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FIEC Press Release

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Energy renovation challenge oversimplified by EPBD

■ Original pragmatic response from EP confused by over-prescriptive amendments

"FIEC always believed that the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive needed better implementation rather than revision. Having said that, we broadly supported the proposal that was published with the Clean Energy Package last year and we were particularly pleased with the European Parliament Rapporteur's original draft report" says Ulrich Paetzold, FIEC Director General, as he reflects on the plethora of amendments published during recent months, many of which have oversimplified the challenge of energy renovation. *"Installing off-the-shelf kits, using specific, prescribed materials, suggesting that construction companies should reduce their costs to make deep renovation more affordable; all of these requests in the amendments give the impression that renovating buildings to nearly zero energy standard, while improving indoor air quality at the same time is an easy undertaking. However, there are inevitable trade-offs and if some of the apparent quick fixes proposed are adopted in the final Directive, the goal of high quality renovation for sustainable energy savings could be missed at the expense of rushed, "one size fits all", even unsafe solutions that will mean that nobody wins, least of all the building owner and the resident"*.

■ Commission's "Level(s)" assessment framework supersedes some amendments

Unfortunate timing means that since the ITRE and ENVI committees worked on their amendments new indicators in DG ENV's voluntary assessment framework have been published. These are the result of three years of development work with industry stakeholders. The two approaches - one regulatory and the other voluntary - risk some overlap, creating confusion and unnecessary costs for the client and the industry. *"FIEC would have liked to have seen better co-ordination, so that the new EPBD and the Level(s) assessment framework would work seamlessly together"* says Paetzold. *"Thankfully the final ENVI opinion has removed some of the potential duplication its draft amendments created and FIEC fully supports a joined up approach to building renovation, with a coherent policy framework that facilitates quality renovation, rather than forces a fast, cheaper solution. We nevertheless remind policy makers that expensive, deep energy renovation should not be wasted on buildings that have other significant structural problems, for which demolition might be the safest choice. We look now to ITRE to finalise its report and we are available to help if required"*.

■ EPCs favoured by EP but alternatives exist: all require competent experts!

FIEC repeats its view on Energy Performance Certificates, which are not sufficiently reliable to be used as a method of determining whether public grants offered should actually be paid out following renovation, once achieved energy savings have been certified. Other tools, still only at concept stage, would provide a comprehensive diagnosis, along with a roadmap for the client, enabling the most appropriate renovation works according to the available budget and long term perspectives. That said, any such tools must be used by competent experts who have been properly trained and who are knowledgeable about the range of options available and able to evaluate those that are most suitable for the specific renovation project in question.

FIEC's position on EPBD proposal: <http://www.fiec.eu/en/fiec-positions/position-papers.aspx>

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