

Press Release

Straw Building Symposium: High interest in EU funded expert conference!

About 140 interested people informed themselves about climate-friendly building with straw

On 27 November, around 140 building decision-makers, building experts and people interested in building met online to find out about building with the renewable building material straw.

After the welcoming address by Freiburg's building mayor, Prof. Dr. Martin Haag, architects and master carpenters reported on their experiences with the traditional and at the same time innovative construction method in specialist lectures and presented current construction techniques as well as large building projects of the building categories 3, 4 and 5 in Germany and Europe. In addition to a three-storey multi-purpose building in the Plankstetten monastery, numerous thatched schools and other public buildings in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Great Britain were presented, housing group projects with up to 40 residential units as well as Europe's highest straw construction projects in France with eight and eleven storeys.

At the evening panel discussion, straw construction experts discussed which steps are necessary to bring straw bale construction out of its niche and into the German construction market. On the virtual podium sat the wellknown straw construction architect Dirk Scharmer, the master carpenter and board member of the carpentry „Grünspecht“ in Freiburg, Markus Wolf and Prof. Dr. Benjamin Krick, managing director of the Passive House Institute in Darmstadt.

During the discussion, Scharmer emphasised the importance of increasing the awareness of construction method in the market, qualifying skilled workers and breaking the habits of the construction industry.

Prof. Dr. Krick emphasised the importance of the political framework conditions which should favour the use of renewable building materials by including "grey energy" in the life cycle assessment of building materials. Master carpenter Markus Wolf added that it was essential for the spread of straw construction to take into account the architectural tastes of builders who did not want "a house with round corners". Many people did not know that straw construction could be realised in very diverse architectural variations. The experts agreed that for multi-storey buildings in building categories four and five, one could not avoid making constructional compromises with regard to ecological sustainability. Only in this way was it possible to realise not only single-family houses - as has been the case to date mainly - with straw insulation, but also multi-family houses and public buildings with their very high building law requirements, e.g. for fire protection.

That the topic of "climate-friendly building" is of great interest was shown not only by the high number of participants but also by the strong participation of the guests in the chat discourse. A new straw construction forum was opened for future enquiries from interested parties (<https://bau-mit-stroh.de/strohbau-forum>) and a monthly straw construction consultation hour was set up on every first Thursday of the month. The next date is 03 December from 16.00h to 17.00h. The link will be announced in the straw building forum and on www.facebook.com/bau.mit.stroh.

The recordings of all expert presentations of the symposium will soon be available for download at <https://bau-mit-stroh.de/publikationen>.

The symposium was organised as part of the Interreg project UP STRAW by the Benedictine Abbey Plankstetten in cooperation with the Fachverband Strohballenbau Deutschland e.V. and the carpentry firm Grünspecht eG, Freiburg.

"Still few people in Germany know that straw construction is now a market-ready method of building," says Benedikt Kaesberg, head of the Interreg project UP STRAW in Germany. The EU project aims to promote the use of straw bales as a building material, especially for inner-city and public buildings. Within the framework of the project, the largest straw building in southern Germany is currently being built in the Bavarian Plankstetten monastery, a multi-purpose building which, classified as a special building, meets the highest requirements, e.g. in the areas of fire protection and statics. It will house a kindergarten, 30 guest rooms and the parish administration.

The international project team of UP STRAW has created a broad basis for the promotion of the construction method. In addition to the construction of five reference buildings, the project results include a register of houses at <http://www.strawbuilding.eu/strawbale-houses-europe>, which shows and describes around 1200 straw-insulated buildings throughout Europe on a map, and a directory of German straw construction companies at <https://bau-mit-stroh.de/ansprechpartner-vor-ort>.

Since 2006 straw has been a building material recognised by the building authorities in Germany. The German Straw Bale Building Association (FASBA e.V.) has defined professional building with straw in the Straw Building Guideline 2019. Anyone wishing to train as a building contractor in straw construction will find links to training providers and an online course on the project website www.bau-mit-stroh.de. As introductory technical literature, the specialist brochure "Straw-insulated buildings" was reissued by the Agency for Renewable Resources in October 2020. And the thermal bridge catalogue certified by the Passive House Darmstadt 2020 makes it easier for architects to plan straw-bale houses to the passive house standard.

Press contact:

Kaesberg, PR manager UP STRAW
Telephone: +49 (0)179 940 2441
E-Mail: wiebke.kaesberg@kloster-plankstetten.de
www.bau-mit-stroh.de; www.facebook.com/bau.mit.stroh
Benediktinerabtei Plankstetten, Klosterplatz 1, D-92334 Berching

Online-Strahbau-Symposium
Fachtagung für Bauentscheider und Baufachleute

27. November 2020 14.30h

Inklusive kostenloser Teilnahme am Online-Jahrestreffen des Fachverbands Strohballenbau am 28.11.