

PRESS RELEASE – MODERN BUILDING ALLIANCE

Revised EPBD: crucial step for energy efficiency and opportunity to enhance quality, performance and safety in building renovations

17 April 2018 – Today, the European Parliament gave its final approval to the revised text of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). The agreement is a positive step for the EU's energy and climate ambition since buildings represent 40% of energy consumption and 36% of CO₂ emissions in the EU. The revised EPBD recognizes the key role of building renovation with regard to climate protection and energy transition. At the same time, the renovation of the building stock will bring other benefits like improving health and comfort, reducing energy poverty and creating jobs and economic growth. It is also recognized that renovation work must achieve high quality and safety performance to deliver its full potential. The Modern Building Alliance encourages Member States to seize this opportunity and transpose this directive into ambitious national plans.

The text approved by the European Parliament aims to fully leverage the potential contribution of the building sector to the EU's energy and climate objectives. The agreement strengthens long-term national renovation strategies to reach a “highly energy efficient and decarbonised building stock” by 2050 and requires Member States to specify how renovation strategies “contribute to achieving the Union's energy efficiency target” defined in the Energy Efficiency Directive. Considering that 90% of the building stock needed for 2050 already exists today, “facilitating the cost-effective transformation of existing buildings into nearly-zero energy buildings” and ensuring “the optimal performance of the building envelope is pursued” will be essential.

The revised EPBD allows for renovation strategies to address issues such as a healthy indoor climate, seismic safety, and fire safety. “With regard to fire safety performance, this is one of the many basic requirements of any construction or renovation project, like all other safety aspects” said Quentin de Hults, Executive Chair of the Modern Building Alliance. These considerations are, for example, important as new building elements like solar panels or electric vehicle charging points may introduce new fire and electrical risks. Ensuring quality and compliance of renovation work with national building codes and producers guidelines is essential.

“Renovation strategies should consider key fire safety features such as smoke detection, escape routes and possibly sprinklers in high-rise/high-risk buildings”, added de Hults. Fire safety is a key pillar of the Modern Building Alliance and we consider it is paramount to consider it beyond renovation strategies. We call on policy makers to put more emphasis on increasing prevention measures via public awareness regarding fire risks and fire safety behaviors. The work initiated by the Fire Information Exchange Platform (FIEP) on data and best practices will support Member States' efforts in this regard.

Members of the Modern Building Alliance, suppliers of key materials and products allowing to achieve high performing and durable building envelopes, are convinced that the revised EPBD has the potential for delivering energy efficient, safe and sustainable buildings in Europe, provided high quality renovation works support those goals.

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About the Modern Building Alliance

We are an alliance of trade associations and companies representing the plastics industry in the construction sector. Plastics are increasingly used in building and construction applications to make our buildings more sustainable, from window frames and durable pipes to state-of-the-art insulation solutions. An essential pillar of our cause is the ambition for greater fire safety across the construction industry. It is a key driver of our product design and manufacturing: improving the fire safety of buildings is a joint responsibility of the whole value chain involved in building and construction. That is why, by engaging with policy makers and stakeholders, we are committed to supporting the EU in ensuring safe and sustainable construction for people across Europe.

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