

Press Release

10 May 2017



Fully satisfied: The 21st International Passive House Conference in Vienna with more than 1000 participants from over 50 nations was a complete success. Eight excursions to 40 exciting Passive House projects in Vienna and the surrounding area were also part of the program. These participants were part of the 30km Passive House bike tour. © Passive House Austria

"You just have to use your head"

Passive House Conference 2017: clever and energy efficient buildings for everyone

Darmstadt, Germany/Vienna, Austria. Changing habits requires us to think, and it isn't easy. That's what the participants of the 21st International Passive House Conference in Vienna were challenged with during the opening plenary. Breaking old habits and sharing resources fairly is necessary in order to reduce climate change to a tolerable level, as renowned climate researcher Helga Kromp-Kolb explained. "We have to manage with just this planet", pointed out Professor Dr. Wolfgang Feist, Director of the Passive House Institute. Over 1000 participants from more than 50 countries travelled to Vienna in order to exchange information relating to energy efficient construction and learn more about international Passive House projects.

Helga Kromp-Kolb, Head of the Center for Global Change and Sustainability at the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, asked the listeners to test themselves by folding their arms and then attempting to deliberately fold them the other way around. This demonstrated that habits can not be overcome automatically, consideration is required, and as summed up by Kromp-Kolb, the construction sector is no different.

"The technology for energy efficient construction is already there, now it is all about implementing it in practice and building cleverly", explained Günter Liebel, Head of Department of the Austrian Ministry of the Environment. According to Liebel, a dialogue on energy efficient construction and building refurbishment must therefore take place also with those who have been making great profits with fossil fuels until now. Each Passive House resident is one customer less for these corporations.



Full plenum at the 21st International Passive House Conference in Vienna: Changing habits and allocating resources fairly is necessary to reduce climate change, explained the renowned climate researcher Helga Kromp-Kolb. This also applies to the construction sector. © Passive House Austria

Breaking through the system

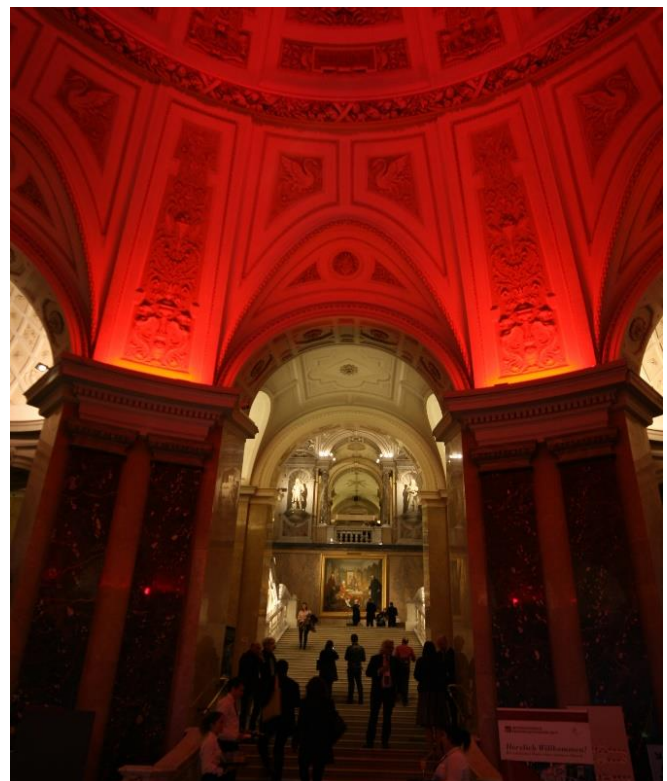
Scott Foster, Head of the Sustainable Energy Division of the Economic Commission for Europe at the United Nations, also specifically addressed traditional practices in his speech. "We must break through this system which is designed to produce and deliver more and more energy". Consumers must also be made aware of this. In general, they tend to care less about where exactly the energy used by them is coming from.

Vienna is dedicated

The city of Vienna chosen by the organisers of the Conference - the Passive House Institute with its two locations in Darmstadt and Innsbruck, and the Passivhaus Austria network - is regarded as a pioneer in energy efficient construction. With Passive House high-rises, hotels, large multi-storey buildings and student dorms, many dedicated projects exist in Vienna and the adjacent province of Lower Austria. They prove that energy efficient construction and refurbishment to the Passive House Standard is also possible for diverse user groups.

Energy efficiency for the population at large

At the 21st International Passive House Conference, the politicians in Vienna made it clear that particularly in cities there continues to be a great need for energy efficient living space to be made available, also for the general public. The Director of the Passive House Institute, Professor Dr. Wolfgang Feist emphasised that the Passive House concept is simple and cost-effective, and meets the requirements of users for healthy living and comfort.



Another highlight of the conference: The evening event at the Vienna Natural History Museum. © Passive House Institute



The Passive House exhibition at Messe Wien Congress Center, which takes place alongside the conference. More and more manufacturers are certifying their products. There are now over 870 certified Passive House components in the Passive House component database. © Passive House Institute

Healthy housing and sustainability

At the same time, the low demand for heating energy among other things also fulfils the criteria for sustainability. In addition, Passive House buildings can be built in any place in the world and can be adapted to individual requirements. According to Feist, "the Passive House Standard is affordable and feasible for everyone; you just have to use your head a little bit".

