

**Toledo, June 2010.**

## **EU-27 to promote housing renovation to generate employment and improve energy efficiency and social integration**

The EU's housing ministers agreed in Toledo on Monday, June 21, to promote housing renovation and refurbishment policies in order to achieve greater economic recovery, generate jobs and improve energy efficiency and social integration.

These aims were included in a final communiqué, which proposes to the European Commission (EC) “that housing should make a contribution to energy efficiency”, as well as to “the renovation and rehabilitation of the building stock”, Spain's minister Beatriz Corredor said during a press conference following the informal meeting of EU housing ministers.

Corredor said the ideas about the rehabilitation of buildings are “fundamental”, in that “the European Union has to meet political objectives on climate change, economic recovery and social inclusion”.

She said housing renovation “fits perfectly within the 2020 Strategy of the EU”, which is promoting “a new sustainable and environmentally-friendly economy that sees innovation, knowledge and better use of resources as the foundations for sustainable development”.

The minister added that building rehabilitation is “a powerful generator of jobs”, since it “creates jobs at a much greater rate than new construction or civil works”, as well as “generating activity in auxiliary industries and construction materials, and boosting productivity and competitiveness in the sector”.

### **Report on building rehabilitation in the EU**

Corredor also underscored Spain's contribution over this half-year period in the area of urban development, which involved producing a questionnaire focusing on the renovation and energy efficiency of buildings, which was distributed to Member States at the start of the Spanish Presidency.

During the plenary session on Monday, the minister presented the report produced by Spain's Ministry of Housing based on the information gathered from these questionnaires; this shows there is broad agreement between the EU-27 in terms of the aspects they include within the concept of rehabilitation of housing, buildings and urban areas.

In addition, between 60% and 90% of the countries of the EU have similar content in their regulations on building rehabilitation, 90% have specific regulations on energy efficiency, 80% include requirements regarding accessibility and 50% contain an integrated approach to urban rehabilitation.

Another significant conclusion of the report shows that most of the countries surveyed recognise that rehabilitation generates employment, above all in terms of professional and specialist labour.

### **“Zero pollution” buildings**

Another issue, according to Corredor, is that “improving the efficiency of housing through energy rehabilitation is not just an expense. It is an investment and a saving over the medium term”. She added that making a commitment “to better insulation of facades and surrounds” could represent “a saving of up to 40%” in each home's energy bill.

On this issue, and given the EU's target of achieving "zero pollution" and "practically zero" energy consumption in buildings by 2020, Belgium's secretary of state with responsibility for housing, Christos Doulkeridis, said that Belgium, in partnership with Spain and Hungary, “but also with the European Parliament and European Commission”, will continue the work of the Spanish Presidency in order to “be able to build a low-carbon emissions Europe”.



Source: <http://www.eu2010.es/en/documentosynoticias/noticias/jun21corredor.html>