

Press Release

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CONVERTING BUILDINGS FROM ENERGY WASTERS TO CLIMATE SAVERS

A new Europe-wide study provides a roadmap for turning homes and offices from being the biggest source of energy use in Europe to becoming Europe's biggest climate saver

With 40% of Europe's energy used in buildings, they represent Europe's single biggest source of carbon dioxide emissions. With it possible to slash this energy use in half through simple measures such as wall and roof insulation, they are arguably Europe's biggest energy waster. If Europe and national governments are serious about tackling climate change, finding a way to turn buildings from energy wasters into climate savers will be key; a new report shows how this can be done.

Better Buildings through Energy Efficiency - a Roadmap for Europe provides a clear path towards seizing the huge energy efficiency potential from buildings. A potential that could save Europe €270 billion a year in energy costs and reduce energy use by the equivalent of 3.3 million barrels of oil a day whilst creating up to 530,000 new jobs. The report, based on best practice examples from across Europe, demonstrates that it can be done and that it has been done.

"Better Buildings through Energy Efficiency, provides policy makers with the toolbox to transform Europe's buildings from energy waster to climate savers," explained Jan te Bos, Director General of Eurima. Mr te Bos continued, "now that we have clarity on what needs to be done, its time for Europe's governments to simply get it done".

Better Buildings through Energy Efficiency provides a number of specific recommendations for all building types. However, a number of general conclusions can be drawn from this Europe-wide report.

- **It can be done:** The study clearly demonstrates that for all situations, the right combination of measures can deliver significant improvements.
- **Tenure matters, regions don't:** Surprisingly, the combination of elements needed to deliver important changes are practically the same everywhere in Europe. However, the tenure situation (private/public) and the type of building (new/existing) calls for different combinations of instruments.
- **Help me don't tell me:** Information alone seems to deliver extremely limited results. Awareness of the need to act is high, what is missing is a helping hand to support individuals and organisations through the complex process of improving a building.
- **Upfront money is key:** Although energy efficiency improvements pay back many times over, ensuring that money is available for the upfront investment is essential.
- **Rules do help:** For new buildings legally binding rules make a real difference; for existing buildings, rules on minimum standards for renovation help, especially when combined with financing and a helping hand.

Note to editors: The full report, Better Buildings through Energy Efficiency - a Roadmap for Europe, is available to be downloaded from www.eurima.org. For hard copies please contact: Lena Esteves (lena.esteves@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 would save Europeans, at recent peak 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 uses today's energy costs as the basis for future energy prices.

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.