BETTER BUILDINGS TODAY, FOR BETTER LIVES TOMORROW

We - Europe's civil society, social, health and environmental NGOs, local authorities, trade unions and youth movements call on policy makers to ensure Europe's buildings provide the foundation for an inclusive, fair and just energy transition that puts people at the core.

Buildings are responsible for up to 40% of the EU's total energy consumption and the majority of our buildings (75%) are deemed inefficient, which means that most of the people in the EU live in unfit housing. Yet, for decades, there has been close to no effort towards inclusive and ambitious building policies that would support the energy renovation of Europe's buildings. This political inaction demonstrated by EU and national policymakers has impacted households across Europe who are now feeling the full brunt of the fossil fuels crisis.

The 'trilemma' of rising energy costs, a cost of living crisis and a climate emergency have arrived at our front doors, with millions of households having to choose between eating or heating. Making our homes and buildings energy efficient and renewable-based is the answer to these issues as it can help reduce our dependence on dangerous, expensive and volatile fossil fuels, help shield people from energy poverty, and improve air quality while also combatting the climate crisis.

This starts with a strong EU policy framework, along with investments and resources that can be directed towards activating the relevant actors on the ground who can make the transition in our buildings a reality. Creating more energy efficient homes saves us energy and money, protecting the right to a comfortable and healthy living environment for all.

In order to deliver a socially and environmentally sound Buildings Directive, we believe that:

- **Maximising the energy performance potential of our homes and buildings through a 'Holistic Deep Renovation Wave'** is one major solution to address the current energy prices crisis. As we are urged to reduce demand for energy and stop using fossil fuels as quickly as possible, combining insulation works with the installation of renewable heating and cooling systems will deliver high energy savings and greater emission reductions, while integrating buildings into the energy system, helping us get the most potential out of investments.

- **A strong and clear regulatory framework needs to be implemented with equally strong social safeguards.** Improving the energy performance levels of residential buildings is crucial to deliver a just and inclusive transition in our buildings. Considering that the housing sector is very diverse, social safeguards need to be designed at national and local levels together with social facilitation measures. These must protect tenants and homeowners and secure housing accessibility to all residents, and take into account a mix of different dwelling types when designing renovation programmes.

- **Adequate and sufficient funding should be ringfenced to vulnerable households to prioritise the renovation of the worst performing homes of low-income households.** Ensuring the allocation of tailored accessible and affordable funding means taking into account not only economic but also racial, age and gender equality considerations among other important dimensions when designing financial schemes for renovations. Also the typology of buildings' tenures should be taken into account as different financial instruments and/or technical assistance measures could better address both economic and non-economic barriers of more complex energy renovations of multi-apartment buildings. Finally, monitoring (and ensuring) positive impacts results from renovations will be key.

- **Activating and supporting national and local actors on the ground through adequate EU building policies can enable a multitude of stakeholders to prepare for the challenges ahead.** With a clear Paris-Agreement-Compatible roadmap, supporting and enforcement measures, governments, regional and local authorities will be enabled (and required) to prepare the needed energy infrastructure to save energy and tap into local renewable heating potentials. Delivering highly energy efficient homes, phasing out fossil fuel-based heating systems and boosting green jobs requires cooperation with anti-poverty organisations (social service providers, NGOs and local health practitioners), energy communities, trade unions, industries and financial institutions.

A long-term perspective can support both public and private actors in designing the necessary enablers (public and private financing and technical assistance), improving working conditions and providing training schemes to upskill workers. This will ensure the creation of sufficient direct jobsat there is a sufficient supply of a skilled workforce, with decent working conditions and strong social protections, to decarbonise our buildings in the most inclusive and environmentally-friendly way.

Now more than ever, decision-makers must address skyrocketing energy bills, heating and cooling challenges and the looming climate crisis. We need a legislative framework that prioritises the leakiest buildings and encompasses financial support, technical aid and strong social protection; because **a socially just and ambitious Buildings Directive, means delivering better buildings for better lives tomorrow.**

BUILD BETTER LIVES

SIGNATORIES

CAN Climate Action Network Europe
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Amigos de la Tierra
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CEE Bankwatch Network
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BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS
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EURO CITIES
EuroHealthNet
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EAPN FRANCE
eco-union
ecodes tiempo de actuar
ecologistas en acción
ecos
ecoserveis
EEB European Environmental Bureau
ENERGYCITIES
ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS INTERNATIONAL
EPSU EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE UNION
EQUINOX INITIATIVE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE
epha european public health alliance
European Federation of Building and Woodworkers EFBWW
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