

New European Bauhaus Academy Lusatia - concept note

I. How we understand the New European Bauhaus Initiative?

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative aims to establish the link between the European Green Deal and European living spaces. It is a call to all Europeans to develop and jointly implement ideas of a sustainable and inclusive, aesthetically, intellectually and emotionally appealing future.

The European Commission describes the NEB as an experimentation and networking platform to promote cooperation between thinkers and doers who want to shape the future forms of living together. It is meant to be a bridge between two worlds: Science, economic rational and technology on the one hand and art, design, creativity and culture on the other. Entirely in the spirit of the Bauhaus of the 20th century, exactly 100 years after its heyday. In the light of the European Green Deal, the NEB is described as an invitation to take a new perspective and see the ecological and digital challenges as opportunities to change our lives for the better.

The aim of the initiative is to align thinking, behavior patterns and markets with the new ways of living and building. In doing so, the New European Bauhaus will bring together citizens, experts, businesses and institutions to facilitate exchange on how to make future living spaces more inclusive, affordable and accessible: Designers, architects, engineers, scientists, students and creative minds from all disciplines will work together to make sustainable living possible in Europe and worldwide. Thus, in the spirit of Walter Gropius' Bauhaus, the value of simplicity, functionality and circular economy of materials should be brought to bear without compromising everyday requirements such as comfort and aesthetic appeal. Through sustainability, preservation and renewal of building fabric as well as design of (everyday) objects of daily use, the social acceptance of the change into a new age of the European continent and the decisive role of (architectural) aesthetics shall be strengthened.

II. Why now?

The reference to today's situation of social change in the European coal regions and especially in the border triangle of Germany/Poland/Czech Republic could not be greater. In order to achieve the common European goals of a climate-neutral continent, the regions most affected by economic change, namely the climate and energy transition face particular challenges. The disappearance of industries (not their transformation, but their complete phase-out) that need to be substituted by new value chains, future proof business models, a new way of thinking and perceptions of the own homeland is a special task in the context of structural change, especially with regard to social acceptance for the upcoming changes... It is now – 100 years after the Weimar School – time to embed these approaches concretely in the new context of social change and to test them in practical projects.

III. What is the fundamental added value of cultural and creative industries in the green transition?

The contribution of cultural and creative industries in supporting fair transition in European coal regions, while not obvious, is profound. Cultural and creative workers in all sub-sectors are closely intertwined with social and economic change. This is based on the intrinsic motivation of these new economic actors to help shape understanding of the world, frame ideas, anticipate change and open hearts and minds to new ways of thinking. They have played an important role in campaigning for reform on many issues facing humanity, and change towards a clean economy can be no exception. Among others, the study: [Key Change: The Role of the Creative Industries in Climate Change Action | SpringerLink](#) concludes that a deeper and more thoughtful engagement of the cultural and creative industries in climate action is not only useful, but crucial to the success of the effort.

IV. Roots of the idea of a Bauhaus school to shape social change

In relation to the previous statements, Walter Gropius' "Proposals for the Foundation of a Training Institute as an Advisory Centre for Industry, Trade and Crafts" were made during the social upheaval of 1919 to 1922. In the spirit of a "Werkbund", Gropius called for a close working community between the merchant and the technician on the

one hand and the artist on the other,... where people could work together in the same spirit, in the unity of a common idea..." (Droste, Magdalena: Bauhaus, 2002, p. 16). Gropius' efforts to bring about social change by uniting decentralized cooperation between art, design, craft and production finally culminated in the founding of the "Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar" college in March 1922 (cf. *ibid.* p. 17). The university's curricula ranged from joint application-oriented educational courses in the disciplines of art, design, crafts, business administration and architecture. At the time, it attracted renowned lecturers from all disciplines and students (e. g. Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Johannes Itten, Georg Muche, Gertrud Grunow, Paul Dobe, Bruno Adler) throughout Europe and heralded the Bauhaus era throughout Europe, including the border triangle and Lusatia.

V. Why is Lusatia the perfect place for an academy for the spirit of the New European Bauhaus and the accompaniment of the social transformation to a green continent?

