For immediate release

“EU leaders convey unclear energy message to citizens” says the European Insulation Manufacturers Association

European leaders meeting at today’s Energy and Innovation Summit delivered a confusing message to EU citizens, according to the European Insulation Manufacturers Association, Eurima.

While EU Heads of State and Government acknowledged that the EU will miss its 2020 energy efficiency targets and actually made a call for the 20% target to be met -therefore giving a clear message to EU Energy Ministers ahead of their meeting on 28 February- they did not propose any really effective action to address this failure.

“The EU leaders have recognised that the energy efficiency target must be met, which is positive, but they are unclear as to how to get there. While common sense dictates that reducing energy consumption is the first and most cost-effective step, they prefer to concentrate on tackling the supply of energy, which is doing it upside down”, said Jan te Bos, Eurima’s Director General.

The European Commission has recently announced that only 9% energy savings will be achieved by 2020 (less than half of the 20% target), and President Barroso stated in January that “the way that the process is being pursued is far from perfect.”

Despite these clear calls -and numerous warnings from top industry and civil society representatives- EU leaders were content today with agreeing to continue monitoring developments, while pushing a further review of the energy efficiency target to 2013. Instead of tackling the problem at its origin and using the easiest solution (reducing the energy demand), the European Council appears to have chosen to focus on highly costly and often unnecessary investments in the energy supply network.

Regarding buildings -where, as it has been repeatedly demonstrated, immediate and huge savings are technically feasible and economically viable- the EU leaders’ proposal is weak and unclear. The only new element in this respect is a proposal to include energy efficiency standards in “relevant” public buildings through public procurement.

“This proposal does not give the much needed political impulse for bold action in this sector” added te Bos. “Taking into account that public buildings make up only 8% of the total number of buildings in the EU, the expected impact is lower than what could be achieved if a really ambitious EU building initiative was launched.”

Eurima has long advocated ambitious action in reducing energy consumption by tackling the energy inefficiencies of existing buildings. Buildings use 40% of the EU’s energy, and are the source of 36% of the EU’s CO2 emissions, and it is widely accepted that the EU’s medium- and long-term environmental and energy goals cannot be achieved without strong action on buildings.

“Citizens” concluded Jan te Bos “expect EU leaders to provide clear political guidance on issues of concern to them. It is true that there are a number of other pressing economic and social problems on the agenda. But the fact is that they all could be addressed by strong, significant action on energy efficiency.”
efficiency in general, and on buildings in particular: this would create hundreds of thousands of jobs, contribute to the economic recovery by boosting the construction sector, and -last but not least-address other compelling issues like security of supply and energy poverty.

Buildings can realistically and cost-effectively reduce their enormous energy consumption by 80% using existing technologies. The only element lacking for following this path is the political ambition."

ENDS

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 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 was just over 90 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](http://www.eurima.org) or contact:

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