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THE NEW ENERGY EFFICIENCY PLAN

The key to combating climate change, ensuring energy security and forging a low-carbon economy: Europe's Buildings

FIEC welcomes the new Energy Efficiency Plan, in particular its focus on buildings and restates the need for an ambitious drive to provide the necessary regulatory and financial incentives to stimulate the market.

Reducing energy consumption in the building stock (40% of primary energy consumption) has been shown to **represent the most cost-effective way of achieving the 20% EU target for energy savings by 2020** and bring down emissions of greenhouse gases, recognized as responsible for driving man-made climate change.

A clear vision with the corresponding financial resources on how to meet the challenge of retrofitting existing buildings and ensuring progress is made to zero energy new buildings is crucial. **FIEC therefore supports the idea of an EU energy efficiency fund** bringing together existing EU funding channels.

In addition, fostering a skilled workforce in energy efficient techniques and supporting the relevant technological innovation will help to reinforce **Europe's competitiveness while strengthening the small and medium enterprises that make up the backbone of the Union's economy.**

FIEC therefore calls on the EU and the Member States to take the following action:

- 1. Develop balanced, well-considered and progressive fiscal and financial incentives for the owners of existing buildings in the short to medium term in order to develop the market for energy renovation.**

The EU should concentrate funding on those projects that are **exemplary and easily replicable both in new and existing build**. Member States should ensure effective financial mechanisms are in place to cover the up-front cost of renovation and retrofitting works in existing buildings.

- 2. Properly implement the recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive by ensuring national regulations on thermal efficiency are set at levels that will lead to a tangible reduction in buildings' primary energy consumption.**

Such regulations should apply to all buildings, both new and existing. A whole building approach is needed when considering energy performance to avoid simply addressing one component. As far as possible, the building envelope (insulation, glazing...) must be checked and if necessary improved, before replacing heating systems and considering micro-renewable options.

- 3. Creating an EU-wide framework for training and education in the construction sector value chain.**

European-level action should concentrate on the identification of best practice examples of courses and curricula as well as on facilitating the mutual recognition of qualifications.

The construction sector is Europe's largest industrial employer and represents nearly 10% of the EU's GDP. FIEC therefore reiterates that whether it be in creating a future resilient green economy in the face of global competition, in reducing carbon emissions through energy savings in existing buildings, or in ensuring new buildings that waste little or no energy, the construction sector offers the solution.

FIEC is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 34 national Member Federations in 29 countries (27 EU & EFTA, Croatia and Turkey) construction enterprises of all sizes, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises as well as "global players", carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities.

For further information, please contact Frank Faraday

FIEC, Avenue Louise 225, BE-1050 Bruxelles

Tel. +32-2-514 55 35, Fax +32-2-511 02 76 e-mail: info@fiec.eu web: www.fiec.eu