

PRESS RELEASE

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Strong push towards very low energy for new buildings needed to stimulate the renovation market

A new study, initiated by EuroACE, concludes that moving towards a very low energy level for new buildings at a faster pace will transform the renovation market by raising overall standards.

The biggest potential for energy and carbon savings lies, of course, in the existing building stock. However, it is important to promote well-performing new constructions because the knowledge and technologies developed by moving to this standard in Building Codes will help the existing building stock to move in the same direction at a quicker pace.

The survey used data collected from five Member States (Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) to calculate the savings potential of their current plans to move towards very low energy in new constructions. All these countries have well-developed plans for moving towards better energy performing buildings in a stepwise approach up to 2020, showing that it is possible for all other Member States to follow in their footsteps.

The survey estimates that, by implementing the national plans of these five Member States, there will be an additional accumulated energy saving of 1,260 petajoules (PJ) by 2020 and a carbon saving of 68 million tonnes. The data was extrapolated to give an indicative estimate of savings if all 27 Member States moved in the same direction, resulting in a 2,550 PJ saving of energy and a carbon saving of 137 million tonnes by 2020. The extrapolation was based on the fact that the five Member States surveyed represent 50% of the total EU population. The energy and carbon saving potential given in the European Commission's Impact Assessment report on the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) is in the same order of magnitude as the savings estimated in this study.

A key factor for promoting very low energy buildings in these countries identified in the survey was the importance for governments to give the construction industry ample warning of long-term strategies on future requirements for new buildings. This would allow the industry to anticipate future required standards for constructing these types of buildings

The EU can also play a very important role. The EPBD, while not requiring Member States to strengthen their building requirements, has motivated at least eight Member States to go beyond the current requirements and set long-term strategies for ensuring that new buildings are constructed to a high energy performance level by 2020. The EU is well-positioned to guide those Member States, who have yet to develop plans on low energy buildings, by showcasing the work being done in active Member States. The current

recasting of the EPBD provides the perfect opportunity for setting this guidance, both for new and existing buildings.

The recast of the EPBD should also be used to promote the public sector as a “front runner” for very low energy buildings. The survey showed that there is a lack of initiatives in the five Member States to promote low energy buildings in the public sector. Given that the recommendations in an Energy Performance Certificate must be cost-optimal, the EPBD recast should require that public sector buildings be upgraded in line with the given recommendations.

EuroACE suggests the following amendment to Article 9 (Buildings of which both carbon dioxide emissions and primary energy consumption are low or equal to zero) in the EPBD recast:

Members States *shall* develop national strategies to ensure that:

- all new buildings are low carbon and low energy by 2012
- a majority is zero carbon and zero energy by 2015
- all new buildings are zero carbon and zero energy by 2020

The existing building stock should be low or zero carbon and low or zero energy, wherever this is cost-optimal.

Separate targets and strategies shall be set for:

- existing residential buildings
- existing non-residential buildings
- buildings occupied by public authorities

Member States shall require buildings referred to in point (c) to play a leading role in achieving low or zero carbon and low or zero energy performance levels in the national strategies by ensuring that all new such buildings are low or zero carbon and low or zero energy by 2012.

The full report can be downloaded from www.euroace.org and from the [SBI website](#).

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Note to Editors :

One of the prescribed actions on buildings in the Communication from the European Commission “Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential” (COM(2006) 545) is for the Commission to develop a strategy before 2009 to promote the widespread deployment of very low energy buildings by 2015. The Commission’s proposal for recasting the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD - COM(2008) 780) requires Member States to actively promote the uptake of buildings where both the carbon emissions and primary energy consumption are low or equal to zero.

In this context, a first survey by the Danish Building Research Institute (SBI) was released in March 2008 to gain an overview of the current activities in EU countries regarding a higher uptake of very low energy buildings i.e. buildings designed to a significantly higher standard of energy efficiency than minimum requirements of national building regulations.

This second survey, entitled “Towards very low energy buildings – Energy Saving and CO₂ emission reduction by changing European building regulations to very low energy standards” (SBI 2009:03), goes a step further by investigating the energy and carbon savings related to the wider introduction of very low energy buildings in five Member States with well-developed plans for moving towards such buildings.

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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