

Workshop I: Eco-Tour with Dr. Georg Löser

Dr. Georg Löser offered an introductory lecture on ten best examples for energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energies in Freiburg and the region of Freiburg, by focusing on the main aspects of site history, society and governance. Rooted in the anti-nuclear local protests in the 70s, a high level of public awareness has developed in the region, determining various institutes (Öko-Institute or Fraunhofer Institute) to seek alternative energy sources. The late 80s brought about the pioneer citizen initiatives for energy independence and security, such as installing photovoltaic panels and micro-wind turbines, wood boilers and many energy-saving appliances. Furthermore, the Chernobyl accident marked a positive shift in the public authorities' perception on "Ökostrom". Ambitious targets for renewables were set, which complemented the community initiatives like: Wentzinger, Staudinger and Richard-Fehrenbach schools, Wasserkraft Volk AG, etc. In this context, Vauban emerged as a pioneer and standard-setting district in Freiburg and the whole region, through the creation of the Solar Settlement (2000) and Solar Ship (2005) and the promotion of the "passive houses" concept.

In order to have a complete picture of the community-level change towards a green economy, one has also to take into account the business initiatives. Hence, the participants had the chance to get an insight from Mr. Erhard Schulz into the complex solutions for energy saving of the Best Western Hotel Victoria. This hotel has been elected twice as the most environmentally friendly hotel of the world. So far, the hotel has adopted solar and wind energy, wooden pallets heating systems and a special ventilation system.

After a vegetarian, locally-produced bio-lunch at Café Velo - another relevant site for our EcoTour, the journey continued in the heart of Vauban. Dr. Löser offered interesting details on the main landmarks of this unique and experimental district, i.e. the Heliotrop, the Solar Settlement, the Solar Ship and passive houses. His mixture of technical information and stories of community mobilization, conflicts personal initiative and, of course, governmental incentives, offered the participants a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the district.