PARLIAMENT FACES FIRST POST-SUMMIT TEST ON CLIMATE POLICY

In the wake of the European Summit's historic conclusions to tackle climate change, Eurima asks whether the European Parliament is serious about delivering on climate and energy security.

One week after the European Council adopted an historic commitment to deal with climate and energy security, the European Parliament has to decide whether to take position on Europe’s Energy Efficiency Action Plan. The European Council has put energy efficiency at the top of the agenda for meeting Europe’s climate challenge. Eurima therefore calls on the European Parliament to maintain its leadership position by deciding to launch an own initiative report on the Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

“The hard work of turning commitments into deliverables starts now” explained Jan te Bos, Director General of Eurima. Mr te Bos continued, “The European Parliament has the opportunity to use the momentum of the Spring Summit to create a real agenda of action on energy efficiency. To do so, it must take position on the Commission’s Energy Efficiency Action Plan and to take position now”.

Creating an agenda of action for energy efficiency is essential. Every day in Europe, just in buildings, a lack of simple energy efficiency measures are leading to the equivalent of 3.3 million barrels of oil being wasted. At recent peak oil price levels, this costs Europe 270 billion euro a year and means that 460 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions (more than the total Kyoto Commitment) are unnecessarily emitted. Whilst Eurima welcomes the strong commitments made by Heads of State, it’s time to begin the hard work of delivering these commitments and energy efficiency is the place to start.

“The Summit has changed the goal posts when it comes to climate and energy policy. To keep its leadership position on this issue, the European Parliament must take this opportunity to define what can and should be done to deliver energy efficiency,” explained Jakob Sørensen, Eurima’s President.

To give an idea of what could be done, Eurima proposes five areas for immediate action:

1. **Lead by example**: Public procurement accounts for 16% of Europe’s GDP - it is time that all public buildings are shining examples for energy efficiency.

2. **Implement and extend the EPBD**: The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive has a huge potential - it is time to speed up implementation and ensure all buildings are covered by renovation requirements.

3. **Set ambitious national targets**: The Energy Services Directive requires all Member States to reduce energy use by 1% per year - it is time to go well beyond this and follow the example of leading Member States and propose at least a 2% annual target.

4. **Invest in buildings**: Up front finance is one of the main barriers to improved energy efficiency in buildings - it is time to create financing schemes for the renovation of existing buildings.

5. **Adopt a strategy on passive houses**: Thanks to better insulation and improved heating and cooling technologies, it is now possible to build houses that produce more energy than they use - it is time to turn this technology into the norm for all new buildings.
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.

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.