

## Meeting minutes for the workshop

### "From knowledge to action: Chances and obstacles for energy efficient building in South Tyrol"

The aim of the workshop was to identify obstacles and chances for energy efficient building in South Tyrol. The highly heterogeneous composition of the participants was advantageous for the discussion. Participants from Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France; representatives of politics, public administration, regional planning, the agency CasaClima, NGOs; and participants, planners, lawyers, entrepreneurs contributed to a very broad discussion of the topic.

The discussion showed that obstacles and chances are closely connected and can not be discussed separately. Overcoming obstacles opens up new opportunities and chances can only be taken when obstacles have been eliminated earlier.

Resuming conclusions are

- There is a gap to be closed between a high level of knowledge and available technologies on one side and a lack of action on the other side. This gap has existed in the past and is still waiting to be closed. The majority of the landlords and owners would be willing to invest in energy saving measures if the costs of the investment amortizes in a near future. Hence the criteria for quality, which are the most striking decision factors for buying a house or apartment, usually do not contain energy efficiency. That is a question of values and awareness. For estate agents the number of energy efficient buildings is insufficient to open up a market segment that pays off. In Southern Tyrol 80% of the population are property/real estate owners. In large multi apartment buildings, which are often consuming/loosing a high amount of energy ("energy eaters"), rehabilitation measures would be of high importance. A frequent problem here is to convince all the tenants to decide for an energetic improvement of the apartment building. One counter vote may block the whole process. In those cases innovative solutions and incentives are needed.
- Usually people ask the question: How do I reduce my energy costs? More important though, is it to ask the question: How do I consume less energy? Photovoltaic electricity is clean and cheap energy, but it does not reduce the energy loss of a building. This matter needs clarification and a raise of awareness. In fact architects who could promote awareness for the topic and provide consultancy to the clients have to cope with revenue expectations of the builders, unwillingness of the clients to pay for consultancy and a tight calculation for their revenue. Clarification in terms of intensive counselling is not profitable because of the financial expectations of constructors and companies. There is a need of cultural and political awareness raising among constructors, builders and clients.
- The whole topic opens up an area of conflict field between legal regulations and investments of both the house owners and the constructors. The new law encourages energetic refurbishments by allowing to use additional space for building, for instance an additional floor at the top of the building. Renting such apartments would guarantee additional income which can be used for paying back the costs for refurbishment. On the other hand the concrete economic conditions, the practical constraints which influence the actions of the building companies, architects and builders may undermine the intentions of the law and overcome the goals of spatial planning. This aspect emphasizes the necessity of a close cooperation of experts. Experts from different departments of public administration should be involved to analyze the various consequences of new regulations, legal restriction and incentives. There is a need for integrated legislation which is not an event-oriented and sector focused legislation.

- In Italy there is a strong tradition of quantifying criteria. Standards were made for altitude, size, the goals to be achieved and the materials to be used. City planning in Italy was based on the idea of volume which also opened up the possibility for speculation. In Southern Tyrol the costs of building have reached a level that makes it impossible for many people to afford energy efficient housing.
- Above all strategies and concepts in the legislative improvement of spatial planning already exist. That is why we register increased efforts in public building and increases in cooperative building which might open up a way for the broad public to participate in energy efficient ideas.
- “Business as usual”-solutions in the field of energy efficiency are not sustainable and therefore insufficient. We do need integrative solutions and a close cooperation of planners, craftsmen, construction companies, public authorities and of course people that will be living in these houses.
- Even though it was emphasized that energy efficient housing is not only for the rich and does not cost much more than conventional building, obstacles in financing still occur. If sustainable projects were strongly promoted this would open up a big chance for the success of energy efficiency. “Ethical Banking” shows ways of collaborating with the agency CasaClima, which is a further step in making energy efficient building affordable for a broad public.

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