CEOs Slam Lack of Political Will on Energy Efficiency as Part of New ‘Renovate Europe’ Campaign

Brussels, 2 May 2011 – Industry leaders of some of Europe’s leading companies and organisations published last week an open letter to EU Member State energy ministers urging them to refocus Europe’s energy policy on promoting the energy efficiency of buildings.

Europe’s energy ministers meet today in Budapest, Hungary, to discuss Europe’s energy strategy to 2050. The letter, which is being published in Le Monde (FR), Financial Times (UK), Berlinske (DK), Handelsblatt (DE), and the European Voice (EU) warns that any effective European energy policy should give reducing energy demand as much political weight as ensuring energy supply.

Despite environmental disasters as well as turmoil in the energy market, recent weeks have seen European governments seek to water down attempts to propose ambitious Europe wide measures that promote the energy efficiency of buildings. For example, European governments have sought to push back on a suggested requirement on governments to renovate 3% of public buildings each year. Governments across Europe are already expected to fail to meet previously agreed targets for achieving energy efficiency improvements by 2020.

“Energy efficiency is the silver bullet to our energy challenges that governments seem unwilling to fire.” said Tony Robson, CEO of Knauf Insulation and one of the signatories of the letter. “The deep renovation of our buildings will reduce our exposure to foreign energy shocks, combat climate change and create 2 million new jobs. It is a political no-brainer but so far there has been very little action. This is why we have joined the Renovate Europe Campaign.”

Europe’s buildings consume around a third of its energy, around the same amount of energy produced by the nuclear and coal sectors together. The European Commission estimates that up to 2 million new jobs would be created through the deep renovation of Europe’s existing buildings.

“Energy ministers have a once in a generation opportunity to shape Europe’s future. We can continue to build increasing numbers of power stations and increase our energy imports or we can start to take real action to reduce demand. The costs of inaction are clear to all.” said Jakob Sørensen, Senior Vice President at Rockwool International, a member of Renovate Europe.

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For further information go to http://www.renovate-europe.eu

• MAIN CONTACT
  David Turier
  Phone: +32 479 649 479
  Email: renovate-europe@fleishman.com

• France
  Pascal Eveillard
  Phone: +33 6 81 48 85 86
  Email: renovate-europe@fleishman.com

• DENMARK
  Susanne Dryboel
  Phone: + 45 2428 9345
  Email: renovate-europe@fleishman.com

• GERMANY
  Martin Bornholdt
  Phone: +49 179 488 798 7
  Email: renovate-europe@fleishman.com

Note to editors:

The Renovate Europe campaign was initiated by a range of industry leaders, with a focus on EU, national, regional and local policy levels. It is an ambitious roadmap on how to triple the renovation rate in Europe by 2020 and achieve an average improvement in energy performance of ~ 80%. Renovate Europe is solution neutral, each building has its own specificity, therefore policymakers should emphasize performance over specific technology.

The companies supporting this campaign stand ready and willing to help national and European policymakers Renovate Europe. We must work together to create local jobs, reduce Europe’s CO2 footprint and ensure that we are less likely to suffer from foreign energy shocks.

Signatories to the open letter include:

EURIMA
KNAUF
Pilkington Glass
Rockwool
Solutia
Velux

Kingspan
Philips Lighting
Pu Europe
Saint- Gobain
United Technologies