

Energy performance of buildings

2021/0426(COD) - 14/03/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 343 votes to 216, with 78 abstentions, amendments to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the energy performance of buildings (recast).

The issue was referred back to the committee responsible for inter-institutional negotiations.

The proposal to revise the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy consumption of buildings in the EU by 2030 and to make buildings climate neutral by 2050.

Requirements

Members 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.

Members clarified the definition of deep renovation to mean a renovation in line with the energy efficiency first principle and efforts to reduce whole life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions generated during the renovation, which focuses on essential building items, such as wall insulation, roof insulation, low floor insulation, replacement of external joinery, ventilation and heating or heating systems and treatment of thermal bridges, to ensure the necessary comfort of the occupants in summer and winter or a renovation resulting in a reduction of at least 60 % primary energy demand for worst-performing buildings for which it is technically and economically not feasible to achieve a zero-emission building standard, and which transforms a building or building unit: (a) before 1 January 2027, into a nearly zero-energy building; (b) from 1 January 2027, into a zero-emission building.

National building renovation plan

Each Member State should establish a national building renovation plan complying with the energy efficiency first principle and should encompass:

- a roadmap with established targets and measurable progress indicators set at national level. The roadmap would include indicative national targets to achieve the deep renovation of at least 35 million building units by 2030 to support reaching an annual energy renovation rate of 3 % or more for the period till 2050;
- 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;
- 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 to roll-out integrated renovation programmes (IRPs) at district level. Member States should implement local level integrated mobility plans and sustainable urban mobility plans that are aligned with IRPs and encompass public transport planning and deployment with other means of active and shared mobility, as well as the related infrastructure for operating, recharging, storing and parking.

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 and give priority to accessibility for persons with disabilities.

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 may decide not to set or not to apply the requirements to buildings officially protected as part of a designated environment or because of their special architectural or historical merit requiring due conservation, or other heritage buildings.

The Commission could decide to allow a Member State to adapt the minimum energy performance standards for residential buildings and

building units for reasons of economic and technical feasibility and availability of skilled workforce.

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. 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.

One-stop shops are also important to encourage citizens to start renovation projects by providing advice and research options, facilitating the search for contractors, helping to navigate through tenders and quotations, and providing support during the renovations.