

Energy performance of buildings. Recast

2008/0223(COD) - 13/11/2008 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to recast Directive 2002/91/EC to improve the energy performance of buildings.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the energy consumption of buildings varies enormously. Whilst new buildings may need less than 3 to 5 litres of heating oil or equivalent per square meter floor area and year, the existing buildings stock consumes, on average, about 25 litres per square meter, some buildings even up to 60 litres. Available construction products and installation technologies can drastically improve the building's energy performance – and so reduce its energy consumption – and create net benefits: the annual energy cost savings are exceeding the annual capital costs for the investments. The best moment for energy improvements is when buildings are constructed or renovated.

The existing Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (2002/91/EC) is a key element to improve buildings' energy performance. Some Member States have made promising progress in recent years, but the majority still have an enormous untapped potential for improvements. To this end, the Commission sees further room for strengthening the effectiveness and the impact of this Directive.

CONTENT: in the proposal the objectives and main principles of the current EPBD are retained and the role of Member States in setting up the concrete requirements is also the same as in the current EPBD. The administrative burdens are kept to a minimum, but developed in order to achieve maximum effect. It is crucial that the current EPBD be properly implemented and on time. This proposal should not be an excuse to delay implementation of the current Directive.

The proposal clarifies, strengthens and extends the scope of the current EPBD's provisions by;

- introducing clarification of the wording of certain provisions;
- extending the scope of the provision requiring Member States to set up minimum energy performance requirements when a major renovation is to be carried out;
- reinforcing the provisions on energy performance certificates, inspections of heating and air-conditioning systems, energy performance requirements, information, and independent experts;
- providing Member States and interested parties with a benchmarking calculation instrument, which allows the nationally/regionally determined minimum energy performance requirements ambition to cost-optimal levels to be compared;
- stimulating Member States to develop frameworks for higher market uptake of low or zero energy and carbon buildings;
- encouraging a more active involvement of the public sector to provide a leading example.

The Commission will continue to help Member States implementing this Directive, like with the information service "Buildings Platform". In 2009, the Commission will launch a major "Build-up" initiative to increase the awareness of the whole chain from authorities, to construction industry and citizens on the saving opportunities. New financing schemes are introduced to overcome investment barriers.

According to the Commission, the macroeconomic estimated impacts are also significant: 5-6% less energy will be used in EU in 2020 (which equals the total current consumption of Belgium and Romania) and about 5% less CO₂ emissions will be emitted in the whole EU in 2020.