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Consumers to benefit from greener, healthier and more affordable housing plus drive to tackle energy poverty in Renovation Wave

The European Commission announced its Renovation Wave strategy today to rapidly increase the rate of renovation and energy efficiency of Europe's buildings. Part of the Green Deal and the EU's recovery efforts, it is a triple win: for consumers, for the environment and for the EU economy.

The Renovation Wave is good news for consumers because the cost of heating or cooling their homes represents a major part of households' energy bills. Investing into energy-efficient buildings is therefore a no-brainer. Consumers will benefit from lower energy bills in the long term, easy access to affordable and trustworthy offers for energy efficient retrofits, healthier and more comfortable homes.

Buildings are responsible for one third of Europe's emissions, yet 75% of Europe's buildings are energy inefficient. To address this, the Renovation Wave will focus on both public and private buildings and the Commission rightly identified some of the main barriers to home renovations: lack of consumer awareness, insufficient financing options, regulatory obstacles and a shortage of impartial advice and skilled service providers.

There is a strong focus on helping people in social housing and multi-apartment buildings access renovations to ensure that all consumers, including those in energy poverty, can live in affordable and healthy homes. This is vital as one of the main barriers to home renovation is the high upfront cost.

BEUC Director General Monique Goyens said: "The Renovation Wave is very good news for consumers. Buildings are massive sources of energy consumption and the vast majority of Europe's buildings today are just wasting energy. We know that the cheapest form of energy is the energy we don't use. So every kilowatt of energy consumers can save will help to reduce household bills, meaning people can more easily afford to power their homes.

"A healthy home has a tangible impact on quality of life and the pandemic has shown us just how important this is to recover from respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19. So we welcome efforts to accelerate building renovations and to tackle energy poverty as the two go hand-in-hand.

"It's good that the Commission has already set out some concrete steps on how it's going to meet the Renovation Wave objectives. But it now needs to walk the talk and speed up building renovations massively to make people's homes more affordable, more energy efficient and more comfortable places to live. Consumers will be key to making this transition happen so should be involved every step of the way".

For background

In its strategy, the Commission:

- Outlined plans to decarbonise heating and cooling by raising the existing renewable heating and cooling targets. This will give consumers the confidence to invest in energy efficiency measures and later in renewable energy technologies too. With the right incentives, [consumers are willing help to the energy system](#) by shifting their consumption, and adapting their behaviour.
- Sent a strong message that it is taking energy poverty seriously. For the first time, EU countries will be given energy poverty guidelines. The BEUC-coordinated [STEP project](#) was set up to advise consumers in some of the countries worst affected by energy poverty. That there will now be guidance for countries to define and measure it is a big step forward.
- Introduced minimum energy performance standards for existing buildings. In the private rental sector, minimum energy performance standards will enable tenants to access homes they can keep warm during winter, while making sure they can control their energy bills.

ENDS

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