



Renovation Wave

The Renovation Wave is coming and the EFBWW fully supports it! The construction sector will have a major role in this, and it will witness a growth in employment and economic activity. Nevertheless, some key aspects must be taken into consideration: a climate neutral Renovation Wave – as announced today by the European Commission – should be synonymous with affordable energy for everyone and with training, education and stable jobs for every worker. In this step forward, no one should be left behind.

Why do we need a Renovation Wave?

Today, buildings account for 40% of energy consumed and for about 40% of CO₂ emissions. The annual renovation rate of the building stock varies from 0.4% to 1.2% in the Member States, where deep renovations account only for 0.2% to 0.3% of renovated floor area. That means that approximately 97% of the current building stock in Europe is eligible for renovation before 2050. These rates will need at least to double to reach the EU's energy efficiency and climate objectives.

Which crucial aspects should be considered?

The EFBWW welcomes the renovation wave initiative to reduce emissions by 2030 and 2050 in line with EU climate objectives and fully supports the goals laid down in the European Green Deal to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

A key priority of a new renovation wave strategy should be the introduction of mandatory minimum energy performance standards for existing buildings. The long-term renovation strategies should foresee policies to target the worst performing buildings, split-incentive dilemmas and market failures as well as measures to alleviate energy poverty. The renovation wave initiative should be backed by financial support from the €750 billion recovery fund. The EFBWW demands that the EU step up its efforts to ensure that affordable, renewable energy is available to low-income and poor end-users in buildings, including no raising of rents or shifting renovation costs to the tenants.

The EFBWW deems it very important that the national trade unions of the construction industry are properly involved during the implementation at national level. In this context, it is important to note that Member States organise stakeholder consultations in preparation of their long-term renovation strategies.

Increasing the renovation rate will have multiple positive effects on employment and economic growth in the construction sector. The transition to a sustainable, carbon-neutral and resource-efficient industry will have a major impact on skills needs. To reach a high number of skilled workers to do the renovation works, urgent fundamental changes in vocational, education and training (VET) systems are required. The vice-chair of the EFBWW

Standing Committee Building, Gijs Lokhorst, states *“we need to increase investments in human capital (education, training, lifelong learning) and to equip all current and future workers in the construction sector with the necessary skills in green and digital technologies. The renovation wave initiative should envisage direct employment and workers being contracted immediately”*.

The renovation wave can be successful if it is designed to kick-start renovation and better adapt the building infrastructure to future challenges. Dedicated investments should be combined with better education, training and upskilling of the existing workforce.

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