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Renovation Wave Strategy Communication

Info mail

On 17th September 2020, the European Parliament adopted the **Cuffe** report* on “maximising the energy efficiency potential of the EU building stock” by large majority. The report calls for energy efficiency policies to be far more ambitious in order to ensure effectively fighting energy poverty, stepping up climate action, and foster sustainable recovery.

Rapporteur **Ciarán Cuffe**, Greens-EFA MEP, said:

"I am happy to see that the Commission has taken on board the work we have been doing in the European Parliament on the Renovation Wave. It’s now time for us to match our ambitions in law and ensure we leave no-one behind. This means tackling energy poverty, creating jobs for the recovery, and reducing our carbon emissions. This requires action at all levels: European, National, and local, but if we get this right- it’s a win-win.”

*Cuffe report as adopted here

Recommendations from the Cuffe report reflected in the Commission’s strategy:

1. **Fighting energy poverty: The role of neighbourhoods and communities**

   The report calls for ending energy poverty by ensuring healthy and safe living conditions for all, and respecting local structures through safeguards such as limits on rent increases. Housing standards not only protect inhabitants from high utility bills, they are also a tool to keep buildings on track in achieving climate neutrality.

Given the increased calls for action on this matter, the Commission will release a recommendation on energy poverty together with the renovation wave strategy communication on 14 October. It will also launch the affordable housing initiative on district renovations, that can be easily replicated and prioritise neighbourhoods, liveability, and innovation.

The Commission will also announce action on worst performing buildings - often inhabited by the most vulnerable of our society, by drawing up a legislative framework for the introduction of housing standards that can be progressively tightened over time, coupled with financial and regulatory incentives.

2. **Stepping up to Climate Action: More ambitious legislation with binding national targets**

   The Cuffe report clearly calls for an alignment of European legislation to EU's increased climate ambition. We need to make sure that all the measures stemming from the Renovation Wave are enshrined in legislation and the national long-term renovation strategies, so that carbon emissions of buildings are steadily decreased.

   As part of its renovation wave strategy, the Commission confirms the necessary revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) so that their objectives match our 2030 climate target. It also recognizes the need to ensure that renovations create actual savings and recommends EU level support to develop enhanced skills and trainings within the Member States.

3. **Integrated renovation programmes and a holistic approach to building renovation**

   Another central aspect of the Cuffe report is the proposal to take an holistic approach to building renovation: Renovation projects should take into account the sustainability of materials and equipment used, as well as the parallel installation of renewable energy and storage facilities that are accessible and beneficial to local communities. Member States should also develop roadmaps to phase out fossil fuels in heating and cooling systems.

   In the upcoming renovation wave communication, the Commission recognizes the need to align the strategy for a sustainable built environment, the construction products directive and the circular economy initiative with the Green Deal, so that the legislative framework is focused on achieving the climate neutrality goal. It also underlines the need to decarbonize heating and cooling as one of three focus areas (alongside action on energy poverty and administrative, educational and healthcare facilities).

4. **Recovery funds for building renovation**

   The Cuffe report calls for the Commission to reserve significant resources in the recovery package and other existing funds to trigger deep renovations (i.e. those that substantially reduce the energy use of a building) in order to foster a sustainable recovery through local jobs and investments in climate action.

   In response, the strategy comes with an annex mapping out the various funding sources available for renovation projects, as well as proposals on how to facilitate their blending and ensure mobilisation. In the context of the recovery and resilience fund, the Commission has already proposed putting building renovation as a flagship for COVID recovery

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