



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 1. 6. 2012
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Dear President,

The Commission has taken due note of the Riksdag's reasoned opinion on the proposal for a new Energy Efficiency Directive {COM(2011) 370 final}. As you rightly pointed out, there is a risk that with no additional action the EU energy efficiency objective will not be achieved. This is indeed the main rationale behind the proposal for an Energy Efficiency Directive. It is also worth mentioning that the energy challenges addressed by this proposal (i.e. security of energy supply, sustainability and climate change as well as EU competitiveness) are concerns shared by the EU as a whole. A collective response at EU level is necessary to ensure that action is coordinated and that the shared objectives are achieved most effectively.

The proposal for an Energy Efficiency Directive provides a legislative framework which ensures that the common EU objective is reached, while providing flexibility to Member States to adapt the proposed measures to local conditions. The two provisions that the Riksdag's Opinion refers to, namely the obligation for renovating publicly-owned buildings and the obligation to factor heating and cooling plans into spatial planning, can be used to illustrate this legislative approach ensuring effectiveness and flexibility.

Under Article 4 of the proposed Directive, Member States will have to renovate 3% of publicly-owned buildings each year to cost-optimal levels. It needs to be noted that these levels will be defined at the national, and in many cases regional level - thus they will be adapted to local conditions, such as climate or the efficiency of the existing building stock.

Article 10 of the proposed Directive requires Member States to carry out a comprehensive assessment of their heating and cooling needs in order to better estimate and use the energy saving potential of cogeneration and district heating and cooling. Public planning can help projects to come to market and provide investment security for private parties. Successful implementation of this objective is not possible unless location issues and heat infrastructure issues are also considered in local and regional energy strategies and planning, and that is why the Directive addresses this issue. Member States will of course remain free to decide how to involve local authorities. The objective of the proposal is not to prescribe where new units are to be placed or that energy efficiency criteria should override all other considerations but to promote an economically sustainable deployment of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plants and district heating and/or cooling networks. It requires these solutions to be used only to the extent that this suits the specific conditions of a Member State and its energy markets.

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The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the questions and concerns raised by the Riksdag on this particular legislative proposal, whilst apologising for the delay in replying to this Opinion.

I look forward to continuing our political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

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Vice-President