

Efficiency First message brought to European Union Sustainable Energy Week

Passive House best standard for NearlyZeroEnergyBuilding

Brussels/Innsbruck/Darmstadt, 22nd June 2015

The EU-Commission hosted the 10th European Union Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) in Brussels, where over 2,700 experts and policy makers from all over Europe met for three days. Günter Lang, leader of the Passivhaus Austria network, Amina Lang from the International Passive House Association and Benjamin Krick from Passive House Institute spoke to EU policy makers, EU-Commission and EU Parliament at the EUSEW, bringing this key message forward.



Source: EUSEW, Photo 1: Maroš Šefčovič, Vice President of the European Commission, Photo 2: Miguel Arias Cañete, Commissioner for Climate Action & Energy, Photo 3: Claude Turmes, MEP and President of EUFORES

Many delegates of the Policy Conference stressed the importance of energy efficiency. “To reach the 2020 energy target of least 27 % reductions, it is important to treat Energy Efficiency as a fundamental principal and to moderate energy demand”, said **Maroš Šefčovič**, Vice President of the European Commission in charge of the Energy Union. He was very optimistic to mobilise additional funding in energy efficiency over the next few years. “We can't afford to waste energy anymore”, **Miguel Arias Cañete**, Commissioner for Climate Action & Energy said at the conference's opening. “We need a peaceful divorce between economic growth and emissions. The highest potential will bring in Energy Efficiency by 49 percent. I hope this December we come to a good result at the UN-climate conference in Paris”, **Fatih Birol**, Chief Economist and Director of Global Energy Economics, International Energy Agency told the audience. “Don't cap renewables! We need energy efficiency first!” **Claude Turmes**, MEP Member of the European Parliament started his speech with a spontaneous rap. **Peter Sweatman**, EEFIG's rapporteur and CEO of Climate Strategies Partners, said that the building sector has a key role, and a concerted effort is needed to meet the Energy Efficiency and greenhouse gas targets.. Specifically, the EU building “renovation rate and depth” needs to more than double by 2020 to secure 2050 targets, he said, and private investment in EU buildings must increase by five times. Vice President Šefčovič offered an apt sum-up to the evolution that Europe is undergoing in Energy Efficiency: “The Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones, but rather because we transitioned to better solutions.” We have to do the same with energy efficiency, he urged.



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Source: Passivhaus Austria, Photo 1: Panel on Implementation of NZEBs;
Photo 2: Günter Lang, Passivhaus Austria – Jan Geiss, EUFORES – Amina Lang, iPHA;
Photo 3: Benjamin Krick, PHI – A. Lang, iPHA - G. Lang, Passivhaus Austria

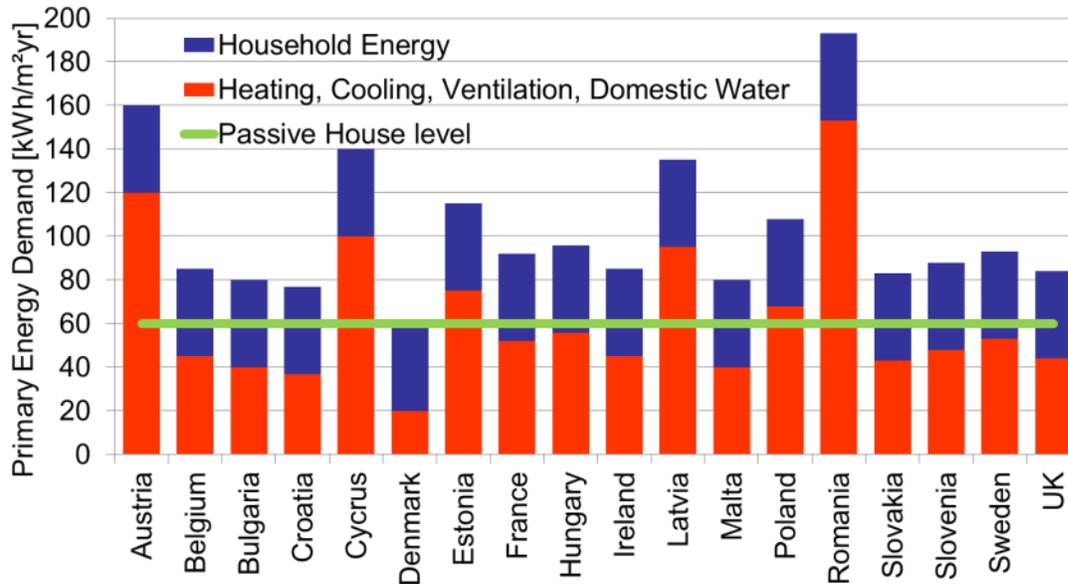
In his presentation Günter Lang, leader of Passivhaus Austria, analysed the Status of implementation of Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) into the national legislations of the 28 member-states. He showed that the Passive House is well established in Europe with more than 55,000 buildings and 60 million square meters and pointed out as well, that the Passive House is also the most efficient and economic building standard. At present, also 35 EU cities and regions, which are representing 42 million inhabitants, have signed declarations to build Passive House Standard in all their fields. The presentation had shown national developments and provided examples of NZEB/Passive House projects in order to further strengthen the implementation of the Passive House concept, single buildings, districts and whole cities or provinces as well.

