EURIMA POSITION PAPER ON THE GREEN PAPER ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Who is EURIMA: EURIMA represents the European manufacturers of mineral wool insulation, the materials used in walls, floors and roofs to keep buildings warm in winter, cool in summer. EURIMA members employ over 20,000 people across Europe. The installation of our products is estimated to produce 300,000 jobs annually.

What is at stake in Europe: Europe is facing a double energy challenge. On one hand energy prices are soaring and reliance on foreign energy supplies is expected to grow to 70% of Europe’s energy consumption by 2030. On the other hand Europe needs to drastically reduce CO₂ emissions in order to effectively combat climate change. These two energy challenges are coupled with the immediate concern of bolstering Europe’s competitiveness and employment as part of the Lisbon Agenda. This means that any solutions to this double challenge must be cost-effective.

The role of buildings: As highlighted in the Vidal-Quadras Report, buildings are the largest consumer of energy in Europe, representing over 40% of total consumption. In addition, it is possible to reduce this energy use by using tried and tested technologies. This energy reduction can also be achieved whilst not only saving money but also liberating energy to be used to fuel the economy rather than our homes.

The Green Paper on Energy Efficiency: EURIMA welcomes the Commission’s Green Paper and supports the direction of the Vidal-Quadras Report. However, there are two areas where the European Parliament must show greater ambition. First, regarding existing residential buildings and second, in dealing with the crisis in the new Member States of the EU regarding high-rise multi family housing.

1. Capturing the potential from existing residential buildings: EURIMA urges MEPs to support amendment number 11 of Fiona Hall related to the extension of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). To explain:
   - The scope of the EPBD needs to be extended to all existing residential buildings smaller than 1000 m² as this is where the real potential lies. Such an extension however must be done appropriately to ensure that sensible cost-effective improvements are made and that individuals are not overburdened. Amendment 11 of Fiona Hall will do this, by simply ensuring that when component elements of buildings are improved (e.g. a new roof is added, windows are replaced) that these components are brought up to current new build standards. This ensures the most cost-effective approach, whilst not missing the opportunity to improve energy efficiency when it arises.

   Justification: Recent studies commissioned by EURIMA demonstrate that an extended Energy Performance of Buildings Directive could save the EU 8 billion EURO a year by 2010 rising to 14.5 billion EURO by 2015, whilst creating up to an estimated 530,000 new jobs.

2. Ensuring an adequate structural funding for energy efficient improvements of multi-family housing in the new Member States: EURIMA urges MEPs to support amendment 8 of Fiona Hall regarding increasing the ceiling for the funding of buildings under the European Regional Development Fund Regulation (ERDF) from the proposed 2% to 10%. To explain:
   - Recent work by the International Energy Agency (IEA) demonstrates that the total costs related to improving the high-rise building stock in the new Member States of the EU is approximately 25 billion EURO. The current 2% ceiling would provide maximum 2.5 billion EURO of investment for these buildings and is clearly insufficient, notwithstanding own contributions from the new Member States. To take this crisis seriously, a ceiling of 10% of total ERDF funding should be stipulated, so that countries and regions who need to improve housing can do so as part of inter-urban regeneration projects.

   Justification: The poorest and most vulnerable members of society in the new Member States live in high-rise buildings. With energy prices increasing and national subsidies for heating being reduced, the impact on this section of society could be dramatic if such buildings are not renovated to make them more energy efficient. In addition, with significant quantities of oil and gas being used to heat these homes, leaving them energy inefficient, this leaves the new Member States more vulnerable to price fluctuations and more vulnerable to political pressure from major energy suppliers in the region.