

September 2014

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# activehouse newsletter

## News



### Active House Alliance Symposium at the WSB14 in Barcelona

The World Sustainable Buildings 2014 Conference is taking place on 28-30 October 2014 in Barcelona. Among 144 sessions offered by the conference, three sessions will be organised by the Active House Alliance and several others will include presentations about the Active House concept, tools and cases. The 5th Active House Symposium will be organised on 29 October at 10.00 - 13.30 with two sessions focusing on the Active House concept and potential ([session 40](#)) and showcasing experiences and best practices in the field ([session 58](#)). The event organised by the Active House Alliance on 30 October ([session 137](#)) will further elaborate the topics of environment, energy, comfort, city development and tools with the objective to discuss how sustainable buildings can be developed further to become the standard solutions for all kinds of buildings, from public buildings to private single family houses. Active House Alliance will be present also at the exhibition area to showcase their solutions and engage in conversations with the participants of the WSB14.

To register for the Symposium and the World Sustainable Buildings 2014 Conference, please click [here](#).

### Active House Alliance Canada launched

On 18 September the Active House Alliance welcomed the launch of its new chapter: Active House Alliance Canada. The Active House concept was first introduced to Canada with the demonstration project inaugurated in October 2013. The house built and situated in Thorold, Ontario, a community located near the Niagara Region was achieved through a collaboration between the award-winning Toronto architecture firm Superkül, VELUX and Great Gulf Homes, the builder committed to bringing the Active House concept to Canada. Their second Active House is already underway in Etobicoke, to be followed soon by a series of models designed by a variety of architects for a different look and feel. The launch ceremony of the Active House Alliance Canada in Toronto was attended by HRH the Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark and the Minister of Trade in Denmark, Mogens Jensen. The Minister focused on the value of international cooperation between countries and companies and congratulated the alliance for its development. The



establishment of the Canadian Active House Alliance is an important step towards development of Active House projects in Canada and North America. It is the intention to grow the alliance and to attract organisations and individuals who want to create healthy and comfortable buildings without causing negative impact on the environment. Membership comes with the privilege of drawing knowledge of the experience of a large international group of creative, innovative and dedicated specialists. Membership also brings responsibility to challenge ourselves to build homes that give more than they take in the context of the environment and the well-being of homeowners.



## AktivPlus Annual Meeting on new building standards gained interest in Germany

AktivPlus eV, a non-profit initiative of planners and scientists with the aim to develop sustainable standards for buildings and neighbourhoods in the construction and property sector in Germany, organised its Annual Meeting on 18 September in Frankfurt. During the morning the membership assembly discussed about the direction the AktivPlus standards should take, while the afternoon session included keynotes from prominent academics and platforms for exchange of knowledge. The event, which looked into “Standards for buildings and neighbourhoods in 2050” along with four targeted workshops dedicated to users, energy, connectivity (net) and Life Cycle Analysis (LLC) was a great success. More than 80 participants were involved in the fruitful discussions and the young association gained 15 new members, who will become ambassadors of the AktivPlus principles of optimising the energy consumption, living comfort and interaction with the users while respecting the environment.

For more information about the AktivPlus eV see [here](#).

## Active House Alliance at Solar Decathlon

The Solar Decathlon Europe is a regular international competition that challenges teams to design and build houses powered exclusively by the sun. This year the exhibition took place in Paris between 28 June and 14 July and two of the projects: the Danish project “EMBRACE” from DTU and the winner of the competition “RHOME for DenCity” from Universita Degli Studi di Roma have been evaluated based on the Active House principles and radar. Several members of the Active House Alliance supported the projects either with knowhow or technical solutions, including Politecnico di Milano, Technical University in Denmark DTU, Grundfos, Saint Gobain and VELUX.



## European Commission published a Communication on resource efficiency opportunities in the building sector

On 2 July 2014 the European Commission published its Circular economy package which includes a Communication on Resource efficiency opportunities in the building sector. The main objectives of this Communication – as defined by the Commission - are to enhance the use of building materials in more efficient way and to reduce the total

environmental impacts throughout the full life-cycle of buildings. As next step, the Commission will develop clearly defined and measurable indicators for building performance and a supporting framework for implementation in order to develop a transparent and comparable information system for Europe where the input is based on “empirical and reliable” data. Active House Alliance issued a press release welcoming the Communication. For more information and the AHA Press Release see [here](#).

Following the publication of the Communication, the Europe Regional Network of the World Green Building Council has collected a series of Stakeholder Views, including an article from the Active House Alliance. For the full Active House article on “Buildings Can Give More Than They Take” by Kurt Emil Eriksen, Secretary General of the Alliance see [here](#).

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## Declaration 2050 Imperative for sustainable built environments



UIA World Congress, Durban 2014  
DECLARATION 2050 IMPERATIVE

With the participation of Active House Alliance, the International Union of Architects (UIA) agreed on the Durban Declaration 2050 Imperative to exercise leadership in sustainable construction at the UIA World Congress held in Durban, South Africa on 6 August 2014. With the declaration, partners intend to send a strong message to the world of their commitment to a truly sustainable and equitable future. Recognising that architects have a central role in planning and designing the built environment, the group devoted itself to designing sustainable, resilient, carbon-neutral and healthy built environments in cities and towns and defined core actions to be promoted. The declaration is a timely message ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings scheduled for 2015 in Paris, where the world’s high level decision makers will discuss next steps on how to further reduce fossil fuel CO2 emission – including that of buildings.

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## Quarterly Interview



The Active House Alliance launched its Canadian chapter on 18 September in Toronto. Great Gulf with the leadership of its President & COO, Tad Putyra, was one of the partners who helped to establish the new chapter of the Active House movement.