The Passive House Standard, developed by European physicists in the 1990s, requires high quality building components and is designed to eliminate the need for traditional heating systems and to drastically reduce carbon emissions. Due to the defined ventilation, the air quality is perfect all the time and because of high surface temperatures of the outside walls and windows of the building, the thermal comfort is superb.

Günter Lang's presentation was timely, as a review of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) is due by the end of 2016. Three different actually studies in ordered by the EU-commission evaluated the 28 national NZEB definitions showing half with strong building regulations close to the Passive House Standard. The most ambitious country will be Denmark. On the other hand, 20% of member states have standards with a much higher energy demand. For an example Austria, who has been a frontrunner on building standards for long time, but now in only four years Austria will dramatically change his pole position to the second last place! In Austria there is a big fight from some old lobbies going on, which benefit from a less ambitious building standard. But also for the EU-commission it is very unintelligible, why Austria will not have more ambitious goals, they said at



meetings during the EUSEW. Their hope is that Austria will change its NZEB definition and regulations to more ambitious ones to have a chance as well to get more independent from fossils imports.



Graphic: Maximum primary energy demands by 2020 according to national NZEB definitions. Source: BPIE 4/2015 NZEB definitions + Passivhaus Austria supplement of Primary household energy [Measurement and reporting of statistics by countries not completely standardised yet]

Brussels rocketed up from 0 to 1,000 Passive House buildings

At the same time many cities and regions are beginning to embrace the Passive House Standard outside of national requirements. With its new “Energy Performance and Indoor Environment in Buildings Regulation”, Brussels has adopted the targets of the European EPBD. Brussels' new regulation is based on the Passive House Standard, making it mandatory for all new builds as well as retrofits (Passive House Standard + 20% energy demand) since January 2015. After the first half year the city government can show very well results. In only 7 years Brussels rocketed up from 0 to 1,000 Passive House buildings with 1,280,000 square meters. And now in 2015, neither building industry nor architects or developers collapsed, as lobbies prophesized. So Brussels is on the right track to reach the climate goals, to increase the comfort and health of its citizens and to strengthen the economy by creating green jobs.

As final speaker Dr. Krick from the Passive House Institute explained the new system to rate the buildings energy demands of renewables on one hand and energy production on the other hand. With this step the Passive House Institute placed again a milestone for a sustainable future with 100 percent renewable energy.



PM - Efficiency First top topic on EUSEW

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Links: <http://www.eusew.eu/policy-conference/highlights-2015>

<http://www.passivhaus-austria.org/>

<http://www.passivehouse-international.org/>

<http://passiv.de/>

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Press material and photos for download at:

<http://www.passivhaus-austria.org/content/presse>

