

I have looked forward to being present here today and joining the celebrations of the excellent and impressive results achieved by the Green Concrete II Project.

We are facing a huge climate challenge, as I am sure everyone is well aware of.

A challenge which the Danish Government takes very seriously.

During the past 100 years or so, the temperature on Earth has risen by 1 degree as a result of the growing content of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere.

We are faced with extreme weather more and more often, and last year's extremely dry summer was a warning of what to expect in future.

That we need to find solutions could hardly be more obvious.

According to the most recent report from the UN Panel on Climate Change, we can still manage to limit global warming to somewhere in the region of 1.5 to 2 degrees, as stipulated in the Paris Agreement.

If we are to meet this goal, we need to ensure a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and a favourable balance of greenhouse gas emissions from a long-term perspective.

During recent decades, Denmark has been in the top league when it comes to the green transition. Last year, the transition was given additional impetus by way of the Energy Agreement and the Government's initiative on climate and air pollution.

The Government is working hard to achieve Denmark's goal to be climate neutral by 2050 at the latest.

It is an ambitious goal which means that we cannot emit more greenhouse gasses than are being absorbed by nature.

In Denmark, the cement production accounts for slightly more than 2.6 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions. On a global scale, the cement industry accounts for 5 per cent of emissions worldwide.

These numbers are not insignificant by any means.

And as emissions from other sectors are being controlled, emissions from industrial processes will account for an even larger share.

Globally as well as domestically.

For this reason, we have no choice but to develop efficient methods for reducing and handling emissions.

And in doing so, reach our climate goals. As an added bonus this will ensure that Denmark will have a competitive and efficient cement production looking forward. I am well aware of both issues and the specific challenges faced by the cement industry.

The research project Green Concrete II is one giant step in the right direction.

The project partners have managed to develop a new type of concrete without any fly ash, a component which will be available on a decreasing scale in future because of coal being phased out in the energy industry.

Moreover, this new type of concrete has been tried and tested in practice – with positive results.

It is my understanding that use of this new green type of concrete will reduce the CO₂ footprint by 30 per cent compared to the production and use of conventional concrete.

This is very impressive. On a global scale, this equals an annual reduction of 400 million tonnes of carbon dioxide when using this new type of cement.

This is indeed sensational news which places Denmark at the cutting edge of sustainable concrete and cement production.

The large number of international guests at this conference today confirms this very much so.

We have to be ambitious and it is vital that we reduce emissions as much as possible.

However, if we are to eliminate emissions from the cement industry, we need to look at carbon capture and storage options, and in cost-effective ways.

Unfortunately, so far progress in this field has not been all that impressive.

Consequently, the Danish Government is determined to earmark 100 million Danish kroner for dedicated Danish research and development into carbon capture and storage. An investment which will also include technological measures.

The effort is expected to help Danish research institutions and companies establish a foothold in this growth area.

Due to the climate changes, we are faced with a massive challenge which calls for new and innovative solutions to the problems.

Such solutions will not just crop up out of the blue but are often the result of broad collaborative partnerships.

Green Concrete 2 is a great example of this.

Indeed, the interaction between scientists, manufacturers and users has produced ground-breaking results and points towards considerably more eco-friendly concrete production and usage.

It is my sincere hope that this greener type of concrete will gain a wide-spread foothold.

Congratulations on the successful work

- and thank you very much for letting me have the floor.