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Energy efficient buildings save money: Recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

Buildings are at the core of the European Union's prosperity. They are important to achieve EU's energy savings targets and to combat climate change whilst contributing to energy security. An enormous unrealized savings potential lies dormant in buildings. The recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (2002/91/EC) will activate this, also boosting sustainable investments and job creation, often in SMEs, across Europe. More energy efficient buildings provide better living conditions and save money to all citizens. The estimated impact of the recast is energy savings of 60-80 Mtoe in 2020 or the total EU energy consumption will be reduced by 5-6%.

The energy consumption of buildings varies enormously; whilst new buildings can need less than 3 to 5 litres of heating oil or equivalent per square meter floor area and year, the existing buildings stock consumes, on average, about 25 litres per square meter, some buildings even up to 60 litres. Available construction products and installation technologies can drastically improve the building's energy performance – and so reduce its energy consumption – and create net benefits: the annual energy cost savings are exceeding the annual capital costs for the investments. The best moment for energy improvements is when buildings are constructed or they are anyway renovated.

The existing Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, adopted in 2002, is a key element to improve buildings' energy performance. Some Member States have made promising progress in recent years, but the majority still have an enormous untapped potential for improvements. To this end, the Commission sees further room for strengthening the effectiveness and the impact of this Directive.

The recast Directive helps citizens to improve the energy efficiency of their houses and construction industry to build better quality buildings. The macroeconomic estimated impacts are also significant: 5-6% less energy will be used in EU in 2020 (which equals the total current consumption of Belgium and Romania) and about 5% less CO₂ emissions will be emitted in the whole EU in 2020.

With the proposed changes energy performance certificate becomes a real, active energy label of houses. For instance, the certificate has to be included in all advertisements for sales or renting. Also, the certificate with its energy saving recommendations has to be part of the sales and renting documents. Inspections of heating and air conditioning systems will advise consumers to use better these appliances or improve their operation, even replacing if need be. Member States have to ensure a good quality of the certificates and inspections.

The concrete energy performance requirements come from the national or regional building codes. Their level of ambition should be improved. For this, a specific benchmarking system will be used.

The scope of the Directive is broadened and, for example, all existing buildings when they undergo a major renovation should meet certain efficiency levels and not only for those above 1000m² as was in the current Directive.

Member States will develop plans for increased numbers of low or zero energy and carbon buildings, such as passive houses. The public sector should show a leading example investing in such buildings.

The Commission will continue to help Member States implementing this Directive, like with the information service "Buildings Platform"¹. In 2009, the Commission will launch a major "Build-up" initiative to increase the awareness of the whole chain from authorities, to construction industry and citizens on the saving opportunities. New financing schemes are introduced to overcome investment barriers.

More information [here](#).

¹ <http://www.buildingsplatform.eu>