

activehouse newsletter

Highlights



Active House works on new brand label to demonstrate the premium market value of buildings

The new Active House label will be a worldwide quality mark for comfortable and sustainable buildings. It will advise on key elements of people's daily lives - in their home, workplace and school. The label will highlight all the positive aspects of the complex structure we call home. It will become the symbol of a holistic approach in the building sector combining comfort, energy-saving, and clean, environmentally-friendly energy.

The label will also make it easy for architects and designers to create sustainable buildings by guiding homeowners towards choosing the home that suits them best. And it will showcase the premium market value of these properties for housebuilders and investors.

The new Active House label is expected to be ready for consumers at the start of April.

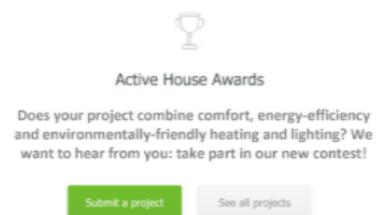
For more details, please read the interview below with the Secretary General of the Alliance, Kurt Emil Eriksen.

Active House invites you to participate in its sustainable buildings contest

The Active House Alliance invites commercial house builders, developers and architects to submit their projects for sustainable buildings. The submitted projects will be evaluated according to the Active House vision and the winner will be awarded with an Active House label.

Interested parties are invited to apply by uploading their projects onto our new (forthcoming) website together with pictures, sketches and a plan drawing between April and September.

A professional jury will then select five projects during mid-September that will be presented at the Sustainable Built Environment Conference in Toronto, Canada on 19-20 September and at a European building event (tbc). The five short-listed projects will be asked to submit further material



in the contest for the top award that will include a full Active House calculation, with the winning project granted its Active House label in November.

More details on the contest will be announced on our website soon. Stay tuned!

Alliance Working for You



Active House General Assembly on 19 April in Brussels

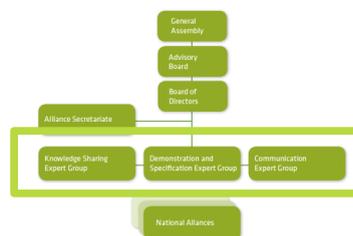
The Active House Alliance will hold its General Assembly on 19 April in Brussels, where among others the new Active House label will be presented. The official part of the General Assembly will be followed by a networking cocktail for the participants, where they will have the opportunity to interact with high level management representatives of our member companies and exchange views on sustainable buildings and related issues.

Although the General Assembly is for Alliance members only, special invitations can be given to potential partners and those interested in joining. Please contact secretariat@activehouse.info.

Renewed Active House working groups on solutions for sustainable construction

On 12 February, the working groups kicked off a new round of meetings. The three groups - Communication, Demonstration and Specification, and Knowledge-sharing – now truly reflect the current challenges of the building sector. At their discussions, participants agreed to focus on building a stronger partnership with house builders, architects and manufacturers. These could benefit from the diverse Active House tools (including specification, calculation, radar, and now label).

The Active House vision will henceforth be presented to university students so they have a better overview of recent innovative solutions and progressive sustainable building design with the overall well-being of the occupants as number one priority.



Active House board members discussed strategy priorities with Commissioner Cañete's cabinet member

Our Board of Directors (BOD) met on 14 January and the Board of Advisory Committees (BAC) two weeks later on 28 January. At these meetings strategic priorities for 2016 as well as for the next period (2017-2019) were debated. Based on the decision of the high level groups, the Alliance will continue with its current activities but will focus more on the communication and exchange of views with professionals as well as pioneering a debate with end users.

The association will reinforce its activities in North America and start a dialogue with national building organisations and local authorities to raise awareness of the added value of its vision regarding the environment as well as human health and well-being.

Silvia Bartolini, member of Cabinet to European Commissioner for Climate Action & Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, provided expert advice on reaching out to local communities and cities within the EU's 28 Member States at the BAC meeting.

Affordable Active House Label - Interview with the Secretary General, Kurt Emil Eriksen



Q: Is there a need for a new label for sustainable buildings?

Secretary General: Yes, there is a need for a label that guarantees that a building has been evaluated according to the most important sustainable parameters and at an affordable price. Today there are quite a lot of label systems; however, they are often costly and quite complicated to attain. The Active House label focuses on modern design parameters that are affordable and simple. To attain the label a building must have been evaluated according to nine design parameters within comfort, energy and environment, with 40 supplementary questions assessed on top. Within this simple and easy to use structure we can evaluate the buildings' performance with a supplementary verification done by an external partner: all at an affordable price. By responding to calls for action and introducing the Active House label, we are closing the gap between 'no label' and a 'relatively expensive and detailed label'.

Q: Who are the target groups?

