recipient contact details together with a click through option to update. We received approximately 399 contact detail updates in the week immediately after the eBulletin was sent out compared to 84 in the previous week, an increase of 375%.

Website (arb.org.uk)
The *Prescription Process* pages hosted on the main ARB website were launched on 23 January 2020 to reflect the change to the Procedures and new supporting documentation devised by the Qualification team. The page received 52 page views in the week before launch and 171 views in the week after.

Our *Brexit* pages were also revised on 3 February 2020 following Exit Day on the 31 January 2019. The Landing page, *FAQs*, *Glossary*, *Useful Links* and *ARB Q&As on MHCLG Guidance* were all updated. The *Statistics* page will be updated shortly once the figures have been confirmed. The *Registration Routes Graphic*, which gives an overview of the current routes to registration, does not require amendment yet. The section was viewed over 500 times in the week following the update.

7. **Administration of the Register and Organisational Efficiency**

    Numbers on Register

    As of 24 February 2020, there were 42,132 architects on the Register. Of these, 9,083 were EU nationals (not including UK). 7,728 of these individuals have registered addresses in the UK. This compares with 8,926 EU nationals (not including UK) at the start of 2020 (figure from 16 January 2020), with 7,621 residing in the UK. This demonstrates that the Register is still growing and that the number of EU nationals on the Register and with addresses in the UK continues to increase.

    Of the 1,332 removed for non-payment of the retention fee at the start of the year, 648 (49%) have now been reinstated to the Register.

8. **Committee Meetings held since January Board Meeting**

    Professional Conduct Committee – 27 to 29 January 2020
    Professional Conduct Committee – 3 to 7 February 2020
    Professional Conduct Committee – 10 to 14 February 2020
    Professional Conduct Committee – 25 to 28 February 2020
    Professional Conduct Committee – 3 to 5 March 2020
    Prescription Committee – 4 March 2020

9. **Future Meetings and Events**

    Professional Conduct Committee – 23 to 27 March 2020
    Professional Conduct Committee – 30 March to 3 April 2020
    Remuneration and Appointments Committee Workshop – 9 April 2020
    Prescription Committee - 21 April 2020
    Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 22 April 2020

13. **Resource Implications**

    Only as identified in the paper.

14. **Risk Implications**

    ARB's Operational Activities Report provides the Board with an update on business activities, progress against the Business Plan, as well as highlighting any emerging risks which may impact on delivery.

    There are continued risks associated with the UK's exit from the EU which have been captured in a separate, dedicated EU Exit risk analysis. Now that the UK/EU has entered the implementation period, negotiations to agree a new deal will begin this month. We will be working closely with Government to provide technical advice as a new agreement is developed. Depending on the progress of the negotiations, as well as the scope and nature of the new agreement, we are likely to be working within a fast paced and changing environment and will face challenges in terms developing revised systems to and implementing them so that they are ready for implementation from 1 January 2021.

    As noted, the working groups looking at the competencies required in relation to life/fire

safety and climate change are making progress. As the work moves forward and the consultation is issued, it will be important to ensure that stakeholders are provided with clear information in relation to the updated requirements and proposed implementation plans, and are provided with an adequate period of time to comment on the proposals. The working groups will need to then consider the consultation responses and make adjustments to the proposals before the Board finally approves them later in 2020.

Further detail of specific risks to the organisation and in relation to operations will be provided in the confidential Registrar's report.

15. Communication

The update on ARB's operational activities, informs the Board of ARB's work and any risks which may prevent the delivery of ARB's operations.

16. Equality and Diversity Implications

None other than dealt with in the body of the paper.

17. Further Actions

These are referred to within the key points set out above.