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Press Release

The future of living – a main topic at BAU 2023 Strategies and technologies for modern and affordable living concepts

Felix Kirschenbauer
PR Manager
Tel. +49 89 949 21472
felix.kirschenbauer@messe-muenchen.de

Rent prices are continuing to rise and living space in major urban areas in particular is scarce. A shortage of materials, supply problems and soaring energy prices are exacerbating the challenging situation in the housing market. BAU 2023 will address this topic. Exhibitors will show how technological solutions can be used to build more cheaply and quickly. And in the presentation program, representatives from the worlds of architecture and the housing industry will present strategies for modern and affordable living concepts.

The construction industry is booming. Construction companies are still currently feeding on full order books. But appearances are deceiving. The prices for energy and taxes are increasing, as is inflation. And, according to the Central Association of the German Construction Industry (ZDB), the production of building and construction materials is more expensive than ever. This all makes investors and developers feel unsure and leads to investments being put on hold and construction sites getting shut down – by necessity.

The consequences of this trend are already visible: The number of building permits issued for apartments fell by 2.1 percent in the first seven months of the year, while permits for single-family houses fell by as much as 16.1 percent. According to the German National Tenants' Association, there is a shortage of 1.5 million apartments, particularly in major urban areas. The ZDB is therefore calling for construction law to be harmonized, construction regulations to be simplified and planning and approval processes to be accelerated.

Messe München GmbH
Messegelände
81823 München
Germany
messe-muenchen.de

Press Release | December 14, 2022 | 2/2

The goal: 400,000 apartments per year

The German government is attempting to improve the situation. It needs the construction and housing industry, not only to secure societal cohesion, but also to achieve its goal of climate neutrality by 2045. That's because the energy-intensive construction sector is among the largest CO₂ emitters. It is therefore a matter of creating affordable living space as quickly as possible while protecting the environment, climate and resources.

In future 400,000 apartments are to be built each year, of which 100,000 are to be funded social housing. Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz calls the goal set by the German government "a great social task". The Bündnis bezahlbarer Wohnraum (Affordable Housing Alliance), an association of 35 institutions from all areas of society, has thought about how this goal can be achieved – which is in fact no longer possible in 2022.

187 measures for better planning and construction

In October 2022, 187 measures were presented in a 65-page document. One of these is large-scale assistance for the construction of social housing. The German government will make 14.5 billion euros available for this purpose by 2026. With regard to the climate, the alliance turns to construction and insulating materials as well as building and heating technologies with low CO₂ footprints. The reuse of building and construction materials (circular economy) should also be promoted. In terms of construction law, the 16 German states have agreed to harmonize national construction regulations in line with the example regulations of the alliance as much as possible. Public planning and approval processes are to be accelerated. One particularly important factor is digitalization. This is required for faster and more efficient planning and construction. Serial construction with industrial prefabrication also depends on it. The alliance aims to make it possible for building permits to be submitted digitally throughout Germany in future.

Press Release | December 14, 2022 | 3/3

Societal developments demand new living concepts

It's one thing to achieve affordable living space that is as climate neutral as possible. But societal developments that demand new living concepts must also be taken into consideration: The trend toward working from home and flexible working models calls for versatile rooms, while the demographic shift demands solutions that are suitable for multiple ages and generations. One such solution is participatory housing models that bring old and young people together and get people out of the anonymity of the big city. The young generation, born around the year 2000, is particularly health and environmentally conscious, and therefore want to live and work in a way that's smart, ideally outside the city, and flexible and part time where possible.

In cities and municipalities, the housing and construction industries are faced with challenging tasks. That's because land for building is rare, expensive and often not municipally owned. According to the alliance's plans, municipal and regional land reserves will counteract this and "stockpile" land. Changing the use of existing properties promises to be a faster solution. New living space can be created from office buildings, factories and storehouses, as long as it is technically and legally feasible. The trend toward working from home has made many office buildings redundant. Studies by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für zeitgemäßes Bauen e. V. (Working Group for Contemporary Building) and the Eduard Pestel Institute have shown that around 235,000 new apartments could be created in the inner-city area just by converting office spaces.

Unconventional ideas are in demand

In addition to conversion, unconventional ideas and flexible concepts are in demand, such as apartments above supermarkets or in parking lots. Another tried-and-tested means of creating living space is densification, i.e. closing vacant lots or adding stories to existing buildings. "Roof space is building space," says Federal Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Building Klara Geywitz.

Press Release | December 14, 2022 | 4/4

Find out what the future of living looks like, which concepts planners and architects are pursuing and what solutions exist for materials and technologies at BAU 2023 in all of its exhibition spaces and in the presentations of its supporting program.

More information is available at www.bau-muenchen.com

About BAU

BAU, the world's leading trade fair for architecture, materials and systems, is the largest and most important event in the industry. Unique worldwide, BAU brings together the industry's market leaders in this multi-trade exhibition every two years. The range of exhibits is broken down according to building materials, products and topics. BAU addresses all those involved in planning, construction and the operation of all types of buildings. BAU is also the world's biggest trade fair for architects and engineers. The numerous events in the supporting program, including high-profile forums with experts from around the world, round out the trade fair program.

Messe München

Messe München is one of the leading exhibition organizers worldwide with more than 50 of its own trade shows for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies. Every year, a total of over 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors take part in more than 200 events at the exhibition center in Munich, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München, the Conference Center Nord and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiary companies, Messe München organizes trade shows in China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Turkey. With a network of associated companies in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, and with around 70 representatives abroad for more than 100 countries, Messe München has a truly global presence.