Press release | 18.11.2009

Energy efficient buildings

EU lays foundation for buildings of the future but misses towering opportunity to convert buildings of the past

After one year of difficult negotiations with the Council, the European Parliament and the Swedish Presidency reached a political agreement (1) yesterday evening on a text of the energy performance of buildings directive.

Luxembourg Green MEP **Claude Turmes** commented:

"The Greens are very pleased that the EU has laid the foundation for the buildings of the future, but deplore that an opportunity has been missed to boost the renovation of existing structures.

Our Green concept of "near-zero-energy buildings" has been accepted as the future standard for Europe. After 2020 (2), new buildings will have near zero consumption of energy thanks to requirements to use the latest construction technologies and insulation, with the remaining energy made up from solar and biomass generation. This will spark a green revolution along every link of the chain from architects to construction companies and for every new building, from private home to shopping centre.

We deplore however that no stringent standards were agreed to renovate existing buildings, which account for 40% of all energy consumption in the EU. The Greens and the European Parliament had called for an ambitious EU building renovation programme to go beyond basic measures and convert inefficient structures into very low energy buildings. This depended on fresh funds from the EU budget to leverage cheap credits for large scale renovation.

Opposition from the EU's newer Member States led Council to reject this initiative. Earlier damage had already by done by Barroso's failure to allocate a single Euro to energy efficiency of buildings in the so-called recovery package. The EU is failing to capitalise on a golden opportunity to create millions of jobs, reduce dependency on energy from beyond its borders and tackle climate change. A better outcome from the negotiations would have definitely led to stronger action. Given that 36% of the EU's CO2 emissions come from the building sector, this would have been a prime area to target to allow the EU to step up its climate commitment from 20% to 30% emissions reductions by 2020."

Notes to editors:

(1) The new legal basis and comitology rules under the Lisbon Treaty are yet to be clarified. A legal agreement on the basis of this politically agreed text is therefore likely to be concluded in early 2010

(2) Rules will apply from 31 December 2018 for public buildings.

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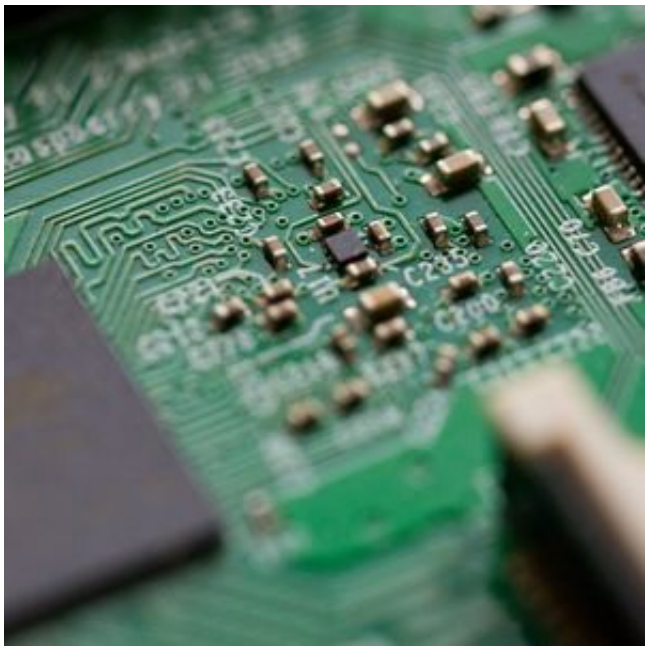


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