

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 31 March 2009

EuroACE welcomes EP ITRE Committee Vote on EPBD Recast

Today the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee voted on the Recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) proposal, taking the Parliament a significant step further towards adopting a first reading before the June elections.

An important change made to the Commission's proposal is the introduction of a mandatory target for all new buildings to be at least net zero energy by 31 December 2018. The technologies and expertise exist to enable Europe to reach this target; indeed many Member States already have ambitious plans to reduce the energy use in new and existing buildings¹.

EuroACE also commends the leading role that MEPs would like the public sector to take by requiring public sector premises to be upgraded in line with the recommendations given in the Energy Performance Certificate. Such recommendations can only be made if they are cost-optimal.

Two key barriers to progress are a lack of financing and a lack of trained experts. MEPs dealt with both of these. Requirements were introduced for Member States to draw up national action plans on financial and fiscal instruments to increase the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings, and for Member States to implement at least two such instruments listed in new Annex IVa. New requirements were also added to ensure that qualifications are recognised across the EU and that minimum training standards are developed to allow skilled personnel to work throughout the EU.

EuroACE now calls on all MEPs to ensure the plenary session vote takes place in April, or at least BEFORE the June elections, and to adopt the legislative resolution with a strong majority. This is essential to give Member States a clear message on the importance of energy efficiency in buildings.

Rick Wilberforce, President of EuroACE, commented, *“There is an urgent need to adopt this proposal by the end of the year, so that implementation can start as soon as possible. The ITRE Committee vote has taken us one step closer to ensuring this will happen. In particular, the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs have shown real commitment to adopting the report with cross-party agreement on a tight deadline”*.

¹ See results of EuroACE-commissioned surveys on very low energy buildings at <http://www.euroace.org/verylowenergybuildings/index.htm>

For further information:

Amanda Afifi
EU Affairs Manager - EuroACE
Tel. +32 2 639 10 10
E-mail: amanda.afifi@euroace.org

Note to Editors :

The proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the energy performance of buildings (EPBD recast) (COM(2008) 780) was presented as part of the Energy Efficiency Package by the European Commission in November 2008. The recast provides an opportunity to tackle existing market barriers and to set ambitious targets for upgrading the energy efficiency of Europe's building stock.

The economic impact assessment accompanying the proposal provides clear evidence that increased efforts to build new or renovate existing buildings to a very high efficiency standard are cost-optimal. It concludes that, when this proposal is implemented fully and effectively, the European economy will see costs savings of 25 billion euro annually; up to 450,000 direct jobs in the construction sector will be created, not to mention the indirect employment from increased demand for such products and services; the EU's final energy use will be reduced by 5-6% by 2020, thereby contributing to Europe's energy security goals; and, finally, 4-5% of the EU's total CO₂ emissions will be cut by 2020.

EuroACE was formed in 1998 by twenty of Europe's leading companies involved with the manufacture, distribution and installation of energy saving goods and services. EuroACE members have a total turnover of 140 billion Euros and employ 328,000 people in Europe. The mission of EuroACE is to work together with the European institutions to help Europe move towards a more sustainable pattern of energy use in buildings, thereby contributing to Europe's commitments on climate change, energy security and economic growth.

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