

Press Release

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For more information, please contact:

For immediate release

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

“Energy efficiency’s potential still awaiting to be fully exploited” says Eurima

Eurima, the European Insulation Manufacturers Association, considers that the Energy Efficiency Plan 2011, adopted today by the European Commission, lacks the clear vision and ambition that an EU strategic document should have. This is why Eurima calls on the EU to urgently gear up its consideration of energy efficiency from a “*would be nice to have*” to a “*must have*”, placing specific emphasis on buildings, where the largest potential for energy savings lies.

“The Commission acknowledges the need to take action”, said Jan te Bos, Eurima’s Director General “and indeed there are some positive measures proposed - for instance the initiative to refurbish 3% of the EU’s public buildings annually. But the Plan lacks an overall strategic vision of where we want to go in the long term. It seems that the EU may once again miss the opportunity to tackle the full potential that energy efficiency offers”.

However, Eurima thinks that this lack of vision can be solved to a large extent by specific proposals to be adopted later this year. Indeed, the adopted Plan can still pave the way for the Framework Directive or Directives on energy savings and the forthcoming Energy 2050 Roadmap. Eurima strongly encourages the Commission to again assume its important role as the “engine of the EU” and take this golden opportunity to transform its current timid intentions into specific, bold action, with ambitious long-term goals and a clear pathway to achieve them.

“It is widely admitted” continues te Bos “that the EU goal of cutting its CO₂ emissions by 80-95% in 2050 would simply be unattainable without a drastic reduction of energy use, and that without strong action in EU buildings, energy efficiency is just mere cosmetic make-up. There is no reason to be shy: the Parliament already gave a strong signal last December with its opinion on the Energy Efficiency Plan, and Member States such as Germany and France have already adopted very ambitious national strategies on the subject”.

2011 is a key year for demonstrating that the EU is serious about reaching its long-term targets. The Energy Roadmap must propose a binding target of 80% reduction of energy use in the EU building stock by 2050, tracing back to the present to determine the necessary actions to be started immediately, with realistic but ambitious scenarios.

The Framework Directive or Directives on Energy Efficiency must be clear and determined with regard to the tools to be used. These may include energy savings obligations, energy performance contracts and certificates that promote the uptake of ambitious projects for deep renovation of buildings. It is essential, however, that these avoid the counter-productive “locking-in” effects of “cream-skimming” refurbishments. Member States must implement these policies and measures by establishing detailed and coherent national roadmaps for refurbishing their building stock to nearly-zero energy levels in the 40 years to come.

“Europe is currently in a transition period from an old model of energy demand and supply to a new one” said te Bos “and the Commission’s Plan, although showing some fresh air and new ideas, still stays too much in the confines of the old model. This transition is about changing organisation, policy priorities and allocation of Community, Member State and private funds from a model that prioritises and starts with supply investment and management, into a new, smart, environmentally friendly and economically sensible way of first tackling demand, and acting first where the biggest and most cost-effective investments and savings can be made”. ENDS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Eurima

- Eurima is the European Insulation Manufacturers Association 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 and save the EU 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 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 is over 110 USD a barrel. The cost savings potential is therefore even higher.

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.

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.
- These jobs would remain for the entire period of the renovation cycle, e.g. 30 years.

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

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