

Implementing the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD): ROCKWOOL's Group position

The incredible opportunity in building renovation

The EPBD is a central element of the EU's Renovation Wave strategy, which sets ambitious targets: renovating 35 million building units by 2030 and achieving a zero-emission building stock by 2050. This matters because when constructed and renovated to high standards, buildings can cut energy use and emissions, increase energy security, and bolster local economies. Improved energy efficiency also unlocks social co-benefits — reducing energy bills, creating healthier indoor environments, supporting vulnerable households as well as creating local jobs. It can also increase energy independence by reducing reliance on imported fuels.

Indeed, investing in more energy efficient buildings is a triple win decision

Large-scale energy efficiency renovations create a rare opportunity to deliver broad and lasting economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Economically, well-insulated buildings consume less energy, with proper insulation potentially reducing heating needs by up to 70 percent. Less consumption = less cost. In Europe, this also means less reliance on imported energy and therefore greater energy security. What's more, some 16 million people are directly employed in the construction industry in the EU. And approximately 95 percent of construction sector is composed of micro, small, and medium-sized businesses with craftsmen generating two-thirds of their revenues within a 50 km radius of their homes.

Environmentally, the International Energy Agency (IEA) says, "No other energy resource can compare with energy efficiency as a solution to the energy affordability, security of supply and climate change crises. This is why the IEA calls energy efficiency the



'first fuel' of all energy transitions". The EU cannot achieve net zero emissions without addressing the built environment's huge impact. The IEA estimates that energy efficiency improvements can drive 40 percent of energy-related greenhouse gas emission reductions needed by 2040 to reach Paris climate goals. It is very straightforward – the less we consume, the less we emit.

In terms of **social wellbeing**, buildings affect the health, wellbeing, and productivity of the people who live, work, learn, recover, and play inside them in multiple ways. A building that is too hot or too cold increases health risks, including mental health and stress; too much humidity and dampness increase the probability of mould growth, which can lead to respiratory diseases. Poor lighting and ventilation and too much noise decrease productivity and learning abilities; noisy environments are also more stressful, which inhibits recovery in care facilities. Well-insulated buildings can also alleviate energy poverty and the associated health impacts from living in low quality buildings.

Getting it right on EPBD – a perspective from industry

Strong national legislation is essential to achieve the EPBD targets. To reap the many potential benefits of these targets, national implementation must prioritise:

- Energy efficiency in buildings
- Healthier, safer indoor environments (fire safety, thermal/acoustic comfort)
- Circular and robust long-lasting materials
- Climate resilience

We recommend that EU countries focus on three key elements to ensure successful EPBD implementation:

1. Prioritise more and deeper renovations:

- Establish minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) for non-residential buildings to transition out of lowest Energy Performance Certificate classes (G-F-E) by 2033.
- Target worst-performing residential buildings, support and carry out more and deeper renovation.
- Introduce Zero-Emission Building (ZEB) standards for both new and existing buildings from 2030 onwards.

