



Liaison office to the EU

Report from Brussels

A) EU-commission launches energy and climate policy package

The EU-commission decided about the climate- and energy package in January 2008. The EU shall reduce 20% of the CO₂-emissions until the year 2020. The part of renewable energy sources shall be increased up to 20%. (“20-20-20 commitments”)

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/focus/energy-package-2008/index_en.htm

During the Brussels European spring summit in March 2008 the leaders of the 27 governments decided to give further backing to the ambitious climate change commitment.

The EU-governments wants to see the measures finalized before the arrival of a new Commission and Parliament 2009 in order to increase the EU's credibility in international negotiations to agree a global climate change deal to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which is set to expire in 2013.

The housing sector is expected to play a major role in reducing CO₂-emissions and increase the level of energy-efficiency.

The buildings' energy performance shall be improved from two sides:

- 1) more energy efficiency by implementing energy saving building standards on insulation, heating- and cooling systems in new buildings and by refurbishing old buildings
- 2) Reinforce the use of renewable energies instead of fossil energies

First step is a recasting of the energy performance of buildings directive (EPBD) 2002/91/EG.

Main objects of the recasting are:

- 1) Clarification and simplification of the directive
- 2) Enlargement of the energy-efficiency demands for existing buildings smaller than 1.000 m²
- 3) Strengthening energy-efficiency requirements and inspection requirements.

IUT will give a statement in the public consultation of the EU-commission.

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/demand/consultations/buildings_dir_en.htm

The EPBD is the directive, which defines the energy certificates for buildings regulations. These certificates will lead to more transparency on the housing markets. Tenants will be informed about the energy performance of a building and are able to estimate their future heating costs.

B) European Regional Development Fund - changes to come

The president of the European Commission, Manuel Barroso, has stated in a letter to the chairman of the committee of the regions that funding for the construction of housing by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is only eligible for those member states that became members after the 1 May 2004 and later. It is not the responsibility of the commission to extend the funding for member states that became members before May 2004. But- the commission plans to recast the ordinance.

At the moment a comitology committee checks if the strict ERDF rules can be opened by linking measures for energy-efficiency improvement and the use of renewable energies directly to housing construction. If measures like this would be quantified not as housing expenses but as energy expenses, a full eligibility of money from the ERDF would be possible for all member states.

EU-commissioner for regional policy, Danuta Hübner, explained at the Parliament that until the year 2013 the ERDF would spend 9 billion Euro for energy-efficiency measures and climate protection in the regions.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/267&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

C) Personalia

Cecodhas:

New designated president of CECODHAS is David Orr, United Kingdom. He will be the successor of Paul-Louis Marty, France.

The general assembly of CECODHAS will be in Gothenburg, 28 May 2008.

Barbro Engmann and Magnus Hammar represent IUT in the Gothenburg conference.

Cecodhas took over the new chairmanship of the European Housing Forum, EHF in April 2008. They follow FEANTSA, the European organisation for homeless people.

Committee of the regions:

New chairman is Luc Van den Brande (Belgium). He is the successor of Michel Delebarre (France)

D) Strategic partnerships and committees

The German federal ministry for housing decided to install an EU-working group for housing policy. The ministry stated that this is a necessary step because of the increasing influence of the European policy in the housing related fields. Members of the group are the Brussels representatives of the German federal institutions and the Brussels representatives of the housing lobbyists. IUT-Brussels is invited to become a member of the group. The first meeting is May 22.

One of the influential lobby groups in the building sector is the “Committee for construction” in Brussels. This committee consists of European representatives in the construction sector like architects, engineers, mortgage banks and the construction industry. IUT-Brussels is invited to participate. The first meeting is May 23.

BEUC, the European head organisation of the national consumer organisations (www.beuc.eu), stated an interest to cooperate with IUT in a strategic partnership. In a meeting with the deputy director of BEUC, Willemien Bax, we found common working fields in services of general interest, financial services/mortgages, and energy related questions. BEUC, present in Brussels since 1962, has a team of 35 specialists in consumer issues. The instrument of a formal strategic partnership is new in statutes of BEUC. The cooperation between BEUC and IUT will be realized in sharing knowledge and helping each other with expert resources. The executive committee of BEUC is ready to decide about a strategic partnership at their meeting May 29. If accepted, IUT will be the first strategic partner. IUT secretariat deals with the formal application.

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