Open letter to European Heads of State on the occasion of the Spring European Summit’s discussion of energy and climate security

EURIMA CALLS ON EUROPEAN HEADS OF STATE TO SUPPORT AMBITIOUS AND BINDING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION TARGETS

In the run-up to this year’s Spring Summit all eyes are turned towards Europe. Expectation is high that European Heads of State will show political leadership on climate change and demonstrate that a transition towards a low carbon economy can benefit the environment and the economy.

Eurima therefore calls on all European Heads of State to support, as a minimum, the European Commission’s proposal for a binding 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and a 30% emission reduction target within international negotiations as endorsed by both Environment and Energy Ministers. With growing evidence that significant emission reductions are needed to prevent the most serious consequences from global warming, Europe’s most senior politicians must give a strong and unambiguous signal this Spring. Such a signal being essential, to provide the stable political environment that is needed so that business can bring its energy to bear to support governments in turning words into action.

FIVE REASONS TO ACT

Demonstrating action will be the next critical step. The EU must show the world that climate security and economic competitiveness can go hand in hand. To do this, Europe will need to act in buildings. Buildings are the largest source of CO₂ emissions in Europe, but also present the largest opportunity for cost-effective action. If Europe is to reduce emissions and create jobs and growth, than the place to begin action is in buildings. This is why at Eurima, we believe there are five good reasons to act¹:

REASON 1 40% of Europe’s total energy consumption is used by buildings. Half of this energy use could be saved through simple measures such roof and wall insulation

REASON 2 € 270 billion is the amount of money that a lack of energy efficiency in buildings can cost the European Union every year

REASON 3 3.3 million barrels of oil is the amount of energy that could be saved each day, if buildings were made more energy efficient

REASON 4 460 million tonnes of carbon dioxide could be reduced each year through cost-effective measures in buildings

REASON 5 up to 530,000 jobs would be created in Europe through an ambitious strategy to improve energy efficiency in buildings

ZERO REASONS NOT TO ACT

Improving energy efficiency in buildings will make a real difference and does not imply sacrifices. Europeans get warmer, quieter more comfortable buildings and lower costs; governments get more energy security, reduced climate emissions and more money to use fuelling the economy rather than buildings. This leaves zero reasons for Europe’s Heads of State not to act.

As we move towards this year’s Summit, Eurima’s key message is that the time to act is long overdue and we call on Europe’s leaders to request that the European Commission bring together stakeholders in the building chain to seize this huge potential. Eurima members are willing and able to help; all that is needed is a request from Heads of State to do so.

Jakob Sørensen
President, Eurima

¹ For more information on the above mentioned figures, please visit www.eurima.org
Background Information

1. Eurima
   • Eurima is the European Association of Insulation Manufacturers and represents the interests of all major mineral wool insulation producers throughout Europe. Eurima members employ over 20,000 people across Europe with the installation of insulation products accounting for an estimated 300,000 man-years.
   • 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 CO₂ 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. 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.

3. Cost Savings from Action
   • A concerted effort to reduce energy use in buildings across the EU 25 could save Europeans approximately €270 billion a year in energy costs.
   • This figure is based on a finding of the Ecofys VI (2006) study.

4. 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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.

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