

PRESS RELEASE

EU countries not on track to upgrade the building stock

Most renovation strategies submitted to the European Commission lack ambition and some are not compliant with European legislation

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Brussels, 28 October 2014. The Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE) analysed national renovation strategies Member States had to submit according to a requirement of the Energy Efficiency Directive¹. From 10 strategies, selected by BPIE for their building stock and climate diversity, only 4 were compliant with the legislation. The 10 strategies, while giving a spectrum of approaches and activities, do not set a clear, strategic path and most lack bold and determined action plans. Moreover, out of 28 Member States, six have yet to publish their strategies, more than 6 months after the Commission's deadline.

The Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU), an important milestone toward making the European building sector energy efficient, required in Article 4 that all Member States develop strategies which incentivise investments into the deep renovation of the building stock. Strategies are meant to provide confidence to building owners to invest in building renovation, and to the market to invest in the supply chain, but the approach taken so far in the 10 analysed strategies falls short of achieving this objective.

The report focuses on 10 Member States (Austria, Belgium (Brussels Capital Region), Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Romania, Spain and UK) that submitted within 3 months of the April 2014 deadline. It scores countries for each of the 5 requirements from Article 4, EED: overview of the national building stock, cost-effective approaches to renovations, policies and measures to stimulate cost-effective deep renovations, forward-looking perspective to guide investment decisions and evidence-based estimate of expected savings and wider benefits. Based on this scoring, BPIE finds that 3 strategies are non-compliant (Austria, Denmark and The Netherlands), 3 are only partially compliant (France, Germany and Brussels Capital Region) and 4 are acceptable but still show potential to improve (Czech Republic, Romania, Spain and the UK). Some strategies include elements which can be considered best practice such as financial support or a wider-stakeholder process, but are weak on other aspects, varying from country to country.

Oliver Rapf, Executive Director of BPIE, says *"Our analysis finds a very piecemeal approach of the strategies, not living up to the intention of the Directive. Member States need to make a better effort to harvest the many benefits of a renovated building stock. Governments are missing out on the opportunities that the renovation of the building stock provides to address the challenges of energy security, economic stimulus, climate change and health of European citizens."*

To achieve the required long term transformation of the existing building stock the report concludes that benefits need to be quantified better, not only in terms of energy, carbon and cost savings, but also in terms of economic impact, health and societal benefits as well as environmental improvements. Policy packages and support measures need to be developed in more detail to provide effective incentives to invest in deep renovation. It is also suggested that the European Commission should provide more effective guidance and that most strategies should be re-submitted with corrective actions taken.

Across Europe and other developed regions, buildings represent the largest potential for cost-effective carbon emission reduction, and with it, improvement in energy security, as well as a myriad of other benefits - fuel

poverty alleviation, improved indoor air quality leading to better health and well-being, increased property values, energy system benefits, as well as energy bill savings. However, deep renovation of buildings to significantly improve their energy performance has never historically been a priority, either for policy makers or building owners and investors and these strategies are yet another evidence. To date, six Member States still have to submit strategies, over 6 months after the required deadline: Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

About BPIE

The Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE) is a European not-for-profit think-tank with a focus on independent analysis and knowledge dissemination, supporting evidence-based policy making in the field of energy performance in buildings. It delivers policy analysis, policy advice and implementation support. The Brussels-based institute is partnering with the Global Buildings Performance Network (GBPN). www.bpie.eu and www.buildingsdata.eu

¹About the Energy Efficiency Directive, Article 4

The Energy Efficiency Directive introduced, in 2012, an important new dimension to the energy saving in buildings legislative landscape. Article 4 requires Member States, for the first time, to set out national strategies for the renovation of their building stocks, thereby filling a major gap in policy concerning the existing building stock, with which the vast majority of energy use and resultant carbon emissions will be associated for the foreseeable future.