"You just have to use your head"

Another focal point of the Conference was the more than 100 presentations by speakers from over 50 countries. This demonstrates the exciting projects that are being built to the energy efficient Passive House Standard throughout the world. This included presentations on the sustainable "5-Euro-Wohnbau" project from the Neue Heimat Tirol social housing company, a lecture on the Tochoji Passive House Temple in Tokyo and a mobile Passive House with 40 square metres of living space from a 3D printer. At the same time, experts also dealt with important issues relating to energy efficient building construction. The topics of the 16 working groups included the combination of Passive House with renewable energy, high-rise buildings to the Passive House Standard, like the Cornell Tech in New York and the "Bolueta" in the Spanish city of Bilbao, projects involving retrofitting to the Passive House Standard and many other international projects.

Many new Passive House components

At the accompanying Passive House specialist exhibition in the Messe Wien Congress Center, around 100 companies displayed their products for energy efficient construction, including windows, attic staircases, insulation materials, pet doors and of course ventilation units with heat recovery. A growing number of manufacturers are now having their products certified as Passive House components. Over 870 products are currently listed in the Component Database of the Passive House Institute. Many new products were certified especially in the last year, explained Professor Wolfgang Feist.

The time is right for intelligent construction

For the organisers of the Conference, it is also important that potential building owners receive first-hand information. This year too, the Homeowners Forum during the specialist exhibition again offered numerous interested persons the opportunity to obtain information about energy efficient construction and retrofitting.

Excursions to more than 40 buildings

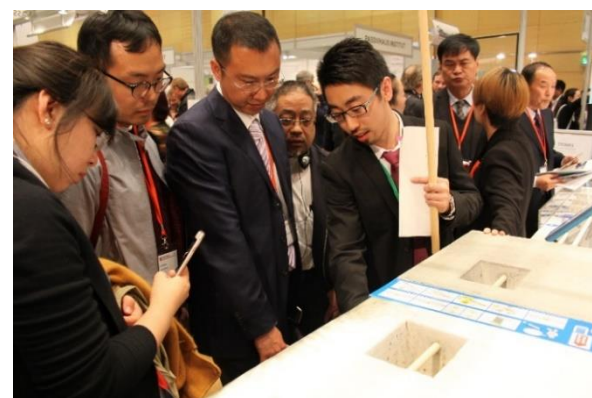
After the 21st International Passive House Conference, participants of the eight excursions in total were able to gain an impression of the different Passive House projects. The visits to more than 40 buildings of a high architectural standard in Vienna and Lower Austria also highlighted the conference theme "Passive House for all!" In two excursions, participants travelled in an environmentally friendly manner via the underground and with bikes. Many workshops and the basics course "Passive House – A Contribution to Climate Protection" took place prior to the Conference.

See you again in 2018 in Munich!

The first International Passive House Conference was held in 1996 in Darmstadt, Germany, the city where in 1991 building physicist Wolfgang Feist built the world's first Passive House building. Ever since then, the Passive House Institute has been holding the event in a different city. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the pilot project in Darmstadt last year, the Conference returned to its place of origin. Next year the 22nd International Passive House Conference and the accompanying exhibition will take place on 9 and 10 March 2018 in Munich.



Prof. Wolfgang Feist (l.) in conversation at the conference. Certified Passive House windows at the exhibition.



Around 100 exhibitors took the opportunity to present themselves to a large and international audience at the Passive House exhibition in Vienna.

Photos (4): Passive House Institute



The Passivhaus Institute, together with Passivhaus Austria (picture), invited participants to Vienna. © PHI



'Passive House for All' was the focus of the 21st Passive House Conference in Vienna. © PHI



Three Passive House presentations (f.l.t.r.): Passive House Temple Tochoji in Tokyo (© Tochoji Temple), mobile Passive House from the 3D printer (© PHI) and Passive House high-rise Cornell Tech in New York (© Lester Ali).



Excursion to the Passive House multi-family complex in Vienna's Raxstraße with a pool on the roof. © PHI

The 21st International Passive House Conference was supported by the following:

BUNDESKANZLERAMT  ÖSTERREICH (Patronage)



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General information

Passive House

A Passive House is a building that does not require any conventional building heating on account of its excellent thermal insulation. Such buildings are called "passive houses" because a major part of their heating demand is met through "passive" sources such as solar radiation or the waste heat from occupants and technical appliances. A Passive House thus consumes about 90 percent less heating energy than existing buildings and 75 percent less energy than an average new construction.

Passive House & COP22 in Marrakesh 2016

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) explicitly mentions Passive Houses as a key possibility to increase the energy efficiency of buildings and thus reduce global warming, => see "The Emissions Gap Report 2016", pages 32 + 35.

https://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/theme/13/Emissions_Gap_Report_2016.pdf

Pioneer Project

The first Passive House in the world was built in Darmstadt-Kranichstein (Germany) 25 years ago by four private homeowners on their own personal initiative. With its newly installed photovoltaic system, the world's first Passive House now utilises renewable energy and received the Passive House Plus certificate for this reason.

Passive House and renewable energy

The Passive House Standard can be combined well with on-site renewable energy generation. Since April 2015, the new building classes "Passive House Plus" and "Passive House Premium" have been available for this supply concept.

Pictures for editorial purposes: www.flickr.com/photos/passive-house-institute
To get the latest news relating to Passive House, visit: www.twitter.com/IGPassivhaus

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