



Energy efficiency: renovating public buildings and savings plans for utilities

Committees: Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

The deal on the proposed EU energy efficiency directive struck by MEPs and Council on 13 June was endorsed by the Energy Committee on Thursday. The directive would introduce mandatory measures such as renovating public buildings and energy-saving schemes for utilities. The plenary vote is scheduled for September.

Parliament's rapporteur, Claude Turmes (Greens/EFA, LU), who led negotiations with the Council, said "The new energy efficiency directive enshrines the 20% efficiency target in law and sets out binding measures that will help bridge the gap that the EU must close to meet its pledge to cut energy consumption by 20% by 2020. Yet more must be done to close this gap. Achieving the EU energy-saving target makes sense, not just to further our energy security and climate change goals, but also broader economic sense, because it can stimulate economic activity and create millions of jobs, whilst bringing down energy bills for business and households and reducing our dependence on energy imports".

Renovating buildings

The directive would require Member States to renovate 3% of the total floor area of "heated and/or cooled buildings owned and occupied by their central government" (administrative departments whose responsibilities cover the entire territory of a Member State).

This would apply to buildings with a "total useful floor area" of more than 500 m², and as from July 2015, of more than 250 m². However, Member States would also be able to use alternative means to achieve equivalent energy savings, e.g. thorough renovation.

Energy efficiency schemes for utilities

Energy companies covered by the directive would have to achieve a "cumulative end-use energy savings target" by 2020. This target would have to be at least equivalent to achieving new savings, each year, from 2014 to 2020, of 1.5% of annual energy sales to final customers, by volume, and averaged over the most recent three-year period before the directive takes effect.

Sales of energy used in transport could be excluded and alternative ways to achieve equivalent energy savings would be permitted, provided that equivalence is maintained.

Energy audits

All large enterprises would be required to undergo an energy audit. These audits would need to start within three years of the directive's entry into force and should be carried out every four years by qualified and accredited experts.

Billing customers for real consumption

To help customers to save energy, suppliers would have to ensure, by 1 January 2015, that billing information is accurate and based on actual consumption. Bills would arrive at least twice a year, or quarterly, upon request.

Press release

Promoting efficiency in heating and cooling

Member States would need to carry out and notify to the Commission a "comprehensive assessment", by December 2015, of the scope for applying high-efficiency cogeneration and efficient district heating and cooling. For the purposes of this assessment, Member States would need to carry out a cost-benefit analysis - a proposal introduced by MEPs - covering their territory based on climate conditions, economic feasibility and technical suitability.

Financing facilities

MEPs also proposed establishing financing facilities for energy efficiency measures. Member States would need to facilitate the establishment of these facilities or the use of existing ones.

EU and national targets

The directive lays down common measures to ensure that the EU makes progress towards its headline target of using 20% less energy by 2020. Each Member State would set its own target and present a national efficiency action plan every three years, in 2014, 2017 and 2020. The European Commission would have to assess, by June 2014, the progress achieved.

The resolution was adopted with 42 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions

Next steps

The plenary vote is scheduled for September. Details of the other proposed measures and possible exemptions are included in a detailed background note (see the link to the right.)

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