Due to the wide-ranging industrial heritage of past and upcoming upheavals in Lusatia and in the border triangle, there are almost unique opportunities and at the same time challenges for establishing a NEB academy. On the one hand, there is the social and cultural challenge of preserving the industrial and architectural heritage and, on the other hand, establishing new facets and economic cycles through the new combination of sustainable, design-oriented and economic renovation and thus shaping a beautiful, sustainable and prosper environment in the border triangle for the generations to come. The playing field for these aspects is enormous in the border triangle; existing cultural and creative economic approaches and anchored structures can be used and expanded. These are referred to in the following paragraph.

VI. What approaches already exist and what points of contact are there locally for founding an NEB Academy?

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the border triangle region was characterized by innovative entrepreneurs who founded prosperous businesses with new technologies and product ideas. This social class, supported by a belief in progress and a wealth of ideas, not infrequently commissioned designers and architects who had studied at the Bauhaus or the arts and crafts schools in Prague or Wrocław. Traces of famous Bauhaus representatives such as Wilhelm Wagenfeld and Ernst Neufert, but also of other world-famous representatives of modernism such as Hans Scharoun, are still preserved in the region today. Even then, the region was an attractive playground for new models of building, working and living, which, in addition to the favorable connections to the European infrastructure due to its central location in Europe, was also due to the availability of well-trained and modern engineers, architects and designers.

The interdisciplinarity that has been tested and lived in the cultural and creative industries for many years opens up the possibility of answering new complex questions here, live – work in progress –, on the ground. Following on from the Bauhaus idea, new solutions of high quality in terms of craftsmanship and science are to be developed and translated into practice together with regional industrial and craft enterprises. The framework for this cooperation must be a newly conceived, actor-oriented structure, which – again following the classical model – is developed with the future teachers on the basis of new research, teaching and implementation ideas.

VII. What role does the industrial heritage (especially in Lusatia) play in the context of the New European Bauhaus?

A large number of industrial buildings and legacies of the coal industry work excellently as a "testing ground" for innovative building methods and subsequent uses, but also for design and connecting elements from innovative technologies and aesthetic, socially useful elements and places. The ecologically sensible preservation of existing buildings opens up new perspectives for the ecologically and socially sustainable uses of existing structures and sealed surfaces. In all parts of Lusatia and the Liberec region, as well as in Lower Silesia, there are places where these new impulses can be realized and a variety of possibilities. It is therefore not only a social responsibility to safeguard this industrial heritage, but also a social will to use it for new design methods and to learn from it for future lifestyles in concrete applications, as well as to create sustainable, applicable added value for other regions with special transformative challenges through the transfer of knowledge, mutual exchange and joint projects.

VIII. Description of an approach to founding and establishing a “New European Bauhaus Academy Lusatia”

Exactly 100 years later, following the model of Walter Gropius' “Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar” university described in Section IV, a science-discipline-connecting, application-oriented academy with a European curriculum is to be established as a complement to and in cooperation with the educational institutions of the region (Zittau/Görlitz University of Applied Sciences, Universities in Wrocław and Liberec) but also supra-regional institutions such as the Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Chambers of Crafts and Entrepreneurs' Associations, the Saxon Chamber of Architects and innovation clusters as well as regional associations of the cultural and creative industries, which will be able to stringently anchor the idea of the NEB, develop a broad pull effect for students, trainees and lecturers, and create space for the NEB: The academic curricula to be developed will be based on the idea of the NEB. The academic curricula to be created are to be based, among other things, on existing approaches in the region and at the Burg Giebichenstein University of Art in Halle, based in the Central German Lignite District and thus echoing the transitional challenge of the CZ-DE-PL-border region.

IX. Expected added value for the region, the coal regions and the objectives of the European Union

Added value for the region in the border triangle

The impact of the NEB Academy in the border triangle will be broad and deep with a pull effect. The region will continue to gain in overall (scientific, artistic and creative-economic) perception in the three countries and will bring interested parties from a variety of disciplines into contact with each other in order to jointly shape the transformation of the region and society and thus be able to develop a radiant force beyond the region.

Added value/learning effects for other European coal regions and impact for the achievement of EU goals related to the NEB

The other European coal regions benefit directly from the application-oriented academic teaching of the planned academy: it develops solutions for design-oriented, sustainable and socially useful preservation of industrial buildings and legacies of the coal industry, which the coal regions throughout Europe can adopt and adapt to their specific regional needs. Furthermore, practical and study trips by students and lecturers as well as the monitoring of projects of the European coal regions as a whole as theses or dissertations can directly contribute to a design effect in other coal regions and thus also to achieving the objectives of the NEB described in Section I.