
Press Release

25 April 2014

Passive House efficiency makes energy revolution possible

Conference in Aachen showcases cost-effective solutions for climate protection

Aachen, Germany. The building sector plays a crucial role in climate protection, with over a third of total energy consumption in industrialised countries resulting from the use of buildings. At the International Passive House Conference, taking place on 25 and 26 April in Aachen, Germany, experts from around the world will illustrate how this consumption can be reduced by up to 90 percent. The conference sessions will cover the whole spectrum of energy efficient construction and refurbishment. Examples based on current projects and approaches make it clear that Passive House technology also gives rise to considerable cost savings with almost any type of building.

"Passive House leads the way towards climate protection", affirms Johannes Rimmel, Minister for Environmental Affairs in the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). "This Standard already complies with the future norms as set out in the European Buildings Directive. In addition, building occupants are hardly affected by fluctuating energy prices". The choice of the venue for this year's International Passive House Conference is no coincidence, confirms Lothar Schneider, Director of the EnergyAgency.NRW. "North Rhine-Westphalia has become a region with model character for modern, sustainable construction and living".

In the past 20 years, many exemplary projects built to the Passive House Standard have been completed in the region of Aachen in particular. Along with a variety of residential and commercial buildings, stand several Passive House schools – a church in the nearby town of Heinsberg was retrofitted using Passive House components. "Standards far exceeding the legal requirements apply for all new builds in Aachen", says Gisela Nacken, Departmental Head of Planning and Environment of the City of Aachen. Many of the Passive House buildings in the region will also be visited as part of the conference programme.

The significance of energy efficient buildings for climate protection has also been highlighted in the latest IPCC report. Professor Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, one of the authors of

the report, which was presented a week ago, will be speaking at the International Passive House Conference in Aachen about resulting requirements for suitable construction and refurbishment. "The energy revolution isn't just about the expansion of renewable energies", pronounces Dr. Heinrich Bottermann, Secretary General of the German Environmental Foundation (DBU). The efficient use of energy is a key factor, especially with regard to climate protection.

"The Passive House Standard is a thousand-fold, proven solution with which every building owner can make a useful contribution to climate protection", explains Professor Dr. Wolfgang Feist, Director of the Passive House Institute. At the same time, Passive House is more than just a very low energy building. This Standard stands for excellent comfort, quality construction, and, above all, cost-effectiveness. "Additional investments are offset in a few years' time through saved running costs. Improving the energy efficiency of one's own building is thus an attractive investment opportunity", declares Feist.

The International Passive House Conference, organised by the Passive House Institute, has taken place since 1997 at different venues each year. The latest conference is jointly organised by the City of Aachen and the EnergyAgency.NRW. About 1000 professionals from some 45 countries are expected to attend. The first Passive House in the world was built more than 20 years ago in Darmstadt, Germany; today, this standard is internationally established. Helping drive uptake, the European Buildings Directive, which comes into effect as of 2021, sets the "Nearly Zero Energy Building" as the norm – a norm that may easily be achieved on the basis of Passive House with the addition of renewable energies. That sustainable construction can be both cost-effective and of high level architectural design will be demonstrated by the Passive House Award; this architecture prize for Passive House buildings is to be presented at the conference on 25 April.

18TH INTERNATIONAL PASSIVE HOUSE CONFERENCE 2014

Conference and accompanying Components Exhibition in the Aachen Eurogress on 25 & 26 April
Organisers: Passive House Institute, City of Aachen, and EnergyAgency.NRW

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