

Without building renovation Europe's energy and climate policies will fail

2016 could be the year Europe is transformed by a new ambitious energy policy. It could be the year Europe honours a bold commitment to keep climate change in check.

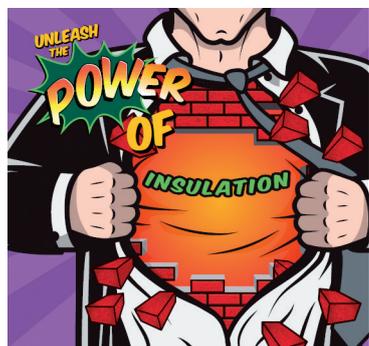
It could be a historic year for change.

But all these plans are set for failure unless Europe commits to renovating existing buildings to nearly-zero energy use.

It's not rocket science. Buildings are the biggest consumers of energy in Europe accounting for 40% of the European Union's total energy bill and 36% of its CO₂ emissions.

"If renovation is not an integral part of any future energy and climate policy, that policy will fail at every stage from securing supply to our decarbonisation goals. If renovation is not implemented by policy makers, those policy makers will fail their countries and fail Europe," says Jan te Bos, Director General of Eurima.

Eurima believes that Europe needs to make a solid commitment to renovating existing buildings to nearly-zero energy use (nZEB) by 2050 backed by setting a national limit for heating and cooling energy demand.



And it's not just Eurima that is calling for energy renovation to be the foundation of a successful climate-friendly energy policy for Europe.

A recent Heating and Cooling Strategy report produced by the European Commission found that a staggering 79% of total final energy use in EU households is used to heat homes and provide hot water.

Cutting this consumption could be easily achieved, said the report, with up to 70% of space heating reduced by energy-saving renovation.

And the potential of buildings is huge. Two-thirds of the EU's buildings were built when energy efficiency requirements were limited or non-existent and most of these will still be around in 2050. "Big savings can be made through simple renovations such as insulating attics, walls and foundations. And these upgrades make indoor environments more comfortable and healthier," added te Bos.



Energy efficiency is also needed to make Europe's COP21 commitment a reality. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has said that two-thirds of the EU's low carbon energy infrastructure to 2040 needs to be in energy efficiency to achieve Europe's pledge to keep global warming below 2°C.

According to the IEA, an average of €178 billion annually needs to be invested to keep the EU on track. "That equates to at least an eightfold increase in energy efficiency investment compared to 2013 levels," a recent IEA report stated.

Energy efficiency has also been highlighted as 'Europe's first fuel' by the Commission and is a key dimension of the Energy Union.

If energy efficiency is to play such a critical role in the Energy Union we need action not words.

The revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) this year is a landmark opportunity to commit to the renovation of buildings to nearly-zero energy-use use 2050. It's time for Europe to walk the talk.

It's time to shape history. It's time to make 2016 the year of renovation. It's time to unleash the power of insulation.

 **eurima**
European Insulation Manufacturers Association