Energy performance of buildings

2021/0426(COD) - 16/02/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Ciarán CUFFE (Greens/EFA, IE) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the energy performance of buildings (recast).

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Subject matter

This Directive promotes the improvement of the energy performance of buildings and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from buildings within the Union, with a view to achieving a zero-emission building stock by 2050, taking into account the outdoor climatic conditions, the local conditions, the requirements for indoor environmental quality and the contribution of the building stock to demand-side flexibility for the purpose of improving energy system efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

It is stipulated that the Directive lays down requirements as regards: (i) a harmonised framework for assessing the life-cycle global warming potential; (ii) solar energy in buildings; (iii) the phasing out of fossil fuel use in buildings; (iv) nature-based solutions that reinforce the good use and adaptation of the public space surrounding the buildings with elements such as wood materials, greens roofs and facades; (v) the indoor environmental quality performance of buildings.

National building renovation plan

Each Member State should establish a national building renovation plan complying with the energy efficiency first principle and should encompass: (i) specific timelines for all existing buildings to achieve higher energy performance classes by 2030, 2040 and 2050; (ii) a detailed roadmap up to 2050 of the investment needs for the implementation of the building renovation plan, public and private financing sources and measures, and the administrative resources for building renovation; (iii) a roadmap on the reduction of energy poverty and energy savings achieved among vulnerable households and people living in social housing comprising of nationally established targets and an overview of implemented and planned policies and funding measures supporting the elimination of energy poverty.

An integrated district approach to building renovation

Member States may empower regional and local authorities to identify integrated districts in order to roll-out integrated renovation programmes (IRPs) at district level. The IRPs should address social pattern, energy, mobility, green infrastructures, waste and water treatment, and management and other aspects of urban planning to be considered at a district level, and shall take into account local and regional resources, circularity and sufficiency.

New buildings

Member States should ensure that new buildings are zero-emission buildings: (i) from 1 January 2026 for new buildings occupied, operated or owned by public authorities; and (ii) from 1 January 2028 for all new buildings.

No later than 24 months after the date of entry into force, new buildings should have optimal indoor environmental quality levels, including air quality, thermal comfort, a high capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change through, inter alia, green infrastructure, adhere to fire safety and safety lighting standards.

Member States should ensure that the use of fossil fuels in heating systems, for new buildings and buildings undergoing major renovation, major refurbishment or renovation of the heating system, is not authorised from the date of transposition of the directive. They should be completely phased out by 2035, unless the European Commission allows their use until 2040.

Minimum energy performance standards

Member States should ensure that all buildings meet minimum energy performance standards, starting with the worst performing buildings.

Residential buildings would have to achieve at least energy performance class E by 2030, and D by 2033. Non-residential and public buildings would have to achieve the same classes by 2027 and 2030 respectively (Commission proposed F and E). Member States should exempt public social housing from these obligations where such renovations are not cost-neutral or would lead to rent increases for people living in social housing that go beyond the savings in energy bills. To take account of the diversity of the building stock in different European countries, the letter G will correspond to the 15% worst performing buildings in the national building stock. Member States should put in place a framework to ensure that a sufficient and skilled workforce is available to enable the timely implementation of minimum energy performance standards in accordance with national building renovation plans.

Solar energy in buildings

Member States should ensure the deployment of suitable solar energy installations, if technically suitable and economically and functionally feasible, as follows: (a) by 24 months after the date of entry into force], on all new public and new non-residential buildings; (b) by 31 December 2026, on all existing public and non-residential buildings; (c) by 31 December 2028, on all new residential buildings and roofed carparks; (d) by 31 December 2032, on all buildings undergoing major renovation.

Financial incentives

Member States should provide appropriate financing and support measures in combination with other Union instruments such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Social Climate Fund and the cohesion policy funds.

The application and procedures for financing should be simple and streamlined in order to facilitate the access to financing for households.

Public financing should address up-front costs associated with renovations faced by households. Member States should also facilitate the access to affordable bank loans, dedicated credit lines, or fully publicly financed renovations.

Financial incentives in the form of grants or guarantees shall take revenue-based parameters into account when allocating financial support to ensure that they target as a priority vulnerable households and people living in social housing.

One-stop-shops

The amended text stressed that one-stop shops could play an important role in connecting potential projects with market actors, including citizens, public authorities and project developers, in particular smaller-scale projects as well as guidance on permit procedures, promoting access to funding for building renovation, and helping to disseminate information on terms and conditions.

Member States should ensure the establishment of technical assistance facilities, including through inclusive one-stop-shops for energy efficiency in buildings, targeting all actors involved in building renovations, including homeowners and administrative, financial and economic actors, including microenterprises and SMEs.