



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 12.12.2012
C(2012) 8955 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Commission's proposal for a new Energy Efficiency Directive {COM(2011) 370 final}, and apologizes for the long delay in replying.

The Commission shares the Senát's view that energy efficiency is an essential part of energy policy as it presents a cost-effective way of increasing energy security and has a positive impact on economic growth. The EU needs to make stronger efforts to save energy to reduce its dependence on imports of fossil fuels from outside the EU and to lessen the negative impacts of increasing energy prices.

In the current economic conditions, concerns about burdening public finances and consumers with excessive cost are fully understandable. Therefore, the principle of cost-effectiveness underpins the proposal and allows for variations between the Member States. As an example, the annual 3% renovation target for publicly-owned buildings is linked to cost-optimal levels defined by the Member States. Furthermore, as a result of the compromise reached between the European Parliament and the Council in June 2012, this obligation will now apply only to central government buildings. Likewise, the promotion of efficient heating and cooling under Article 10 of the Directive is subject to a cost-benefit analysis taking into account national circumstances and local conditions. As to the obligation for private companies to undertake energy audits, it will be mandatory only for big companies, whereas small and medium-sized enterprises will be merely encouraged to undertake them.

The question of the appropriate future policy framework and possible binding targets is open. In line with the provisions of the Directive, the Commission will assess Member State progress in 2014 and propose additional measures, if appropriate. However, at the moment our efforts should focus on the correct implementation of the Directive agreed in June 2012.

The Commission hopes that these explanations address the concerns expressed by the Senát and looks forward to continuing our dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

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President of the Senate
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