

BBRI/Enerbuild
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**The future Directive on energy performance of buildings
and the 6th Framework Programme Research**

**The need for non-technological research,
in ten points and ten minutes!**
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To day, we look at research: *What kind of activities should FP6 consider in order to create the Networks of Excellence in support of the future Directive on energy performance of buildings?* In accordance with Kurt Eriksen (VELUX), I will look at research needs with respect to non-technological research in general, while he looks at technological research specifically related to the current draft Directive

Social research

1 What is the reason why so few house owners take ‘ownership’ of the problem of energy consumption of their house? They know they can save energy, they know they can protect the environment, and yet the general public remains rather passive when it comes to energy savings in houses. That situation merits social research and in particular research about possible remedies (social remedies, legal remedies, economic remedies, etc)

2 In the same context, what is needed before politicians, regulators and officials (who all know about the potential of energy savings in buildings) start taking vigorous action? This is rather political research but it is needed very much too.

Economic research

3 In the (present) system of descriptive standards, a manufacturer can use the product tests in all countries of the EEA. Soon, with energy performance standards, the calculation differs from country to country, from region to region. The danger is real that the energy performance standards will lead to a proliferation of calculating methods (also given the fact that there could be many innovative systems), and thus to an increase of costs. A kind of observatory to keep and up-date all European data about the different calculating methods could be a cost-savings measure. Research is needed about the feasibility of such an observatory.

4 There is again the possibility that some kind of EU energy tax sees the day light before the end of the year. In The Netherlands exists a ‘*kleinverbruikertax*’, a tax for small users. Small users are house owners and similar. Is this concept of an energy tax for heating of houses applicable all over the Union? What are the economic and political conditions?

5 The 'opposite' instrument of taxation is subsidy. There exist numerous tax advantages and subsidies to promote energy savings in buildings (or they did exist in the past). A comparative study is very useful: What kinds of schemes do exist? What is effective? What about the efficiency of the various schemes? How to feed the schemes (funding)? Etc.

6 On the borderline of economic and legal issues: what are the possibilities available to, and the problems encountered by public bodies to play a leading avant-garde role to promote energy savings in buildings (the problem of public purchasing)?

7 In the shipping world, the concept of a logbook is daily practice. The owner and operator can retrace everything that happened with the ship ever since its first day of sailing. Such information saves time and money whenever repairs are needed. Would a similar concept be economical in the building sector? It would mean that every dwelling has a logbook in which all maintenance, repairs and alterations are noted. The owner as well as the inhabitant has the obligation for keeping the logbook. A well-maintained logbook is a first (but certainly not sufficient) indication at the moment of selling or renting out the dwelling. Research into systems of logbooks for dwellings is very much welcome indeed.

Legal research

8 Developers make publicity about the (low) energy consumption of the houses on offer. Can they be held liable under the legislation for consumer protection? Is a liability scheme conceivable at national and/or regional level? Question of liability also applies for energy audits and the certificates thereof. What is the liability of the issuer? What is the contractual guarantee for the users? Can the EU consumer protection policy be used to give more security to house buyers and users? Research is welcome, especially given the fact that the envisaged new Directive imposes the use of energy certificates..

9 The Union has a good record in environmental policy. Air pollution control is one element of this EU policy. There exist two legislative texts with eventual potential for reducing emissions from heating, i.e. the Decision 1999/296/EEC on annual reports about air pollution and on remedies against the pollution; and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive 2001/81/EC. Could these ceiling on allowed emissions as well as the reporting procedure be used to reduce air pollution from heating and cooling? It is worth researching.

10 The Member States are in charge of implementing the Directives. This requires important legal work. European collaboration in relation to the philosophies and lessons learned from the various countries might well be beneficial for all those involved. It is also worth researching.

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