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Commissioner Piebalgs welcomes political agreement on energy performance of buildings

Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs welcomes the political agreement on energy performance of buildings reached yesterday by representatives of the European Parliament and the Council. The agreement will greatly contribute to achieving EU Climate and Energy objectives for 2020 and to boost European economy. The agreement will strengthen the building codes and energy performance requirements for buildings across the EU and fixes 2020 as deadline for all new buildings to be nearly zero energy buildings.

Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said: *"Energy performance of buildings is key to achieving our EU Climate & Energy objectives for 2020, namely the reduction of Greenhouse gas emissions and the achievement of a 20% of energy savings. By this agreement, the EU is sending a strong message to the forthcoming climate negotiations in Copenhagen. Improving the energy performance of buildings is a cost effective way of fighting against climate change and improving energy security, while also boosting the building sector and the EU economy as a whole."*

Energy performance of buildings: towards near zero energy buildings

The agreement reached yesterday by representatives of the Council and the European Parliament retains the key aspects of the Commission proposal presented in 2008. The recast proposal aims at extending the scope and strengthening the current Directive by setting a legal framework to upgrade the national building codes and by launching an ambitious policy of nearly zero energy buildings, so that all new buildings will be nearly zero energy as of 2020. As for existing buildings, Member States will also draw up national plans to increase the number of nearly zero energy buildings.

Moreover, the recast Directive also improves the information provided to consumers in the buildings energy performance certificate. Not only the energy performance certificate shall be shown to the prospective new tenant or buyer of the building, but the energy performance indicator of the building shall be stated in the sale or rental advertisements.

Buildings are responsible for 40% of energy consumption and 36% of EU CO₂ emissions. It is estimated that, by strengthening the provisions of the Directive on energy performance, the EU could achieve a reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 70% of the current EU Kyoto target. In addition to this, these improvements could save citizens around 300€ per annum per household in their energy bills, while boosting the construction and building renovation industry in Europe.