

“Public Buildings in the EED: the first cog to set in motion the Renovation Wave”

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Updating the EU’s energy efficiency directive (EED) gives us the chance to patch a serious shortcoming in the rules concerning public building renovations.

Meeting the EU’s essential climate goals means upgrading all our buildings and making sure they use far less energy than they do now. There is no Green Deal without substantial progress in cleaning up our buildings: Europe’s buildings emit more than a third of emissions and soak up 40% of primary energy.

The review of the EED is an essential cog as the EU gears itself up to at least double the overall renovation rate from its paltry ~1% by the end of the decade, as part of the ‘[Renovation Wave Strategy](#)’. Ensuring public buildings are front and centre in our renovation efforts is an indispensable step.

Current failings

The current EED text obligates central governments to upgrade 3% of the buildings they own and occupy every year. But this scope is insufficient when you realise that figure represents just 0.2% of public buildings. Public buildings themselves are 10% of the total building stock, so the current Article 5 is a tiny drop in the ocean.

As the Commission prepares to publish its proposal for the revision of the EED on 14th July, now is the time to patch up this shortcoming. Article 5 should be extended to cover regional and local government buildings, as well as any edifices that serve some sort of public interest. That brings hospitals, schools, museums, retirement homes and social housing into play. Not only is that a huge chunk of buildings that need to be upgraded, but it also offers an amazing opportunity to improve living conditions for those more vulnerable parts of society.

Opportunity of the EED

Bringing public buildings to the fore of that effort, scrapping the alternative measures that member states can currently deploy to avoid actual renovations and linking the renovations to high-quality minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) is the way forward.

But with the EED, the EU must also lend a helping hand in the shape of financial resources and expertise. Both are available, in the form of the €800 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility and technical assistance provided by one-stop shops and the European Investment Bank. An upgraded EED which can plug into all these instruments will set the needed framework for Europe’s public buildings to lead by example, ahead of the upcoming proposal for a revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) later this year.

The Commission’s proposal on 14th July is only a first step of course. MEP’s and the Member States themselves will have their say too, so it is important that they also understand the fantastic opportunity the EU has ahead of it. This is a chance to strike a massive blow for climate action, benefitting millions of people in the process.

Together, and only if they are meshed together with sufficiently high ambition, the EED and the EPBD can be the essential cogs that set in motion the Renovation Wave to make a real difference for Europe’s buildings, Europe’s Green Deal, and Europe’s citizens.

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About the Renovate Europe Campaign:

Renovate Europe is a political communications campaign with the ambition to reduce the energy demand of the EU building stock by 80% by 2050 through legislation and ambitious renovation programmes. Accelerating the rate of renovation is a key tool in the fight against climate change, and will deliver major benefits for people, their quality of life, and the economy. www.renovate-europe.eu

- #PrioritisePeople
- #AccelerateRenovation
- #Renovate2Recover

REC Partners (July 2021)

There are currently 48 partner companies and associations actively engaged in the work of the REC, of which 18 National Partners active in the Member States.

