

Common Sense for the World

Manifesto for sustainable architecture and civil engineering
issued by architects, engineers and town planners in Germany

Preamble

The scientific evidence that mankind is responsible for climate change is irrefutable. The temperature of the earth's biosphere has risen perceptibly over the past one hundred years. Extreme weather conditions are an ever more frequent phenomenon. If we fail to change our attitudes and lifestyles, global warming will have a devastating effect on our lives and those of future generations.

Countermeasures can still be taken. If we combine and coordinate our efforts climate change can be kept at bay. So far, however, attempts to achieve the far-reaching goals of sustainable development have been far too hesitant. That applies equally to societies, governments, trade and industries, and the scientific community all of which have shown a lack of interest, resolution, decisiveness and boldness. All segments of society are now called upon to act. In this manifesto we document the specific responsibility we bear as architects, engineers and town planners. The contribution we can make in the form of sustainable architecture and civil engineering is essential to bring about the changes needed in the use of our natural resources.

We must...

place the planning and layout of our cities and buildings on a new ecological footing,

- › ... by substantially reducing the amount of energy, material and land use,
- › ... by avoiding emissions that are harmful to the environment,
- › ... by planning the use of building materials so that they can be recycled to form the basis for new products.

We want...

sustainable cities,

- › ... which are structured so that people can run their lives along ecological lines,
- › ... which are systematically reorganised to make them producers rather than consumers of energy,
- › ... which make wise use of density to save land and take due account of demographic changes,
- › ... in which local public transport enjoys priority over private motor traffic,
- › ... in which intelligent systems are employed to reduce water consumption,
- › ... in which materials usage forms part of a recycling economy that makes sensible re-use of used materials.

We want...

resource-saving architecture and civil engineering,

- › ... in which sustainability is the dominant element in planning and execution,
- › ... in which the physical, biological and technical properties of all systems involved interact to mutual benefit,
- › ... which give priority to the use of regional materials, thereby avoiding the unnecessary transport of often superfluous imported materials,
- › ... which rely on natural cycles rather than energy-intensive technology,
- › ... in which regional building traditions are linked with pioneering ideas in the development of new forms of architecture and civil engineering,
- › ... which find expression in new architectural forms and designs, yet fit in with the infrastructure and appearance of our cities, thereby providing clearly recognisable indications of the change in our attitude.

We want...

a heightened awareness of sustainable development,

- › ... so that we no longer approach complex ecological problems with the narrow outlook of the present but with a holistic understanding,
- › ... so that money in government research budgets is invested in the development of ideas and concepts that treat ecological building as an integrated whole comprising building construction, materials, usage and design,
- › ... so that an all-embracing appreciation of the ecological interaction between the planning and design of cities and architecture becomes the foundation for teaching and research at all colleges and universities,
- › ... so that Germany, as a key player with global responsibilities, acts as a pioneer of climate-friendly architecture and civil engineering.

We will...

lend credibility to our commitment through personal involvement,

- › ... by advocating sustainable urban development with sustainable architecture and civil engineering, the special quality of which will be determined in equal degree by functional, aesthetic and ecological aspects,
- › ... by working for global awareness to counteract climate change and, out of respect for other cultures, by devising specific solutions which will help to alleviate the effects of climate change and resolve ecological problems worldwide,
- › ... by actively encouraging further training for architects, town planners and engineers that will enhance their awareness and improve their ability to plan and build sustainable architecture and use civil engineering accordingly,
- › ... by cooperating with the relevant players in the public and private sectors to draw up and agree on incentives for sustainable construction and climate-friendly urban development,
- › ... by employing evaluation techniques we ourselves have helped to develop to ensure that the sustainability of the buildings and urban neighbourhoods we have planned is made transparent,
- › ... by intensifying research and development for specific tasks in resource-saving construction and by working together with the building materials industry to implement series solutions,
- › ... by joining the construction industry and tradesmen in devising forms of ecological architecture and civil engineering that constitute an investment in the future.

This manifesto issued by architects, engineers and town planners is a touchstone for the fundamental ethical attitude of our professions. To document our position publicly, we will report regularly on the extent to which we have lived up to our voluntary commitment.

Architects, Engineers, Town Planners, Landscape Architects and Interior Architects are called upon to sign the 'Common Sense for the World Manifesto' and publicly to make known their aspirations.

Please sign the manifest under www.klima-manifest.de

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