

December 2014

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activehouse newsletter

News



Circular Economy will remain a priority for the EU in 2015

On the 16th of December along with the presentation of the European Commission's Work Programme for 2015, Frans Timmermans, First Vice President of the European Commission, responsible for Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights confirmed that among others, the Waste Proposal published as part of the Circular Economy package on 1 July earlier this year is to be withdrawn. At the same time, it has been claimed that a more ambitious and holistic initiative will be put on the table next year, which would better reflect the principles of the circular economy concept. It is also to find the right way that this proposal could directly contribute to the Commission's first priority: creating growth and jobs. After the Commission's announcement, it is expected that the Communication on Resource efficiency in the building sector would equally be better reflected in the new proposal, which would be approached in a "circular way and not just half a way". In the conclusions of the Environment Council, which took place after the Commission's announcement on the 17th of December, Ministers also stressed the importance of continuing work on the circular economy package and on the waste review in particular, building on the work done so far.

Successful Active House Alliance Symposium in Barcelona

On the 29th of October, the Active House Alliance held its 5th annual Symposium within the framework of the World Sustainable Building 2014 Conference in Barcelona, where during three days 145 sessions and 50 parallel events attracted more than 2 170 participants. The purpose of the Symposium was to discuss how to raise awareness on the sustainable built environment and mainstream sustainable building solutions. Along the event politicians, authorities, industry and investors had the opportunity for contributing to the debate and exchange best practices with special attention to Active House solutions and related tools. The conclusions of the session included the necessity of awareness-rising to the values of sustainable buildings, together with the value of indoor climate and productivity. It

was also highlighted that making these values visible for the investors and occupants is essential. Participants agreed that we should use the methodologies available already today, and architects, investors and occupants must set a target for sustainability in the early design process, in order to use this target as a dialogue tool during the design process and to avoid higher costs later in the process. Furthermore, the panel emphasized that buildings should be seen as an element in the cities and neighbourhoods – where evaluation is done –, and we should avoid sub optimization on specific topics, like integration of renewable energy. Finally, climate renovation in order to create real impact also received strong focus during the discussions. Along the three days, the Active House boost has gained interest among participants and all the USB sticks with the Active House Radar tool and the Specifications has been sold out. For the Active House Press Release on the Symposium, see [here](#).



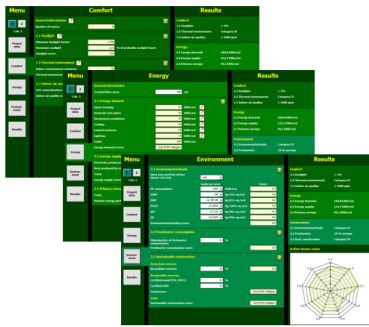
Danish Active House Alliance launched

On the 29th of October, the Danish Active House Association was launched at the Building Green conference in Copenhagen. The Danish Active House is the third national branch after the Netherlands, and Canada founded in order to spread the vision to local building designers and constructors, who are implementing the Active House principles on the national housing markets. The seven funding partners including members of the international Alliance are dedicated to promote the vision and the related specific knowhow across the country through targeted trainings and regular exchange of knowledge between partners. The Danish network is also planning to establish a new, easily accessible classification with a special focus on small and medium-sized buildings. These would equally include homes, offices and public buildings both under construction and renovation. The suggested sustainability rating is expected to evaluate a given building on the basis of three main parameters: Comfort, Energy, and Environment, which are the key pillars of the holistic Active House vision. For the Active House press release on the Danish Active House launch, see [here](#).

Funding member of Active House Canada wins Wood Works Award in Toronto

Following the 18th of September, when Active House Alliance welcomed the launch of its new chapter: Active House Alliance Canada, Great Gulf, funding member of the Association won Wood WORKS! Award in Canada in the Residential Wood Design category with its “Great Gulf Active House”. Wood WORKS! is a national, industry-led initiative of the Canadian Wood Council that promotes and supports the use of wood in all types of construction. The objective is to encourage the use of wood and wood products in construction projects, and to acknowledge the contribution of wood-use advocates and industry leaders. For more information on the project and the Active House philosophy, see a video and an interview with Tad Putyra, president and COO at Great Gulf [here](#).





New Active House tools and Guidelines

The Active House Alliance has developed a Guideline for designing Active Houses, as well as a tool for Calculation of Active House projects. The Guideline will be uploaded on the Active House homepage at the beginning of January and interested parties will be able to download it free of charge. The first version will follow the same structure as the Active House Specification, of which the Alliance shared a draft version a year ago giving people the possibility to test and evaluate it, in order to have an open source and large involvement by the industry and partners. The Calculation tool will equally be made available on our homepage soon. This tool can be used along the calculation of the ambitions of Active House projects. Members of the Alliance will have full authorisation to use the tool, whereas non-members will be entitled to a "30 days trial version". Thereafter a password will be required that are given to member on an individual basis.