Secretary General: We intend to approach those groups which would like to label a project, but find the existing labelling systems complicated and expensive. These are mainly architects, commercial house builders, investors in small and medium sized buildings as well as public authorities and public building owners. We are mainly focusing on domestic buildings such as homes, row houses, multi-storey blocks of flats, as well as public buildings like schools and kindergartens.

Q: What value will it bring to architects, commercial house builders, investors and public authorities?

Secretary General: A building that has reached an Active House label has been designed with modern design parameters and with, a focus on better living. Such a building also meets future demands and will secure a long-term value for investors and home-owners. Many architects and house builders use such an approach in their design process but they have never had an opportunity to get their project evaluated at an affordable price. With the new Active House label it will now be possible to showcase a project based on the performance within the design parameters set by the alliance. These parameters have been identified as the most important modern design parameters for sustainable buildings. The value of the label is the proof that 'this specific building' has been evaluated according to sustainable parameters that 'another building' has not met.

Q: Will a label create any value for home-owners and for users of the building?

Secretary General: A building that has attained the Active House label is designed with focus on people living, working and playing in it. The focus has thereby been on parameters that create a better life for people; it is a building that is a good and healthy place to live and grow up in. Those parameters are important for children whether in the home, kindergarten or school and equally so for adults in their home and at their workplace. Thereby the Active House label gives advice on

elements that are important in one's daily life and makes it easy for homeowners to choose the right home for them.

Q: Will such a building lower energy costs?

Secretary General: The design of Active House focuses on 'Energy Efficiency First', so the aim is to reduce the use of energy to a low level without compromising on other parameters. At the same time final energy use has to be calculated. This is very different compared to other systems, where at the calculation stage it is often the primary energy that is used. Thereby the house owner will know already when moving into the building how much energy he is expected to use. As this level corresponds to the indoor climate conditions – which are also evaluated in Active House – it becomes easy for the homeowner to identify his own energy use.

Q: What is the expected procedure to reach a label?

Secretary General: The alliance has developed a guide for architects and commercial house builders, which explains the process in detail. The guide will soon be available free of charge on the Active House homepage. In short, the only requirement is to evaluate the house according to the nine design parameters and to meet the minimum legislative requirement within those, as well as to answer 40 additional questions. When this is done one must have the calculation validated by an approved external institute. When this validation has taken place one will be allowed to use the Active House label on the building.

The cost involved is approximately 1.000 € depending on the building size and has to be paid directly to the validator. Supplementary to this, one needs to join the Active House Alliance and participate in a one-day seminar (webinar) on Active House design and calculation.

Q: Isn't it unambitious only to set a requirement to meet existing legislation?

Secretary General: NO, absolutely not. A building that is qualified to receive the Active House label has to be evaluated according to several modern design parameters, where only a few are required in law. It is the combination of evaluating a building on all parameters that ensures that the building has a minimum impact on the environment and creates a better way of living for people.

As it is a worldwide label, it is difficult to set a specific requirement, for instance, on primary energy, which – we all know – varies between countries. So an ambitious requirement in one country would be less ambitious in another. The value of the label is that all buildings worldwide have been evaluated using the same nine modern design parameters. Those include among others LCA evaluation of the building, sourcing of material, use of water, and parameters that are not (yet) commonly used and are not part of legislation.

Developments towards more sustainability in buildings

Health and wellbeing factors will be key when developing environmental performance indicators for buildings

The European Commission has decided to develop an EU common framework of environmental performance indicators for buildings with a view to encouraging design improvements and increasing the durability and recyclability of the buildings' components. The related macro objectives have now been finalised by the Commission and will be translated into environmental performance indicators for buildings during 2016.

The final set of these objectives focus on buildings' GHG emissions, material efficiency, efficient use of water resources, resilience to climate change and optimisation of



their lifecycle cost and value, and, last but not least, on their design as healthy and comfortable spaces. Additional macro-objectives were also identified for later potential development as indicators, notably on the provision of a healthy and comfortable indoor environment with good air quality, ventilation, natural light and temperature.

For the full report of the European Commission see [here](#).



Stakeholders called for integration of comfort elements in EPBD

As part of the revision process of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), on 14 March the European Commission held a stakeholder conference in Brussels. This review process kicked off earlier last year and an online consultation took place between 30 June 2015 and 31 October 2015, which reached out to a wide audience. The high-level stakeholder event was organised to discuss the findings of these evaluations and possible options regarding the ways forward. Along with other stakeholders at the meeting, our Secretary General Kurt Emil Eriksen welcomed the revision of the directive and called on the Commission for a better focus on comfort elements and an integration of indoor air quality in the revised legislation.

