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Press Release

The EU needs a citizen-oriented Energy Union

Why the housing sector holds the key to a fair energy transition

Housing Europe, representing 42 national housing federations from 22 European countries, considers that the proposed framework strategy for an Energy Union issued by the European Commission can be a step towards a fair energy transition in the EU. It is encouraging to read the European Commission's recognition of the need for customised financial support for the building sector. For Housing Europe it is clear that **buildings not only account for 40% of the overall energy consumption in Europe but, with the right incentive and policy framework, also hold the key to a fair energy transition.**

The President of Housing Europe, Marc Calon explains why a consumer oriented approach is needed and welcomes this emphasis in the communication:

'Empowering and involving citizen-consumers and communities will be key to unlocking the full potential of every green energy transition strategy. A successful Energy Union requires the trust of citizens.'

'The public, cooperative and social housing sector is committed to reducing our carbon footprint while ensuring better living conditions for residents coupled with affordable running costs. Our renovation strategies are showing that this can and is being done.'

This win-win mix of better quality of life and savings on energy bills is already a reality in many EU countries that can be used as best practices and guidelines. For instance, extensive monitoring ([data available through the HIVE online energy consumption tracker](#)) of **13 case studies in Bulgaria, Estonia and Italy** over the last three years has proven the added value of a bottom up approach where qualified architects, engineers and housing managers mediate with owners and tenants in order to achieve the expected results in terms of **energy savings, costs, behavioural change and - last but not least - indoor comfort**. Of course, this means that there is **no space for one fits all solution** but the potential within any given geographical and societal context should be examined.

Combating fuel poverty should be a priority of the Energy Union with between 50 and 125 million Europeans being affected by it. Decentralised and "micro-generation" of renewable energy combined with smart grids offer effective solutions and make the link between affordable housing with climate preservation, energy efficiency and security.

What can the EU do? Citizens, communities, cities, regions, member states and the European Institutions are all parts of this big Energy Union puzzle. Therefore, positive long-term European and national **incentives and regulation** are of crucial importance, while the amount of funding available will define the speed of the energy transition.

Alongside the Structural Funds (20% of European Regional Development Fund) allocated to the low-carbon economy, the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the so called Juncker Plan, may offer a much needed boost to refurbishments. Housing Europe expects the Energy Union to promote this approach and deliver the fair energy transition.

ADDITIONAL INFO

- Find out more about our policy and actions related to [energy issues on our website](#)
- Contact our Policy Coordinator, Julien Dijol at julien.dijol@housingeurope.eu

*** Housing Europe is the European Federation of Public, Cooperative & Social Housing.**
Established in 1988 it's a network of 42 national & regional federations gathering about 41.400 providers in 22 countries who manage over 25 million homes, about 12% of existing dwellings in Europe.