

Jose Manuel Durao Barroso  
President, European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
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Brussels, 10 July 2014

Dear President, Dear Commissioners,

**Re: Energy efficiency in buildings - Politics cannot ignore economic necessity**

The undersigned, representatives of leading industries in the building energy efficiency sector, want to express our concern about the lack of focus and political ambition in the on-going negotiations on the EU Energy Efficiency Strategy, due to be adopted by the Commission later this month.

As leading company executives, our day-to-day concerns are very much linked to the economic reality that we are confronted with, and this reality tells us that in order to consolidate the recovery in our sector<sup>1</sup> we are in dire need of vision and ambition from policy-makers in the promotion of building renovation.

Research has shown that bold action in this field can have positive effects on other political priorities, such as energy security. A recent report from Ecofys<sup>2</sup> shows that deep renovation of buildings would drastically reduce EU energy imports with no higher costs than other supply-oriented solutions. In addition, increasing the rate and depth of building refurbishment would address many compelling issues such as job creation and energy poverty, while significantly reducing public health costs through increased indoor comfort.

Nevertheless, we are alarmed to see that despite all evidence, outlined also by the Commission's own research, political bargaining could lead to weak targets on energy efficiency and shy action on buildings. This "business as usual" scenario would only mean economic stagnation for our sector and huge missed opportunities for the EU.

The current College of Commissioners has repeatedly stated, in numerous Communications and policy papers adopted during the last 5 years, that building renovation is key to addressing many of the social, economic and environmental challenges that the EU is facing, and that buildings are one of the key sectors to be addressed within energy efficiency policies. Now is the time to demonstrate that these acknowledgements are something more than just words and good intentions.

We therefore urge Commissioners to show leadership and to create a positive political legacy by proposing an ambitious target on energy efficiency, coupled with an unambiguous energy saving objective to be delivered by the buildings sector. Such a bold and pragmatic objective is essential for the EU to mobilise industrial actors, investors and society as a whole and thus trigger real actions to tap the enormous savings potential in the buildings sector.

Yours faithfully,

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<sup>1</sup> The construction sector generates 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) in the EU and provides 20 million jobs - 'Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises' (COM(2012) 433).

<sup>2</sup> "Deep renovation of buildings: An effective way to decrease Europe's energy import dependency", Ecofys 2014. The report shows that 61% of the gas imported by the EU is used in its (generally very inefficient) buildings, and that building renovation can reduce EU energy imports by 60% in 2030, and by 100% in 2050

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**Recipients:**

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