Press Release

Brussels, 18th November 2009

For immediate release

For more information, please contact:

Andoni Hidalgo
Eurima
Tel: 02/626 2092
Email: andoni.hidalgo@eurima.org

EU LEADERSHIP ON BUILDINGS CONFIRMED
(EPBD - Energy Performance of Buildings Directive)

Eurima, the European Insulation Manufacturers Association, congratulates the parties involved in the trialogue discussions on the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) on results reached at yesterday's meeting.

"*This achievement will help change buildings from energy wasters to climate savers"*, said Jan te Bos, Director-General of Eurima.

With buildings accounting for 40% of Europe's entire energy consumption, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) recast was a key opportunity to contribute to provide energy and climate security for the future generations – ambition was therefore not an option but a necessity.

"*Over the recent years"* -continued Jan te Bos- *"Eurima has been working with many stakeholders to put the energy efficiency and climate change mitigation potential of buildings at the top of the European agenda. But intentions needed to be translated into concrete legislative action. We are now satisfied to see that decision-makers have successfully concluded a tangible result after months of hard negotiations on often highly technical matters*".

The role of the building sector is crucial if Europe wants to address its future economic and environmental challenges. Yet, this great potential was not correctly addressed by the legislative framework.

Indeed, energy use by new and existing buildings can be cut in half through simple measures such as wall and roof insulation; a study released in 2006[1] showed that, with a barrel of oil at 70 USD, legislative action upgrading the energy efficiency of the building stock would save the EU up to 270 billion Euro a year in energy costs. Additionally it would reduce CO_2 emissions by 460 million tonnes annually and create up to an estimated 530,000 'green collar' jobs in Europe.

Significant Improvements

The most significant improvements brought by yesterday's agreement include the removal of the 1,000m^2 threshold for renovation in existing residential buildings which avoids the exclusion of 70% of the building stock from the scope of the Directive and the setting of minimum energy performance requirements when a building element is refurbished or retrofitted. This is a major step forward for the improvement of the energy performance of existing buildings. In addition, the agreement on a 'Nearly Zero Energy Buildings' definition and compliance for all new buildings by 2020, with public buildings leading by example by 2018, is a huge recognition of the role that our homes and buildings play in the reduction of CO_2 emissions and climate discussions.

Still work to be done

Yesterday's agreement is a major step in the right direction, putting an European 'drop of optimism' in the recent negative atmosphere surrounding the forthcoming Copenhagen negotiations, but the EU should not forget that this is just the start of an even more difficult and challenging path. Now there is very serious work to be done on implementation and compliance, by transposition of the Directive by all Member States and implementation measures through Comitology in cooperation with Parliament and the Commission. In addition, the forthcoming Energy Efficiency Action Plan should propose further ambitious and detailed measures for the renovation of all existing buildings towards very low energy standards before 2050.

Eurima is convinced that the decision on the EPBD recast reaffirms Europe's position and leadership on energy efficiency in buildings and that this example is followed by all stakeholders involved in the discussions at COP 15 in Copenhagen in December.

[1] "*Sensitivity Analysis of Cost Effective Climate Protection in the EU Building Stock*", Ecofys VI - June 2006

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Eurima

- Eurima members manufacture mineral wool insulation products. These products are used in residential and commercial buildings as well as industrial facilities. Glass and stone wool insulation secure a high level of comfort, low energy costs and minimised CO_2 emissions. Mineral wool insulation prevents heat loss through roofs, walls, floors, pipes and boilers, reduces noise pollution and protects homes and industrial facilities from the risk of fire.

2. The Eurima Ecofys studies

Since 2002, Eurima has been working with Ecofys, an independent and international consultancy specialised in energy saving and renewable energy solutions, to develop a deeper understanding of the potential from buildings. These studies have revealed that:

- Buildings account for 40% of Europe's CO_2 emissions but thermal insulation could cut these emissions in half [Ecofys I, 2002];
- In its current form the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) will capture only 10% of the potential from buildings but a fully extended EPBD could reduce total emissions from buildings by 460 million tonnes a year [Ecofys II, 2004 and V, 2005];
- Capturing the potential from buildings would save Europe 270 billion Euro a year in energy costs, based on a price scenario of 70 USD a barrel of oil), [Ecofys III 2005, IV 2005 and VI 2006], whilst creating up to an estimated 530,000* jobs in Europe.

3. Energy Use in Buildings

- Currently over 40% of all Europe's energy is used in buildings, this is more than is used in either transport or industry;
- Measures such as roof and wall insulation can cut this energy use in half, reducing energy use across the EU by 20%, saving the equivalent of 3.3 million barrels of oil a day.

4. Cost Savings from Action

- A concerted effort to reduce energy use in buildings across the EU 25 would save Europeans, at recent energy price levels, approximately 270 billion Euro a year in energy costs;
- This figure is based on a finding of the Ecofys VI (2006) study, which used the "then" peak price of 70 USD a barrel of oil as a basis for the calculation; the most recent peak price (22 May 2008) was 135 USD a barrel.

5. Environmental Benefits

- The major environmental benefit from reducing energy use in buildings is a decrease in carbon dioxide emissions;
- The technical potential from buildings across the EU is a CO_2 emission reduction of 460 million tonnes (Mt) per year, which is more than the EU's total Kyoto commitment;
- If a concerted action was launched today to improve energy efficiency in buildings, a CO_2 emission reduction of 83 Mt per year by 2010 could be achieved with this figure rising to 144 Mt per year by 2015 and the technical potential of 460 Mt per year being reached by 2032.

5. Job Potential

- Improving energy efficiency in buildings would require a major effort to renovate existing homes, which has the potential to create significant jobs across the EU;
- It is estimated that a concerted effort to improve energy efficiency in buildings would lead to the creation of the equivalent of up to 530,000* full time jobs across the EU 25;
- These jobs would remain for the entire period of the renovation cycle, e.g. 30 years.

* Eurima estimate

For further information on energy efficiency in buildings, please visit www.eurima.org or contact:

Andoni Hidalgo
Eurima
Avenue Louise 375, Box 4
1050 Brussels
Phone: +32 (0)2 626 2092
Fax: +32 (0)2 626 2099
andoni.hidalgo@eurima.org