

The Renovation Wave initiative has established the conditions but the holistic approach must not be forgotten

Brussels, 15 October 2020 - Bioenergy Europe welcomes the overall tone of the Renovation Wave initiative but urges the deployment of coherent measures to ensure a faster phase out from fossil fuels combined with further market uptake of renewable solutions.

Buildings are responsible for about 40% of the EU's energy consumption, with the largest share (80%) from the residential sector (heating, cooling and domestic hot water). Two thirds of this energy is still produced from fossil fuels, making European buildings one of the largest GHG emissions contributor (36%).

Under these circumstances, the proposal to set higher emission reduction is a first steps in the right direction. However, stronger commitment to phase out fossil fuel is still required. The Commission acknowledges that 'fossil fuels will gradually disappear' but timing is key to meet the Climate Target Plan 2030 and reach climate neutrality by 2050.

The renewable energy sector is already undertaking efforts to offer less carbon intensive solutions; this must be further promoted. If rightly implemented, the proposal to introducing a requirement to use minimum levels of renewables in buildings represents a real opportunity.

Europe needs supporting measures to foster the modernisation of the heating stock which is currently characterised by old and inefficient appliances. Modern, clean and efficient technologies are readily available, their market deployment must be reinforced. To this end, equipping the Renewable Energy Directive with an effective and binding target for renewable heating will be key.

And to get the most out of modern and renewable technologies, the training of the workers and creation of green jobs is indeed essential. Heating appliances installers for example, are the actual agents implementing the transition. Beyond the renovation of buildings, adequate financing to installers is key to ensure modern bioenergy appliances are fully exploited.

This must be accompanied with actions that put at the centre communities and consumers' real needs with tailored information on the best solution available, financial support to replace old appliances, and most importantly enhance accessibility to renewable solutions.

Bioenergy Europe welcomes the effort of the Commission to introduce a carbon price instrument to buildings. This should be compatible to other instruments pricing carbon at EU level and Member State level (national instruments including minimum price, tax or market mechanisms).

Jean-Marc Jossart, Bioenergy Europe Secretary-General, said: "We need to break the inertia effect. Incentivising buildings' efficiency without clear signals to phase fossil fuels will not be sufficient. It is crucial to help Member States to give a strong impulse to replace old fossil appliance with modern renewable technologies."

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