

Greeting

I would have very much liked to greet you in person in Saxony Anhalt. The current situation, of course, allows only for digital meetings. Personal contact and exchange, as well as professional communication - the heart of every conference – must be shifted to the Net. You have all already adjusted to this situation and with this demonstrated your resilience.

This brings us to one of the intriguing topics of the conference. Questions about resiliency, about the ability to go through difficult situations without lasting damage, are with view to Climate Change more pressing than ever.

It is imperative that our state, our society, and the natural world meet the great challenges resulting from Climate Change. As agriculture and environmental minister of Saxony Anhalt, it is the forestry and agricultural sectors that are especially of concern to me.

Recently, I presented the 2020 Monitoring Report for Climate Change in Saxony Anhalt. Using selected indicators, the results of climate change monitoring are described and evaluated. These data objectively and statistically demonstrate the changes in climate.

The climate crisis has indeed arrived in Saxony Anhalt. We can perceive and measure these changes. Temperature demonstrates this explicitly: The yearly mean has increased by 1.5° Celsius since 1880. The number of days over 30 °C has increased in comparison to the reference period of 1961-1990, and in low-lying regions it has doubled to an average of 14.7 days. The vegetation period has prolonged itself by 13 days and apple trees keep blossoming earlier.

At the same time, precipitation is lacking. Soil moisture – important for agriculture - has decreased in most regions. Especially in lowlands, local water balance has worsened, which then influences our forests. The unusually long persistent drought which started in April 2018 is now striking higher elevations.

We know what this means: trees can decreasingly defend themselves against pests. This combined with storms means that there are areas in Saxony Anhalt where entire forests are endangered.

We can halt this climate crisis if we act with resolve. Everyone is called upon to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is why the State of Saxony Anhalt adopted the Climate and Energy Concept (*KEK*) in February 2019. Numerous stakeholders were involved in drawing up and now carrying out this concept, ensuring that the concept will be put into practice with broad civil consensus.

Simultaneously, we are adapting to the unavoidable consequences of climate change. The Saxony Anhalt State Climate Change Adaptation Strategy started in 2010 is regularly updated with the latest developments and findings. To carry out the resulting measures, working with stakeholders and those affected is of utmost importance.

The Climate and Energy Concept, and the Adaption Strategy are two major building blocks in paving the way to more sustainability in our society.

Sustainability is required in all areas of life in order to provide future generations with quality of life. This is why sustainable development is a holistic task for all state organizations in Saxony-Anhalt.

In 2019, the Cabinet of Saxony-Anhalt adopted a State Sustainability Strategy. It follows the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations, as well as the German Federal Sustainability Strategy. Part of the State Strategy is an Indicator Report with clear goals to be met by 2030.

This offers a myriad of possibilities for landscape architects to actively bring in their ideas to strengthen the resilience of many systems. I look forward to receiving the findings and outcomes of your conference.

A healthy and vital natural environment is one of the keys to meeting the challenges that await us. In this sense, I wish you all an inspiring and successful conference.

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