

Excellence meets excellence

The Institute of Architecture and Planning's Professor Peter Droege reflects on the Liechtenstein Congress on Sustainable Development and Responsible Investing...

Our world is in a state of radical transformation. Changes in the environment, society, business and technology are taking place at an increasingly accelerated rate. A radical change in the way we live, work and do business, finance and learn is under way. The Liechtenstein Congress on Sustainable Development and Responsible Investing is focused on this sea of change: filled with opportunities, innovation and exciting challenges on the path to a truly sustainable world.

Organised at the University of Liechtenstein, and co-sponsored by the government as well as supporting organisations such as Taurus Investment Holdings and the LL Reibling Family Foundation, the large congress series will stage its next event from the 2-4 May 2012. The Congress aims to provide an international platform for practical research and informed practice in sustainable development and responsible investing, guided by effective policy and enlightened by a deep sense of responsibility.

The most recent event took place in September 2010, attracting over 600 visitors in three-and-a-half days of conferencing and intensive workshops in finance, spatial development and local resource management. In his opening speech in front of 75 leading visionaries and experts from finance, real estate, building and regional branches, the Head of State of the Principality, Klaus Tschütscher, emphasised the ethical basics of economical actions: "Values have economical benefits which include empathy, trust and decency. Sustainable development and responsible investment are two key definitions for the benefit of future generations and numerous stakeholders will have to realise their specific responsibility accordingly."

Lorenz Reibling, Chairman of Taurus Investment Holdings Boston, valued the conference as a real quantum leap where excellence meets excellence. The congress closed with a final address for sustainable development of regional resources, proposed to reinforce the idea of climate neutral Alps. The development of new winter sport infrastructure, such as water reservoirs for snowmaking, roads and ski runs, have major impacts by releasing CO₂ and destroying its potential stores. The protection of natural resources in the Alps stood at the foreground, including the safeguarding and regeneration of wetlands and moors, and the promotion and adoption of biological, bio-char based, humus enriching and biodiversity building 'climate farming' approaches. New paths of regional energy gain through renewable energy were presented, including solar parks, biogas centres,



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hydropower and wood pellet heating in the Lake Constance area, which is part of the BAER project.

The BAER project – Bodensee/Lake Constance-Alpine Rhine Valley Energy- and Climate Region – is a cooperative research project in the areas of renewable energy autonomy, sustainable development and the broad mitigation of regional climate change and energy risks, initiated in October 2009 for a three year period.

Coordinated at the Institute of Architecture and Planning with the participation of four other regional universities, the project is supported by the Internationale Bodensee-Hochschule IBH, and strives to demonstrate the paths towards renewable energy autonomy. The public, political leadership and scientific communities are informed about results and directions throughout.

For further information on the BAER project, please visit www.baernet.org



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