



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the energy performance of buildings (recast) {COM(2021) 802 final}.

For the EU to reduce by at least by 55% its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, to reach climate neutrality by 2050 whilst ensuring energy independence, we need to work forcefully together at all levels. The support by the Italian authorities is crucial in this regard.

The Commission notes that the Senato della Repubblica acknowledges in its Opinion that buildings are one of the largest sources of energy consumption in Europe. Boosting their energy efficiency would reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports, lessen exposure to energy price volatility, cut greenhouse gas emissions, tackle energy poverty and support the economic recovery and job creation. The proposal for the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), together with the other EU energy and climate legislation proposed in the 'Fit for 55' Package is key to ensuring a clean and inclusive transition that leaves no one behind, in line with the European Green Deal objectives. Today, in the light of the current geopolitical context, increasing buildings renovation and energy efficiency in the Member States is more than ever a precondition to successful decarbonisation policies and to EU's energy independence.

The Commission welcomes that the Senato della Repubblica considers the proposal to comply with the subsidiarity principle while it takes note of the observations and concerns expressed with regard to the principle of proportionality and would like to make the following clarifications.

Regarding the comments in the Opinion in relation to nearly zero-energy buildings (NZEBs) and cost-optimality, the Commission observes that the principle of cost-optimality remains central in the Commission proposal in view of defining minimum requirement criteria for major renovations at national level and in relation to NZEBs. The Commission proposal introduces the concept of zero-emission buildings, for which it is suggested to define a threshold of primary energy consumption differentiated by climatic zones, to take into account national specificities.

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Regarding the need to address the worst performing buildings which is one of the goals of the minimum energy performance standards, the Commission proposal suggests addressing the potential for improvements in energy performance gradually, for instance from G to F class. Greater improvements, for instance moving from G to E class with a single renovation could be envisaged. However, according to the Commission proposal building owners could also decide to intervene through staged renovation in different steps over time.

Regarding the calculation methodology, the Commission has proposed several improvements to enhance quality and reliability, including via the change from monthly to hourly calculations, precisely to better account for actual behaviours.

Securing adequate public and private funding will be essential to support investments in the energy renovation of buildings. The EPBD recast proposal aims at providing clear signals, together with access to data and information tools to support the market towards the development of targeted financial instruments. It is also expected that financial and technical support at national and local level is dedicated to low-income and more vulnerable households. To further engage with private financial institutions and Member States, the Commission will launch a high-level European Energy Efficiency Financing Coalition based on the successful Energy Efficiency Financial Institutions Group (EEFIG).

Several EU funding instruments address already at present the energy renovations of buildings. In the Recovery and Resilience Facility, EUR 67 billion have been committed to energy efficiency, mostly for buildings renovation. In May 2022, the Commission made a targeted proposal to integrate dedicated REPowerEU chapters in Member States' existing recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) to outline reforms and investments to contribute to the REPowerEU objectives through measures including boosting of energy efficiency in buildings. Regional funds are the main EU public finance support to clean energy, in particular energy efficiency. The Social Climate Fund, currently being negotiated by the co-legislators, would be dedicated to low-income households, also addressing energy renovations to reduce energy poverty.

Under the InvestEU Advisory Hub, the European Investment Bank (EIB) implements the European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) initiative to provide technical assistance to regional and local public and private actors towards ensuring that investment projects for building renovations are financially sound. For any million euro invested via ELENA, further EUR 33 million are mobilised for building renovations. In cooperation with the EIB, the Commission is promoting the establishment of national and regional technical assistance facilities based on the successful ELENA model. Furthermore, the Commission launched in February 2022 under the Pact for Skills a partnership with companies in the construction sector to facilitate the upskilling and reskilling of at least 25% of the construction industry's workforce in the coming five years. The partnership will support the construction sector to meet the challenges of the green and digital transition.

The Commission believes that the political dialogue with national Parliaments is essential for bringing together EU institutions and citizens in view of effectively implementing the European Green Deal objectives. The Commission hopes that the comments in this reply address the issues raised by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue.

The Senato della Repubblica's Opinion has been made available to the Commission's representatives in the ongoing negotiations of the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, and will inform these discussions.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Kadri Simson
Member of the Commission*