

Press Release

## **Minister of State Schreyer lays the foundation stone for the largest straw bale construction in southern Germany**

### **Benedictine monks build with their own renewable resources**

Berching, 11.07.2020

On the high feast of St. Benedict, the patron saint of Europe and founder of the Benedictine order, the foundation stone for the new building "Haus St. Wunibald" was laid in the Benedictine abbey in Plankstetten. The Bavarian Minister of State for Housing, Construction and Transport, Mrs. Kerstin Schreyer, praised the straw-insulated building as a trend-setting example of climate-friendly construction in Germany and Europe.

In addition to the Bavarian State Minister and local politicians, representatives of the sponsors, the authorities involved, the planning team and the construction companies attended the laying of the foundation stone.

After a festive service in the monastery church on the occasion of the high feast of St. Benedict, Abbot Dr. Beda M. Sonnenberg OSB welcomed the guests to the laying of the foundation stone and paid special tribute to "the builders and those involved in the project, as they - in keeping with our focus on the preservation of creation - are making a major contribution to building an example of climate-friendly construction, which we hope will be imitated by many others".

In the speech that followed, the Bavarian Minister of State for Housing, Construction and Transport, Kerstin Schreyer, spoke of how well this construction project combines the preservation of values, monument protection and sustainability. "At such a historically significant location as the Plankstetten Monastery, the new building with wood and straw represents both tradition and modernity - a real showcase project. We are therefore very pleased to contribute 5.24 million euros from the urban development funding of the Federal Government and the Free State to the second construction phase of the monastery renovation, to which the Haus St. Wunibald belongs".

In his speech, the responsible architect Robert Härtl from the Hirner & Riehl architectural office in Munich presented the new building and emphasized: "In the Plankstetten Monastery project, the goals of our office are excellently combined with the abbey's guiding principles of acting in sustainable manner and designing the monastery accordingly. He explained the fact that right now there is a lot of concrete on the building site: "The massive basement absorbs the pressure of the slope and thus protects the listed building stock".

The Benedictine Abbey is a partner in the EU project UP STRAW, whose aim is to increase the use of straw, especially in public construction, and thus reduce the high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the building sector. UP STRAW's funding from the Interreg Programme North-West-Europe represents a part of the financing of the new building. In his speech, Benedikt Kaesberg, head of the EU project, highlighted the excellent values in the life-cycle analysis of straw as a building material. "Straw bale construction contributes like hardly any other construction method to protecting the climate, because straw binds CO<sub>2</sub> during growth, requires hardly any energy during production and, as excellent thermal insulation, avoids CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by reducing heating requirements.

The mayor Ludwig Eisenreich of the city of Berching explained in his welcoming address: "A special building is being created here, which will be constructed for the region using regional building materials. The fact that the kindergarten is integrated in this new building contributes to the fact that even the little ones grow up with the important topic of regional added value and a sustainable way of life".

After the speeches, Minister of State Kerstin Schreyer, together with Abbot Dr. Beda M. Sonnenberg OSB, architect Robert Härtl and Mayor Ludwig Eisenreich, laid the foundation stone in the entrance area of the new multi-purpose building and carefully tapped the memorial slab prepared by stonemason Stefan Regnet with a mason's hammer. The memorial box in the foundation stone contained the certificate, current print media of the monastery, an edition of the daily and church newspaper and information about the new building.

After a refreshment in the monastery beer garden, where there was an opportunity to get personal information about the project and the construction method in a conversation with the construction managers and straw construction experts, numerous guests took the opportunity to personally view the prefabrication of the wall elements made of wood and straw. This is currently taking place in the workshops of the commissioned carpentry company Holzbau Bogner GmbH in Seubersdorf/Freihausen.

Further information about building with straw and the EU project UP STRAW can be found on the German websites [www.bau-mit-stroh.de](http://www.bau-mit-stroh.de) and [www.facebook.com/bau.mit.stroh](http://www.facebook.com/bau.mit.stroh). The English language site of the project is [www.nweurope.eu/upstraw](http://www.nweurope.eu/upstraw). Information on the general renovation of the monastery can be found at [www.kloster-plankstetten.de/strohbau](http://www.kloster-plankstetten.de/strohbau).

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Benedictine Abbey Plankstetten