### **What was the reason behind Great Gulf Homes’ involvement with the Active House Alliance?**

Great Gulf has closely followed the Active House programme since its inception. Our biggest interest was in the fact that it goes beyond just environmental friendliness and also addresses the well-being of the home owner.

Based on the similarities between the principles of the Active House concept and Great Gulf Homes’ ambitions, we

believed that taking part in the launch of the Active House Alliance in Brussels as a founding member back in 2010 could be to our benefit. We have also realised that the Canadian housing industry could equally profit from the commitments of the Alliance and therefore, we started working on a related new Canadian chapter.

### **What experiences have you gained from the first Active House demonstration project?**

The first Active House in Canada was completed last autumn. We followed the Active House

principles very closely, however it became clear to us very quickly that although the challenges we faced were global, we had to develop our own local solutions. We have also learned that this house, like any other concept product, needs to appeal to the consumer not just through performance, but exceptional design that matches the innovative technologies as well. Forcing new technologies and new ideas into a commodity product most likely will not succeed, which is why projects like this need to be addressed in an extremely holistic way. Taking this lesson as a basis, together with the Alliance, Velux Canada and other industry partners we decided to establish a new Canadian chapter of the Active House movement, which can better focus on these specific needs.

### **How would you assess the progress of the housing industry towards sustainable buildings concepts in Canada?**

The housing industry in Canada has made much progress in improving the quality of homes in recent years. We are building homes that are being constructed better and with higher energy efficiency. Special recognition must be attributed to the national and provincial building codes for raising the bar for the industry and also the tireless work of numerous industry association must be recognized as well in introducing energy efficiency programs. As a direct result, we have created an industry that has high standards in both quality of construction and environmental sustainability. I believe that we have a good foundation for creating buildings which will not only be environmentally friendly but also healthier and safer for users.

### **How can we move on with the sustainable buildings concepts in Canada?**

Simply, we have to make them attractive to the home owners. Homes with good performance, healthy climate and outstanding design will be recognised by buyers and ultimately help us promote our vision.

### **What are the intentions with active house designs in Canada?**

The Active House design of environmentally friendly buildings filled with fresh air, natural light and open space contributes positively to the user's health and well-being while respecting the surrounding environment. Active House members in Canada will be the ambassadors of this vision and will be responsible to design homes that meet these requirements. In order to help the Alliance partners getting the concept right, Active House Canada will provide a platform for continuous exchange of experiences and knowledge between its large international group of creative, innovative and dedicated specialists.

### **Who and how can become a member of the Canadian Active House Alliance chapter?**

The Active House Alliance includes companies and organisations from the construction sector as well as manufacturers, architects, engineers and research and knowledge centers from the field. In order to become a member of the Canadian chapter of the Alliance, applicants need to fulfil the same criteria as those joining the Association in Europe: being supportive to the vision of Active House and committed to take an active role in promoting the concept.

## **From the Alliance**

### **Alliance welcomes new Members**

**Kompetenzzentrum Gesundes Bauen** (Competence Centre Healthy Building), a part of the Austrian Academy of Occupational Medicine and Prevention (Österreichische Akademie für Arbeitsmedizin und Prävention) joined the Alliance in September. The main focus of the Competence Centre is on human health and psychological well-being within the building sector, as an additional perspective to current developments such as energy and ecology. Its approach is based on analysing the effects of buildings on human health and psychological well-being and giving recommendations concerning the planning and construction of "healthy buildings", which improve health and well-being of the inhabitants. Based on more than 30 years of experience within the field of occupational medicine, the Competence Centre possesses a rich expertise in the area of factors



influencing on health, productivity and well-being of human beings.

**Tiles & Bricks Europe (TBE)** also joined the Alliance in September. TBE represents industry associations and companies from 22 European Union Member States plus Norway, Russia and Switzerland. The association promotes the interests of the clay brick and tile industry in Europe. It provides a forum for its members to exchange information on technical development, sustainable construction, climate change, resource efficiency and other emerging issues.



If you are interested in becoming a member, please e-mail the [secretariat](#) for more information.



## MoU with the Good Homes Alliance

On 12 August 2014 the Active House Alliance signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK-based Good Homes Alliance. The Good Homes Alliance is a group of housing developers, building professionals and sustainability experts whose aim is to build and promote sustainable homes and communities, and to transform the whole of mainstream UK house building into a sustainable endeavour. Given the complimentary interest of both groups it was decided to sign a reciprocal membership arrangement.

## Interesting Case

Do you have an Active House case you would like to share with other website viewers? Please feel free to upload your case to our website. It's free and easy. Follow these simple [instructions](#).



## Events



### 5th Active House Symposium

The "5th Active House Symposium - The lessons learned and next steps with the Active House design" will take place during World Sustainable Building Conference held in Barcelona on 28-30 October 2014.

The symposium will take place on 29th October from 10.00 - 13.30. The Symposium will be divided into two sessions focusing on the lessons learned and will look forward and debate how the know-how from first Active Houses can be used in the future projects. Further to this the Active House Alliance will organise a session debate on Active House and tools on 30th October from 12.00 to 13.30.



### 30th International PLEA Conference

PLEA is an autonomous, non-profit, network of individuals sharing expertise in the arts, sciences, planning and design of the built environment. Founded in 1981, PLEA (Passive and Low Energy Architecture) organises international

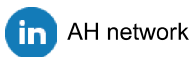
conferences and workshops; expert group meetings and consultancies; scientific and technical publications; architectural competitions and exhibitions. The goal of the 30th International PLEA Conference (PLEA 2014) is to promote discussion and debate on the learnings, opportunities and challenges in passive low energy architecture and design in a rapidly growing world. The programme will include a presentation on Active House.

## Members



Become a member of the Alliance

## Press and communication



**activehouse**.INFO  
NETWORK AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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