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BUILDINGS – A WASTED OPPORTUNITY TO SECURE EUROPE’S ENERGY?
EURIMA comment’s on today’s release of a European Green Paper on a European Strategy for Secure, Competitive and Sustainable Energy for Europe

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With 40% of Europe’s energy used in buildings, energy efficiency could become a new fuel for Europe and play a vital role in making Europe more energy secure. Europe currently uses the equivalent of more than 6 million barrels of oil per day to heat its homes and offices. Simple measures such as roof and wall insulation could cut this energy use by the equivalent of 3.3 million barrels of oil a day – or 700 000 more barrels of oil than the EU imports from Russia on a daily basis. Unlike simply finding more energy from other providers, a concerted EU 25 effort to reduce energy use in buildings, would already be saving the EU 14.5 billion EURO a year by 2015, whilst also creating up to the equivalent of 530,000 full time jobs.

Commenting on today’s release by the Commission of its Green Paper, Horst Biedermann, Director General of Eurima, said,

“Energy efficiency in buildings can become Europe’s new fuel and help to make Europe a world leader on energy efficiency. Instead of looking for more energy from politically unstable parts of the world, EURIMA thinks it is time to tap into the reserves that we have sitting in our buildings all across Europe. Energy efficiency has the potential to fuel our economy and fuel our job growth, whilst dramatically reducing our impact on the environment.”

Biedermann continued, “EURIMA is pleased to see that the Commission’s Green Paper recognises that energy efficiency must play a vital role in helping to improve Europe’s security of energy supply. However, it is time to move from words to action. And that action must involve capturing the potential from Europe’s buildings if we want to see energy efficiency in buildings become Europe’s newest and cleanest fuel.”

Biedermann concluded, “It’s time for a real concerted action on buildings, an action that must include an extended European Directive on Energy Performance in Buildings as well as significant levels of structural funds being made available for housing projects in the new Member States of the EU.”
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.
- The energy used to heat our homes and offices is the equivalent of 6 million barrels of oil a day (i.e. 280 million tones of oil equivalent per year).
- Simple measures such as roof and wall insulation have the potential to cut this energy use in half, reducing energy use across the EU by 20% and saving the equivalent of 3.3 million barrels of oil a day (i.e. 154 million tones of oil equivalent per year).

COST SAVINGS FROM ACTION

- A concerted effort to reduce energy use in buildings across the EU 25 would save Europeans approximately 8 billion EURO a year by 2010 rising to 14.5 billion EURO a year by 2015. These are net savings and take into account the cost of materials and labour to carry out the renovations.
- The above figures break down in the following way:
  - EU 15 – savings would be around 7.5 billion EURO a year by 2010 rising to around 13.5 billion EURO by 2010;
  - EU 10 – savings would be close to half a billion EURO by 2010 rising to 1 billion EURO by 2015.
- The cost savings are less in the EU 10 for two main reasons. Firstly, the amount of floor space is one tenth of that in the EU 15 and secondly energy costs for heating have been traditionally lower due to government subsidies.
- The costs savings are calculated based on 2002 energy costs, and therefore the potential costs savings are conservative in light of the recent increases in the price of oil and gas.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- 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 Kyoto commitment.
- If a concerted action were 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.

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.
- The job potentials is split into a potential of 300,000 for the EU 15 and 230,000 for the EU 10.
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.

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