

Commission sets up EU's next energy efficiency battle

The European Commission announced increased EU energy efficiency targets on 30 November 2016. But it will face resistance from member states opposed to binding, more ambitious rules, and from the European Parliament, which has demanded much higher goals.

The executive published its 'Winter Package' of new energy legislation aimed at creating an EU Energy Union. The strategy is designed to lessen the bloc's dependence on energy imports and fight climate change.

Among the suite of bills are rules setting EU-wide 2030 climate and energy targets, including energy efficiency. Greater efficiency reduces both emissions and the need for imports because less energy is used. The Commission has repeatedly promised to put "energy efficiency first" in its Energy Union plan.

The executive set a binding EU-level 2030 target of at least a 30% increase in energy efficiency compared to 1990 levels.

Before it can become EU law, an identical goal must be agreed by both the Parliament and Council of Ministers. MEPs have twice backed Parliament resolutions calling for 40% but member states have supported just 27%, suggesting tough negotiations ahead.

This REHVA Journal is providing information on the set of EPB standards. These standards are currently out for Final (Formal) Vote. REHVA member-associations and their members play an important role in supporting this voting on national level. They have good contacts with the national standard bodies. Where necessary it is important the REHVA members support this voting procedure, and see to it that the national standard bodies (NSB's) vote timely, this is before the end of January 2017. As all standards have been accepted during the enquiry stage and all Technical Committees have processed the comments successfully, a positive result of the voting on all EPB standards is expected. However, it is important that all NSB's vote!

Why is it that important that these standards are voted positive and accepted to be published as EN or EN/ISO standards? This modularly structured, transparent, unambiguous, but flexible set of EN and ISO EPB standards is an important instrument to support the proper implementation of the Energy Performance Buildings Directive (EPBD) in the EU- Member States. These standards are also expected to be the basis for the EU voluntary certification scheme for non-residential buildings.

The need for these EPB standards is even more urgent given the COP21 targets, the earlier 20-20-20 targets

for EU 2020 and the 2030 and final 2050 targets. (see insert) This EPB set is essential to promote the unambiguity and harmonisation in the energy-efficiency and energy-transition market. In EU-28, about 40% of energy consumption is due to buildings, 2/3 for residential of which 80% heated by gas which the EU imports for 55% (2013). Our first task: reduce building energy use (by measures like insulation, passive solar, system efficiency improvement, etc.). Next: we have to increase the fraction (and production) of renewable energy, locally on the building site or nearby and finally decarbonise the energy grid. All these measures and how to weigh them, are addressed in the overarching standard EN ISO 52000-1 and several other EPB standards.

It is essential that we use these standards at national level and stop using the national procedures as is currently the case in many EU countries. The use of these typical national procedures, only partly taking into account the current EPB standards, is considered a barrier of trade and services for many energy saving technologies and products, due to the diverse assessment procedures. Using EPB standards to assess the Energy Performance of Buildings is essential for our industry. This harmonisation will reward energy saving products, systems and technologies the same way throughout Europe. This will offer great market opportunities for our industry and professionals. Bigger market opportunities mean more possibilities to invest in more energy efficient technologies. This will also have a positive effect on the cost-effectiveness of these technologies and enlarge their market. Europe could in this way be the global frontrunner and our industry could increase their market potential globally.

Widely used EPB standards will give REHVA a unique position to support their Member Associations in developing training schemes, supporting tools, dissemination programs, webinars etc. As partner in the EPB-CENTER initiative REHVA supports setting up an EU-wide program to support EU countries and professionals with their implementation process. Via this EPB-CENTER we will share our experiences and bring the standard developing and using experts together. Also with the aim to develop tools that can be used EU-wide and deliver feedback to the standardisation field, as improvement is always possible. ■

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