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Impetus for more climate action in the built environment: Climate Positive Europe Alliance launched

A new European non-profit organisation is setting out to transform the construction and real estate sector towards greater sustainability. The Climate Positive Europe Alliance (CPEA) is a think tank that brings together expertise and market-based practical solutions for the most pressing sectoral challenges in the areas of sustainable finance, circular economy or the intelligent handling of building data and translates them into concrete recommendations for action. At the core of the Alliance's activities are collaboration and the establishment of a cross-sector dialogue between business and policy-makers.

The EU Commission has set the goal: Europe should become the first climate-neutral continent. To get there, some efforts are still necessary – especially in the construction and real estate sector as one of the main causes of carbon emissions and resource scarcity. "The sector needs to set on a strategic course today in order to be able to achieve our common goals," says Dr Christine Lemaitre, CEO of the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB). "This can only be done in European solidarity and in purposeful cooperation between the construction and real estate industries, the financial sector and policy-makers."

This is precisely where CPEA comes in. The newly founded organisation based in Brussels is backed by the DGNB, the Green Building Council España (GBCe), the Austrian Sustainable Building Council (ÖGNI) and the Federation of European Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (REHVA). Other partners are to follow. "Together we want to significantly accelerate the transformation of the European construction and real estate markets towards sustainability," says Lemaitre, the Alliance's new Chair.

CPEA works with a bottom-up approach, focusing on collaboration between key decision-makers in the market. All planned activities and projects are based on a common European understanding of the

key requirements of sustainable construction, which is reflected in the DGNB certification methodology. Thus, the Alliance follows a fact-based, data-driven approach based on holistic life cycle considerations.

Four thematic focal points

The new European Alliance will focus its activities on four main topics:

- Sustainable Finance
- Buildings and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Circular Economy
- Building data and information

In the area of sustainable finance, CPEA will continue to support the work of the EU Commission and the Sustainable Finance Platform in further developing the EU Taxonomy criteria. The basis for this is the market study on the applicability of the EU Taxonomy recently conducted and published by various CPEA partners. In addition, a separate "European ESG Working Group" will explore the establishment of a harmonised uniform European ESG standard.

Together with representatives of EU institutions, CPEA wants to work towards putting the SDGs and circularity principles at the centre of existing and future building policy development and actively engage in the development and roll-out of a standardised, central building data repository which will store all relevant building information over the entire life cycle, forming the basis for more informed and more transparent decision-making.

Away from individual interests, towards joint European action

What all topics have in common is that they have an enormous influence on whether the path towards climate neutrality in the building sector can succeed. "All of these topics require close, constructive and goal-oriented cooperation between the market, legislators and the finance and investment community," says Peter Engert, Managing Director at CPEA co-founder ÖGNI.

"The construction and real estate industry is complex, with many different players and just as many motivations. Understanding these interrelationships and defining ambitious targets based on robust data, ensuring that subsidies are linked to real consumption is essential on the way to a climate-positive Europe," says Ursula Hartenberger, Secretary General of CPEA.

Ways to participate and collaborate

CPEA invites other European organisations and associations to become actively involved in its work and to collaborate on the various topics. The most important prerequisite is that they pursue the same goals and want to join the Alliance in creating positive momentum based on a common understanding of sustainability.

Contact details and all additional information are available online at www.cpea.eu.

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