

Energy Ministers fail to build on EU Commission's ambitious buildings recast proposal

- **Energy Council adopts General Approach on the EU Buildings Directive that is less ambitious than the proposal by the Commission launched before the war in Ukraine**

Brussels, 25th October: EU Energy Ministers adopted an agreement today on the Energy Performance Buildings Directive (EPBD) which fails to maximise the potential of buildings in addressing the climate, energy and socio-economic priorities stemming from the trilemma we find ourselves in.

While Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) are officially part of the Council's agreement, known as General Approach, the text appears substantially weaker than the original proposal launched by the European Commission last year. This is in spite of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February and the ensuing energy prices crisis that is pushing a growing number of households across Europe into energy poverty.

The text differentiates the approach for residential and non-residential buildings, introducing exemptions and further flexibilities that will undermine MEPS implementation at national level. The design of these regulatory instruments, especially for what concerns the residential buildings, does not provide the actors of the renovation value chain with clear pathways towards the climate neutrality goal while failing to address worst-performing buildings, and with them, the issue of energy poverty.

We need to ensure that “*we do not close the window of the 1.5°C goal*,” as stated by Luxembourg Energy Minister, Claude Turmes. Energy Ministers from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed a Declaration that will call the Council to strengthen and inject more ambition in the “*fragile compromise*” reached today on Minimum Energy Performance Standards during the Trilogue negotiations, which will likely start in beginning of 2023, under the Swedish Council Presidency.

The General Approach also brings forward “Zero-Emissions Building” standards whose thresholds for maximum energy use will be domestically defined, raising questions on the actual contribution of these standards to ensure the achievement of carbon neutrality in the building sector.

There seems to be an overall understanding on the importance of maximising the solar energy potential of buildings. This is shown by the inclusion in the Energy Council's General Approach of an EU-wide solar obligation proposed in the REPower EU package last May. Yet, there is still room for improvement as an [ambitious solar mandate](#) should signal investment opportunities and promote the growth of energy communities while beginning to create quality jobs and training opportunities within EU member states.

“Overall the ‘fragile’ compromise reached today by Energy Ministers does not put the EU on a path towards achieving our climate goals. The trajectory approach proposed for the

residential buildings fails to shield a growing number of people from skyrocketing energy bills throughout future winters. With ongoing multiple crises, we cannot afford a business-as-usual-scenario when revising a piece of legislation that is key to tackling fossil fuel consumption in buildings at its root. When it comes to the vote by the ITRE Committee on EPBD, MEPs must support a more ambitious and tighter regulatory framework that will put the EU on a path to a safer, energy secure future,” said **Eva Brardinelli, Buildings Policy Expert at CAN Europe.**

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