

The Buildings Directive – Halfway There? 10 highlights for Trilogue negotiations

On 21 June, EuroACE gathered High level policy makers and industry leaders to exchange on the role of efficient buildings for people, competitiveness, and the climate. Here are the event's main highlights:

1. Industry leaders support an ambitious Buildings Directive and call for a deal by the end of the year

Last month at the IEA Global Conference on Energy Efficiency, 45 governments from around the world and 50 CEOs endorsed the agency's call to double global energy efficiency progress by the end of this decade. A strong Energy Performance of Buildings Directive is needed to achieve this objective in the building sector.

2. Market visibility is needed to unlock investments

Establishing Minimum Energy Performance Standards in the EU will encourage investments throughout the renovation value chain, unlock further production capacity and help companies optimise training programmes. Clear timelines and benchmarks will also help homeowners to better plan their renovation works whilst improving living conditions for millions of citizens.

3. Energy efficiency solutions are already available today

Energy efficiency solutions are well known, proven and already available: insulation, windows, ventilation systems, decarbonised heating and cooling systems, technical building systems, lighting and building automation and control systems. All of them will be needed to achieve the highest performance standards.

4. Improved access to finance is key to drive energy renovations

EU and national funds must be used more efficiently to cut costs for homeowners, and dedicated mortgage portfolio standards and renovation loans should facilitate access to finance for vulnerable households and worst performing buildings as a priority.

5. Improved living conditions is a key concern driving energy renovations

Multiple benefits such as improved health, comfort, indoor environmental quality are key drivers for homeowners to conduct energy renovations. More ambition is needed under a 'Healthy Indoor Climate' framework in the EPBD, particularly as ninety percent of time is spent indoors.

6. Switching to digitalisation by design

Digital technologies play a key role in gathering data about building renovation projects across the EU but also to improve the design process. Policymakers should encourage the use of the smart readiness indicator as well as digital design and simulation technologies like digital twins and building information modelling to enable a robust planning approach throughout the entire planning life cycle.

7. Buildings can provide essential services to the energy system

Energy efficiency has a crucial role in decarbonising the electricity system and paving the way for a 100% renewable energy future. Energy efficiency reduces costs that would otherwise be passed on to customers by avoiding unnecessary generation capacity (to cover peak load), and transmission costs.

8. Energy renovations should be made simpler for consumers and businesses

The EPBD is a package deal: performance requirements must go hand in hand with improved access to information and streamlined administrative procedures. One Stop Shops and information tools such as

Energy Performance Certificates, Renovation Passports and the Smart Readiness Indicator must be rolled out to facilitate and simplify renovation works.

9. The EPBD is not a stand-alone legislation. Industry leaders call for an equal level of ambition in Energy Market Design and Net Zero Industry Act.

Including provisions on energy efficiency technologies and demand side flexibility in these texts is essential:

- Enabling a significant production ramp up and the development of a skilled workforce will be key to ensure the availability of energy efficiency technologies.
- New market rules are needed to facilitate the integration of efficiency and smart buildings as central actors of the energy system.

10. The EPBD should tackle both operational AND embodied emissions

New provisions on deep renovations, minimum energy performance requirements and technical building systems all address the decarbonisation of buildings. But the EPBD should also start factoring in embodied emissions. A common vision on whole-life carbon is required through the calculation and reporting of the Global Warming Potential of a new building. This should lead to a common EU framework so that data can be collected and exchanged.

For further information

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About EuroACE – Energy Efficient Buildings

EuroACE represents Europe’s leading companies involved with the manufacture, distribution and installation of energy saving goods and services for buildings. EuroACE members employ more than 220,000 people in these activities in Europe and have over 1,100 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.

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