Webinar on Designing & Living in Mediterranean Active House

On the 24th of September Active House held a free webinar entitled "Designing & Living in Mediterranean Active House: assessment on climate and users impact on energy and indoor comfort". During the session the Alliance welcomed its guest speaker Ing Arianna Bramilla from the Department A.B.C. of Politecnico di Milano. Ms Bramilla presented the robustness of the Active House Specification (AHS) solution, which tries to keep a universal validity and a wide adaptation for buildings. Recently the AHS has been tested in three different Italian cities from a very hot climate to a more continental one including Palermo, Roma and Milan, and related results have been discussed during the interactive webinar. The objective of the dialogue was to better understand the resilience that an Active House could provide according to different users scenarios both from an energy point of view and the indoor comfort. For the presentation at the Webinar, see [here](#).

Quarterly Interview



Today, the world is facing many environmental challenges. Meanwhile there is a need to meet essential human needs for healthy, comfortable indoor climate. Active House seeks to respond to these needs and its Specifications represent the next generation in sustainable buildings with a focus on user well-being. The Specifications got particular attention during the last months along the Active House Symposium and a related Webinar, furthermore, our members are currently developing the Active House Specification for Offices. Carsten Østergård Pedersen is one of the key figures for this latter endeavor of the Alliance.

What is exactly Active House Specification and what does it

focus on?

The Specifications is a guideline in how to balance your building the right way – taking energy, environment and comfort into consideration. I personally call it “sustainable comfort”. For many years energy efficiency has been achieved by compromising the comfort of the people living or working within. This is not a sustainable way forward and in the end it can also have negative consequences on the health and performance of the people.

More specifically the Specifications are based on the most ambitious legal standards (and coming standards). In all 3 areas (comfort, energy and environment) 3 sub-areas are defined that all have a specific value to meet, before being categorized as an Active House/Building. From this lowest level, 3 higher levels have been defined (4 levels in total) before the best-in-class level can be reached - e.g. the annual energy demand must be maximum 120 kWh/m² in an office building, before it can be perceived as an Active House/Building on this criteria, next levels are <80 kWh/m², < 60 kWh/m² and finally best-in-class are defined as <40kWh/m².

What are the important issues to consider when creating an Active House and how are they included in the Specification?

As mentioned, the most important thing is to balance the building, but the demands can of course change from building to building. We should achieve the right level of this “sustainable comfort”, meaning that we should not compromise comfort/health criteria to achieve the demanded energy savings.

Do these issues only incorporate technical specifications or do they also go further reflecting the holistic approach of the Active House vision?

The holistic thinking is all what the Active House principles is all about – balancing the technical specifications/criteria.

Is there any concrete tool that measures the level of ambition of the three Active House principles that the Specification is based on?

The Active House Radar is a very simple tool that takes the most relevant things into consideration. You very quickly get an overview of where your building is over- and underperforming by typing in measures on daylight, thermal comfort, air supply, humidity, energy consumption, environmental loads, freshwater consumption etc. This is very relevant for both the design phase and for improving the building later on.

How do Active House members as Grundfos work with Active House Specification and how does the Active House Radar function in the practice?

For us in Grundfos the most important thing is that the Active House principles will become a standard way of constructing and renovating buildings. Whether LEED, BREEAM, DGNB etc. is used for the purpose, does not really matter. We just believe that the Active House Specifications, including the Guideline and Radar tool make it much easier and cheaper for everyone to build in a sustainable way, making it a big contribution in reaching the environmental goals being set up by governments around the world. New buildings in Grundfos and numerous renovation projects also support the Active House Principles, stimulated by our ambitious targets on CO₂, but again with the ambition not compromise comfort.

Who can have access to the Active House Specification and the Radar diagram?

The Specifications and the Radar diagram are available for all and can be used and downloaded free of charge from the homepage of the Alliance [here](#). To set up a Radar you need to create an account and you will be redirected to the Radar creation page after you have logged in. You will then be able to add a Radar to an existing case on the website, as well.

From the Alliance

Alliance welcomes new Members

HouseMachine joined Active House in October 2014. The company was created through the successful



implementation of the project "The First Multi-Comfort House in Belarus", which embodies the best European experience in the design and construction of buildings, the relevant sustainable development, taking into account local climatic, economic and socio-cultural conditions. Architect Alexander Kucheravy and builder Alexei Tarnagurski united for further implementation sustainable architecture ideas. The main activities of the company are as follows: 1) design and construction of buildings energy efficiency class A + from the wooden I-beams 2) design solutions to achieve the best options for comfort living, energy efficiency, impact on the environment with economically reasonable price 3) analysis of existing projects and buildings in order to adapt them to the optimal parameters 4) check the quality of construction of buildings with Blower Door Test and thermal camera imaging and 5) educational activities and exchange of experience. The general goal of the team at the moment is the realization of sustainable development principles based on a modular architecture.