Active House proposed issues to discuss at the EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW)

The EUSEW annual policy conference is the most important European event of its kind dedicated to sustainable energy issues. This year the conference will take place from 14 to 16 June at two venues in Brussels. The EUSEW is an opportunity to meet stakeholders promoting energy efficiency and renewable energies, learn about successful policies and inspire innovation to meet the EU's energy and climate goals. Sessions will be organised by the European Commission and energy stakeholders supporting an economy built on clean, secure, efficient energy focusing on consumers. Among others Active House brought forward some of its own suggestions for discussion such as 'How to grow the awareness and value of sustainable building labelling schemes for end users'.

For more information see [here](#).



Events to discuss sustainable buildings



Chinese Green Building Conference with a session on Active House projects

The 12th International Conference on Green and Energy-Efficient Building will take place on 29-31 March in Beijing, China. It will include a session on the Active House vision. The Alliance as well as representatives from other sustainable building networks will bring forward ideas on the future development of Active House projects in China.

For more information see [here](#).

Round table on Active House values at the Healthy Building Day in Brussels

The Active House Alliance has been invited to set up a round-table debate at the 2nd Healthy Buildings Day on 20 April in Brussels, Belgium. Experts will exchange views on the background for healthy buildings, including costs, design approach, systemic innovation, socio-economic aspects, and state-of-the-art research. The event will bring together policy-makers, house builders, housing associations, building owners, thought leaders, and media. A blend of speeches, presentations and round-table sessions will give you the opportunity to interact, engage and help shape solutions for healthy and affordable housing. The Healthy Building Day is set up and sponsored by one of the Active House members, the VELUX Group.



Romanian Buildings Reality in 2016 and its Outlook for 2030

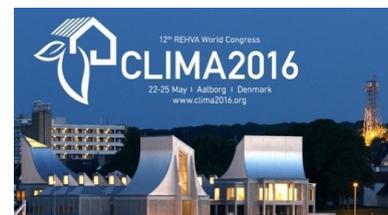
At the 10th AAECR (Asociației Auditorilor Energetici pentru Clădiri din Romania) conference on 13 May in Constanta the implementation of energy efficiency-related European directives in Romania will be evaluated. It will focus on the extent to which laws and norms establishing ambitious targets for phasing out/curtailing fossil fuels are being applied in practice and the net effect on the national economy, on the construction material and technology market, on the population personal savings, and on the quality of our environment.

For more information see [here](#).

CLIMA 2016 on heating and cooling & Active House side event in Denmark

The REHVA World Congress CLIMA 2016 is a leading international scientific congress in the field of HVAC (Heating, Ventilating and Air-Conditioning). The 12th edition will take place in Aalborg, Denmark on 22-25 May 2016. This year's event will focus on energy efficient building and HVAC system performance in practice regarding fulfilment of the intended design, ability to fulfil the needs of the occupants and interact with the users' daily practice as well as role in any future smart energy system. Among others, Active House will be at the conference with a fringe event and a policy-paper presentation.

For more information see [here](#).





in Bulgaria

The aim of the conference to be organized on 22-25 June 2016 in Balchik, Bulgaria is to create Central and Eastern Europe's first community building event on energy efficiency in buildings. The half-week interactive programme combines practical sessions, creative workshops and evening plenaries with high-level speakers and plenty of informal networking opportunities. The discussion will feed into the review of the European energy efficiency legislations and will give useful input to the new National Energy Efficiency Action Plan and energy efficiency programmes. Together with our partners - BPIE, EuroACE, Renovate Europe, Eurima - the Active House Alliance will be present at the event with papers as well as our member VELUX will sponsor the conference.

For more information see [here](#).

Central Europe towards Sustainable Building in Czech Republic

The Central Europe towards Sustainable Building Prague 2016 (CESB16) conference - to be organized on 22-24 June - is a part of the 2016 international Sustainable Built Environment conference series convened under auspices of the four international organizations: iiSBE, CIB, UNEP-SBCI and FIDIC. CESB16 will be the fourth conference in a row where the Active House Alliance will be present with a presentation and our member ROCKWOOL will be attending as one of the sponsors.



For more information see [here](#).



PLEA Conference on Passive and Low Energy Architecture goes to Los Angeles

The next PLEA conference will take place in Los Angeles on 11-13 July. PLEA (Passive and Low Energy Architecture) is an organization engaged in a worldwide discourse on sustainable architecture and urban design through annual international conferences, workshops and publications. It has a membership of several thousand professionals, academics and students from over 40 countries. Participation in PLEA activities is open to all whose work deals with architecture and the built environment, who share its objectives and who attend PLEA events.

For more information see [here](#).

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Past Issues

Transl

For more upcoming events in 2016 consult the Active House Events Calendar [here](#).

Interesting Case

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