

INDUSTRY NEWS

July 2019

“Barrier-free buildings need suitable windows as well!”

We spoke with Professor Dagmar Everding, architect and designer, author of a manual on barrier-free building and expert consultant for accessible designs and buildings.

Until now, the issue of building accessibility has mainly been associated with the provision of lifts and ramps. How important are building windows for the elderly and people with disabilities?

Dagmar Everding: Windows provide buildings with natural lighting, sunlight and ventilation and offer building users a view of their surroundings. Good light and good air are particularly important for people who spend a lot of their time indoors due to their age or physical limitations.

What do people with disabilities want from windows?

Everding: A distinction needs to be made between general requirements and the specific needs of people depending on the nature of their disability. Basically, the windows should be adequately dimensioned and easy to operate so that they meet the specified functions. Apartments should have a least one lounge or living room area whose windows let in sunlight even in the winter months. At the same time, there must be effective shading from the heat in summer. Hearing-impaired people benefit from soundproof windows which reduce noise interference. Wheelchair users need at least one larger window that provides a view at a low height (maximum 60 cm high). Visually impaired individuals are dependent on good levels of daylight at home, at work and in their leisure time. It must be possible for all individuals with limited mobility or strength to open and close windows and/or window parts smoothly and easily. In some cases this is only possible with the assistance of electric drive mechanisms.

**Ideelle und fachliche Träger
Sponsors**

Fachverband Glas Fenster Fassade
Baden-Württemberg

Landesinnungsverband des
Glaserhandwerks Rheinland-Pfalz

Landesinnungsverband des
Bayerischen Glaserhandwerks

Veranstalter**Organizer**

NürnbergMesse GmbH
Messezentrum
90471 Nürnberg, Germany
T +49 9 11 86 06-0
F +49 9 11 86 06-82 28
frontale@nuernbergmesse.de
frontale.de

**Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrates
Chairman of the Supervisory Board**

Albert Füracker, MdL
Bayerischer Staatsminister der
Finanzen und für Heimat
Bavarian State Minister of Finance
and Regional Identity

Geschäftsführer**CEOs**

Dr. Roland Fleck, Peter Ottmann

Registergericht**Registration Number**

HRB 761 Nürnberg

Do colours also have a role to play in window design?

Everding: Yes, colours ensure contrasts, which are a necessary feature of barrier-free building. The frames should be a different colour to distinguish them from the interior wall; in addition, operating elements like handles and switches are easier to find if they contrast with their background.

Are the solutions for easier operation of windows that are already on the market sufficient?

Everding: Electrically operated shutters and shading elements are the most common solution. Remote controlled skylights and roof windows for ventilating rooms and night-time cooling are also becoming more and more popular. Integrated rain sensors, which ensure that windows are closed automatically in the event of storms, rain, snow and hail, have also proven practical. The use of Internet-based tools for operating various equipment and fittings is just starting to become more prevalent. With the help of an app, controls can also be activated at a large distance from buildings. At the moment I still feel that many sensor-triggered shading elements are not practical, because in the event of fast-moving clouds the shades are constantly going on and off and can become an annoyance.

Has progress been made with the certification of windows in barrier-free buildings?

Everding: The accessibility of a building consists of the functioning interaction of many components. The absence of steps or thresholds does not make a building entrance barrier-free. Other features are necessary, such as the minimum width of the door, the manoeuvring area in front of and behind the door and many other factors. Windows are an integral part of a barrier-free home, office or doctor's surgery. Designs and buildings can be certified as barrier-free by DIN CERTCO. When certifying a structural unit a check is also conducted to determine whether the windows meet the requirements of the DIN 18040 standard for barrier-free building. To increase the number of barrier-free buildings that can be used by everyone, it helps to have standardised building elements and products with those properties that the designers of such a building need, e.g. doors with handles at an operating height of 85 cm, toilets with a higher seat height and folding grab rails, lifts

with the necessary cab size and fittings. As a construction element, the importance of windows for accessibility does depend strongly on the respective architectural design. Its inherent barrier-free properties consist primarily of its ease of use. The German institute for window technology (ift Rosenheim) has published Fachinformationen zur Umsetzung der Barrierefreiheit mit Fenstern und Türen (Technical Information on Making Windows and Doors Barrier-Free, available in German only), which contains helpful recommendations.

Professor Dagmar Everding is an architect and designer and author of a manual on accessible building, the Handbuch Barrierefreies Bauen (guide to DIN 18040 Parts 1 to 3) as well as a DIN CERTCO expert consultant on barrier-free design and buildings.

Contacts for press and media

Stefanie Haug, Lena Vogl

T +49 9 11 86 06-83 23

F +49 9 11 86 06-12 83 23

lena.vogl@nuernbergmesse.de

For all press releases, further information and photos please go to:

www.frontale.de/en/news

Further services for journalists and media contacts: **www.frontale.de/press**