Dostupne Zhito Ukrainy also joined the Alliance in October. The "Dostupne Zhitlo Ukrainy" building cooperative's team of specialists have been on the housing market of Ukraine since 1998, having built over 550 residential units (individual houses, mostly) throughout various regions of the country. The same year they have completed training courses in Winnipeg, MB, CANADA on the use of wood framing techniques in residential homes, conducted by OLYMPIC Building Systems LTD. Their engineers have been certified by MiTek Industries spol. s.r.o. and use specialized software and equipment to maintain the production capacity of one house per day. The cooperative's main goal is to create a highly technological, industrialized type of residential housing in accordance with the world standards of economy, ecology, reliability and sustainability that is financially available to most of Ukrainian families. So far there are 10 different house models that they offer, although any individual project can be customized up to the client's needs and modern technological advance, and built in the timeframe of less than 6 months. Financial programs that their non-profit cooperative offers to its members provide the flexibility and reasonable savings.



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

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](#).

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NETWORK AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Events



BAU 2015 – Trade Fair for Architecture, Materials and Systems in Germany

The World's Leading Trade Fair for Architecture, Materials and Systems, BAU 2015 hosted by the Messe Muenchen International and believed to attract around 23 5000 people will open its doors to the public on the 19th of January 2015

for 6 days in Munich, Germany. The members of AktivPlus eV, which is 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, will use this occasion to engage with relevant players and raise awareness on its endeavour. The trade fair and exhibition will also be a good opportunity for representatives of authorities, academia and industry to network and showcase best practises besides specifically discussing future sustainable building standards aiming to find the right balance between the three core elements: energy, user and integration. The German Association and Platform AktivPlus eV, which is spreading similar values to Active House and closely collaborating with it, will present at the event with a variety of lectures on sustainable building solutions.

More information is available [here](#).



European Nearly Zero Energy Buildings Conference in Austria

The coming years will see a sharp increase in the market uptake of highly efficient buildings supplied by renewable energy throughout Europe. According to the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, all new buildings must be "nearly zero energy buildings" by 2020 (public buildings already by 2018). A "nearly zero energy building" (NZEB) is a building that has a very high energy performance and the very low amount of energy required is covered to a very significant extent by energy from renewable sources. On the topic a high level European conference will be organized during the World Sustainable Energy Days in Well, Austria on 26th-27th February 2015. The conference will focus on national developments and implementation and the definition of NZEB. Speakers will include among others representatives from the Building Performance Institute Europe and the Global Building Performance Network. The Active House Alliance will equally join the event with a poster presentation.

More information is available [here](#).



Healthy Builders Europe 2015 in the Netherlands

Healthy Buildings 2015 Europe will take place between the 18th - 20th of May and is a conference organized by the Dutch Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate (ISIAQ.nl) and the Eindhoven University of Technology, under the auspices of ISIAQ International. With Healthy Buildings 2015 Europe the aim is to provide a platform where participant elaborate the boundaries of a good (healthy) indoor environment and open views and gain knowledge from

adjacent scientific fields. At the same time new developments and research results will be acknowledged and presented. The conference will be built around six adjacent fields including Design & technology, Politics, policy & law, Behaviour & environmental psychology, Energy & sustainability, Sources & exposure, and Physical responses & physiology; on which keynotes and workshops will be organised. The programme will include an interactive workshop on Active House.

More information is available [here](#).



2nd AktivPlus Symposium in Germany

AktivPlus eV will organize its 2nd AktivPlus Symposium on the 21st of May 2015 in Stuttgart, Germany within the framework of the Clean Energy Building 2015 International Trade Fair & Conference. AktivPlus eV is a non-profit initiative of planners and scientists with the aim to develop sustainable standards for buildings and neighborhoods in the construction and property sector in Germany. At the Symposium the current state of play of the standards aiming to find the right balance between the three core elements: energy, user and integration, will be presented. Respecting these aspects, AktivPlus buildings strive to optimize energy consumption, living comfort and interaction with the user thereby relieving the environment. However, this optimization faces several challenges, which the session will elaborate. The programme will equally include a presentation on Active House.

More information will be available [here](#).



European Sustainable Energy Week

The date of the 2015 edition of the EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) to be held in Brussels has recently been fixed to the 15th-19th of June by the European Commission. From now on, organisers equally look forward to the engagement of Energy Day organisers across Europe, which can take place during the entire month of June 2015.

More information will be available [here](#).

Members



Become a member of the Alliance

Press and communication

- @activehouseinfo
- AH network
- Instagram

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NETWORK AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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