



NEW GREEN DEAL

THE ROAD TO A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY OF THE 21ST CENTURY

When the Czech Green Building Council was established in 2009, the world faced one of the worst financial crises in human history. Even then, we have emphasized that investment in quality sustainable buildings can not only contribute to solving the problems of climate change, but also help to ease the economic crisis.

On the verge of another decade of sustainable buildings for economic growth and healthy living

Today, more than 10 years later, we stand on the verge of another slowdown in the economy and structural changes caused by the coronavirus. The COVID-19 impact is awful, but the climate change could be worse. We strongly believe that investing in sustainable buildings is one of the best tools to resolve both problems.

The Czech Republic is not any beginner in this area, a number of legislative measures and renovation programmes already exists, and the Czech Republic serves as an example for many partners in the Central and Eastern European region. But there are several issues that still need to be improved. The aim of this document is to define both – the successes and the challenges and offer a helping hand to the government to move forward again on our common path.

We structure the Declaration into five thematic areas addressed by the Council.

1. BUILDINGS WITH ZERO ENERGY CONSUMPTION

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the Czech Republic, renovation programmes work for most types of buildings, the financing is long-term and predictable. Minimum energy standards for buildings are well defined in the Czech Republic.

CHALLENGES

- To increase the volume of programmes of deep renovations 2-3x (on 3% floor area renovated per year).
- To raise awareness of energy efficient buildings, for example through a state information campaign.
- To involve banking and other sectors in the promotion and distribution of renovation programmes, for example by providing guarantee for part of the renovation loan.
- To introduce a temporary incentive for investment in buildings by reducing VAT.
- To support innovative (e.g. hydrogen, battery) solutions in the sector of building energy.
- To support the project preparation phase and thus create a reservoir of public sphere projects for rapid implementation in the event of a decline in private investment activity.
- To support a method for public procurement that evaluates the parameters of a building with regard to long-term operating costs not just the lowest initial purchase price.
- To remove barriers to the implementation of new and advanced energy saving technologies or their efficient use.
- The State should set an example both in the renovation of its own buildings and in the construction of new buildings, achieving the highest standards of sustainability and efficiency.

2. SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

ACHIEVEMENTS

The awareness about the sustainability of materials and their recycling is increasing in the Czech Republic. There is a national database of environmental product declaration (EPD) and the use of EPD materials is credited in the New Green Savings programme. There are functioning certification systems that require information about the share of recycled material and supply chain. In addition, the Czech Republic is moving towards a ban on landfilling without pre-sorting and recycling, which will lead to an increased motivation to reuse of materials.

CHALLENGES

- To include requirements for the use of secondary raw materials and products in the public procurement criteria (so-called green public procurement).
- To encourage the market to share information on the origin, recyclability or carbon footprint of the product by promoting the use of EPD.
- To remove barriers to the reuse of construction waste, e.g. in the form of decrees defining the rules for the management of secondary raw materials.
- To introduce quality label of recycled material and introduce training of designers.
- To take measures to deconstruct buildings in the form of a pre-demolition audit and to support pilot projects for selective deconstruction or demolition of buildings.
- To support projects aimed at renovation neglected sites - brownfields.

3. WATER MANAGEMENT

ACHIEVEMENTS

The need to manage water efficiently is already a public issue and there is a number of measures that promote the effective use of water in and around buildings. The Rainwater programme is focused on the use of rain and grey water in residential and family houses, the definition of utility water, its parameters and possible uses have been negotiated. We welcome the continuation and expansion of support programmes for all types of buildings.

CHALLENGES

- To abolish of the exemption for the payment of rainwater drainage tax from residential buildings in cities (first new buildings, gradually all houses).
- To allow water reuse between different entities (property-law issues). The current law imposes an obligation to resolve own "wastewater". However, the waste of one can be the source of the other.
- To require a hierarchy of rainwater (first retention and reuse, second absorption or vapour).
- To clearly define the drainage coefficients for green roofs and rainwater retention.
- To increase the countability of vegetative roofs to the greenery coefficient.
- To increase the amount of funds allocated in the subsidy programmes by tens of billions CZK for the implementation of green solutions for effective water management.
- To include the investment in water savings in the reduced VAT rate.

4. HIGH-QUALITY INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

ACHIEVEMENTS

The importance and impact of the internal environment on the comfort, health and performance of people inside buildings is beginning to be addressed by an increasing number of people. In the segment of administrative buildings, the WELL certification system operates, which deals in detail with all aspects of the internal environment quality. Support for ventilation, lighting and acoustics has been extended within the OPŽP, which is mainly used in schools and public buildings.

CHALLENGES

- To set the legal environment adequately – update technical standards and ensure their enforceability.
- To extend support for the quality improvement of the internal environment to all programmes.
- To favour or condition support programmes with projects ensuring a high-quality indoor environment.
- To promote new technologies that contribute both to the quality of the internal environment and to the maximum level of efficiency.
- To define minimum standards within the framework of support programmes and criteria, e.g. for tenders, in particular in the area of coherence of the whole concept of the building, design, implementation and subsequent operation.
- To increase the emphasis on the interface of technologies and the quality of their management with the architecture or building parts and the purpose and operation of the building.

5. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT – PATH TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

ACHIEVEMENTS

Within the EU, there is a system of emission allowances in the Czech Republic that encourage companies to reduce CO₂ production. The global climate change will require further significant action.

CHALLENGES

- To start the preparation of the Climate Act for the Czech Republic, including the legislatively enshrined emissions reduction target.
- To update strategy for climate protection policy.
- To initiate a multi-level climate and energy dialogue.
- To focus on investing in science and research, with goals like learning to store energy and produce it sustainably.
- To support local renewable energy sources embedded in the building and remove barriers to its use on a local scale (PV plant, wind farms, battery storage, heat pumps, shared energy).
- To support blue-green infrastructure.
- To introduce carbon tax or other fiscally neutral measure to favour green fuels and renewable energy sources in buildings.

The environment we create affects us in return as individuals and as a society. The buildings are its cornerstone. Let us not get contented with a few exceptional buildings that Council members can take pride in, that we leave here for future generations but let us make sustainable building an absolute standard. We have knowledge, we have technology, we have experience, let's use it to achieve the goal. The steps that lead to this are formulated by this declaration. We are well advanced on this journey, let's move on.

We undersigned represent significant part of the construction industry in the Czech Republic and declare that it is in our common interest to move the Czech construction industry to a new sustainable level. Join us.

