

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2317/08  
by Catherine Guy-Quint (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: ERDF eligibility of energy expenditure in the 'old' Member States

I would like to draw the Commission's attention to the ERDF eligibility of expenditure on energy investment in the housing sector. This expenditure is not in fact currently eligible in the 'old' Member States under Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006<sup>1</sup> on the ERDF.

On 30 January of this year in a letter sent to the President of the Committee of the Regions, President Barroso indicated that the Commission intended "to present an appropriate amendment to the rules", particularly as regards their comitology aspects. The reclassification of expenditure on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies in housing as energy expenditure would allow all Member States to benefit from energy measures for the housing sector.

Nonetheless, it would appear that this flexibility in interpreting the Regulation would be restricted to very high-performing or particularly innovative investment, such as in processes not currently in large-scale production. The aim would therefore be to use the ERDF to promote very high energy efficiency.

I would first of all like to know what is currently happening with this reclassification, which is required for the consistency of EU action in the field of energy.

Secondly, whilst I fully support the Commission's objectives in this field, I do wonder about the feasibility of such a measure as things stand at present. There are in fact several obstacles standing in the way of propagating environmental technologies and eco-innovation in the building sector, the main one being access to business insurance that covers construction or renovation work using these innovative techniques.

I would thus like to draw the Commission's attention to a pilot project I tabled for the 2008 budget that aims to facilitate access to insurance for building firms so as to stimulate innovation and the promotion of eco-technologies in the European Union (budget line 02 02 12). This pilot project is currently being enforced but is meeting with considerable resistance at the European Commission, which seems to have problems in finding an appropriate framework to implement this measure. However, the use of alternative processes may well be compromised unless there is some guarantee or assistance to develop innovation.

I would therefore like to know how the European Commission intends to promote high eco-innovative energy efficiency if it is incapable of ensuring proper support for the private sector that is an essential partner in implementing the project.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 1.