

Energy policy: energy performance of the buildings of the Union, energy saves and efficiency

2001/0098(COD) - 11/05/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: To propose a European Directive with the specific remit of improving upon the energy performance of buildings in the European Union. **CONTENT:** One of the findings published in the Commission's Green Paper "Towards a European Strategy for Energy Supply" was Europe's increasing dependance on outside sources for its energy supply. Experts estimate that were this current trend to continue, by the year 2030, import dependance on energy sources from outside the EU could rise to 70% of total demand. Such statistics, combined with the EU obligations to reduce CO2 emmissions under the Kyoto Protocol, require an urgent review of energy consumption and an assessment of where savings can be made. Recent research indicates that the residential and so called "tertiary" secotor (namely offices, retailers, hotels, restaurants, schools, hospital, sports halls, indoor swimming pooles etc.) are the largest overall end users of energy. Further research also indicates that potentially large energy savings in these sectors are feasible - possible larger than in any other area sector. Accordingly, the underlying objective of this draft Directive is to promote the improvement of the energy perfomance of buildings within the EU and to ensure that as far as possible only such measures as are the most cost-effective are undertaken. The proposed Directive lays down a framework that will lead to increased co-ordination between Member States of legislation in this field. The practical framework will, however, remain the responsibility of the Member States. Specifically, the proposed Directive lays down: - requirements for Member States to establish a methodology for an integrated calculation of the energy performance of buildings. A framework for the methodology is annexed to the Directive; - obliges Member States to set minimum standards for the energy perfomance of new buildings and to update them regularly. To assess the feasibility of installing alternative energy supply systems for large new buildings; - obliges Member States to apply the appropriate standards for energy performance to large existing buildings when these buildings undergo major renovations, provided certain cost and cost-effectiveness criteria are met.