

Oped 'Procrastination is a prelude in a minor key' Céline CARRE, EuroACE Vice-President, Chair of the 'Energy Efficiency Policy' Work Group

Today is 10th March 2020 and I should be excited about it. Whose birthday is it? What should we celebrate? Has someone been sent to the moon today? Did humanity collectively achieve something new?

None of these. Today is the deadline for transposing the latest Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. It's also the deadline for the 27 EU countries to unveil their megaplans to renovate their buildings before 2050, the so-called Long-Term Renovation Strategies (LTRS). You may think that it's nothing to be really excited about. You're right. Spending over 15 years in the EU regulatory bubble can get you quite passionate about boring implementation deadlines.

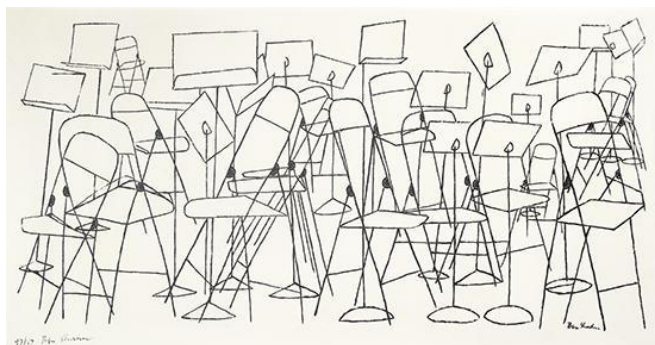
But today is the 10th March 2020, and I am concerned that no one seems to be worried about the missing renovation strategies. That no one heard about large scale, engaging national consultations on strategies that, taken together, should bring 210 million buildings on track for our 2050 climate goals and take over 50 million people out of energy poverty.



Governments asleep at the wheel

I am concerned that after saying “yes, yes, yes” to the EPBD in December 2017, our governments seem ready to accept that an average 1% energy renovation rate in Europe is good enough; that savings of around 9% primary energy consumption per renovation is fine (all data from a Commission Study). Continuing this way would take us 100 years to meet our (2050) goals.

I am upset that administrations still try to change the rules of the games to make things look better on paper. For example, changing from primary to final energy for expressing the performance of a building would “lower” the number of critically bad performing buildings to be renovated. This doesn't make homes warmer. Nor does it lower energy bills.



Today is the 10th March 2020 and I am tired. It is the third round of national renovation strategies. Do writers write books that shouldn't be read? Do musicians write music to remain silent? Do our governments really want to improve people's living & working conditions?

Light at the horizon?

But today is the 10th March 2020 and I am still motivated and determined to make the EU Renovation Wave a success. The promised wave is part of the Green Deal. This makes me think of a bright horizon, of wind, of boats and windsurfers. I see green, blue, fish and sun, and this gives me hope that things can change.



First, if something is big, let's make it really big, and treat it as such. Arguably, the issue is complex. It's about every single home, office, school, hospital. The decision-making process is not straightforward. The value chain is scattered. Success of the whole plan depends on hundreds of thousands of steps. But the energy renovation of our buildings should be a priority, because 97% of them are not "Paris-proofed", and because we spend 90% of our time in them.

Second, let's put an end to the structural procrastination on building renovation. The job of explaining why it matters and why everyone has to play a part, is too often left to the next government. Yes, it costs money, and those among us who cannot afford to renovate, should

Time to play by the rules

So, if everyone has a great role to play but no big progress has been made, aren't we missing the rules of the game, the "what's in it for me"? I believe that the Renovation Wave is about clarifying the rules of the renovation game for the entire value chain.

Visibility (around what needs to be achieved and by when) will motivate SMEs to train staff and banks to deploy capacity and new financing products. It will enable governments to be creative about deploying "carrots" and "sticks" over time. *Continuity* of programmes and policies will enable homeowners to plan ahead and anticipate requirements, and demand to grow. *Accountability* will increase the quality of the works, the responsibility of each player, and the uptake of support measures. And taken together, these three dimensions will boost coordinating roles, the badly needed conductors of our 21st century renovation symphony.



be helped. But did you know that between 2012 and 2016, across the EU, in the residential sector, over €300 billion was spent every year for non-energy renovation, vs. €200 billion for energy renovation? Our collective challenge is to make energy upgrades become part of other improvements.

Third, let's focus on what's missing. It's not about "how to do it" but about how to deploy known solutions. It is not about money, but about how to channel it to those who need it. And it's no longer about piloting, but about scaling up. It is about mobilizing all forces of the value chain to prepare, advise, finance, coordinate, and to deliver faster, better and deeper building renovations.

Today is the 10th March and the 100th anniversary of Boris Vian, the writer, poet, singer and musician. He wrote "*Procrastination is a prelude in a minor key*". But today we have been waiting long enough, time for rehearsal is over. I want to make sure our Renovation Wave becomes a concerto in a major key, for real. For everyone.

Picture 1: [Unsplash](#), Maks STYAZHKIN

Picture 2: Silent Music, drawing by Ben SHAHN

Picture 3: [Unsplash](#), Samuel SIANIPAR

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About EuroACE

EuroACE represents Europe's leading companies involved with the manufacture, distribution and installation of energy saving goods and services for buildings. EuroACE members employ around 200,000 people in these activities in Europe and have around 900 production facilities and office locations. The mission of EuroACE is to work together with the EU institutions to help Europe move towards a more efficient use of energy in buildings, thereby contributing to Europe's commitments on climate change, energy security and economic growth.

EuroACE Members (2020)