2. Design and deliver performance-based financial support:

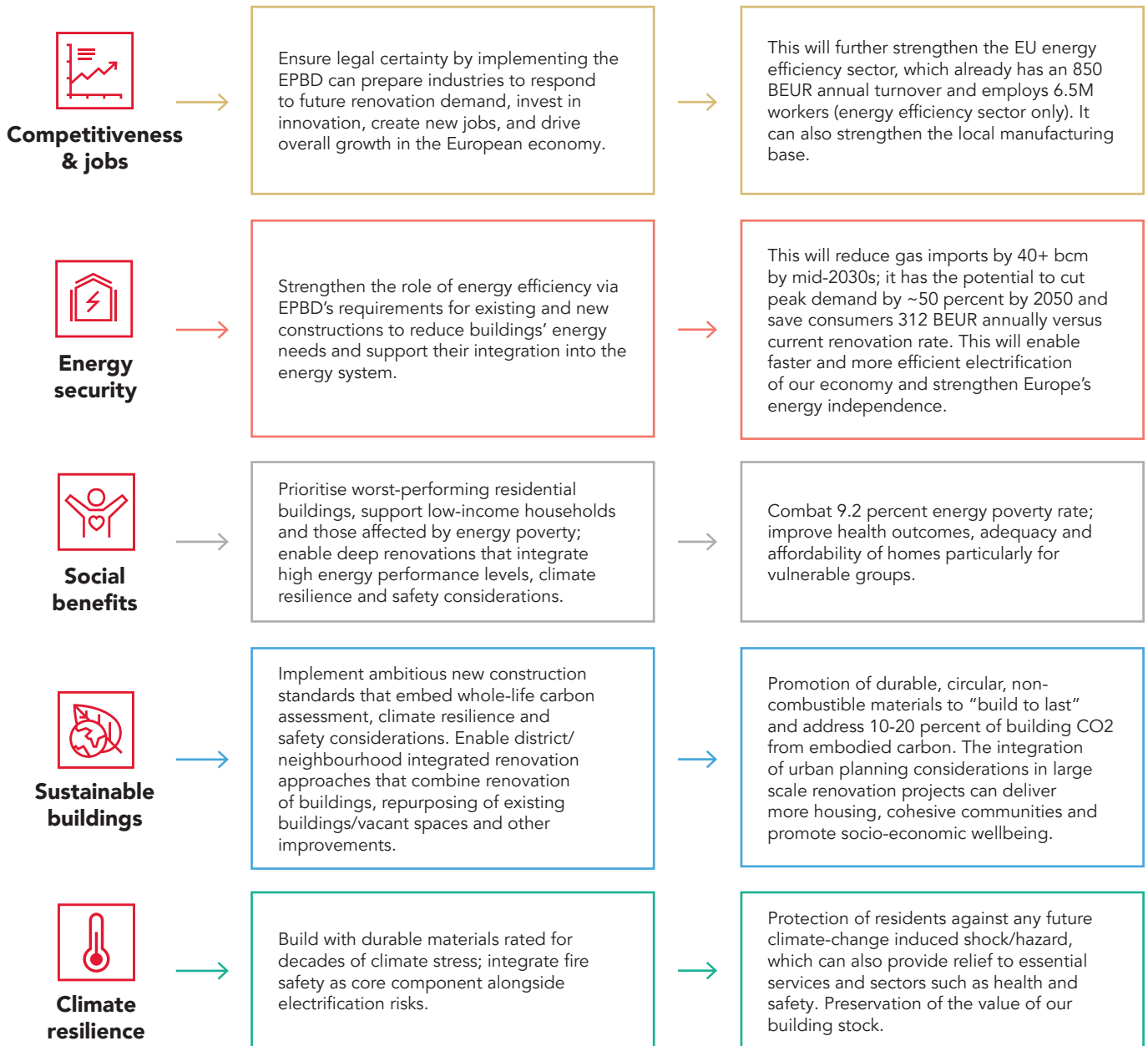
- Condition public funding disbursement on minimum quality, climate resilience, durability, and safety criteria.
- Prioritise deep renovations achieving ZEB standards (or minimum 60 percent primary energy savings).
- Mobilise and increase accessibility of private financing mechanisms (blending, de-risking instruments).
- Invest in advisory and technical services (e.g., one-stop shops) to support consumers in their renovation journeys and enable full absorption of funds.

3. Strengthen fire safety regulation at national level

- Increase minimum fire safety standards for high-rise and high-risk buildings – for example, by lowering the high-rise height threshold triggering a requirement to use non-combustible façade materials such as cladding and insulation; and by requiring such non-combustible materials on all high-risk buildings, such as schools, care facilities, and other buildings requiring longer evacuation times.
- Within the framework of the EPBD “solar mandate”, require that non-combustible materials are used underneath PV panels to limit fire spread and protect precious assets.



Five key benefits of effective implementation



Investing in more energy efficient buildings is a winning formula, having immediate positive impacts on the environment, economy, and society overall. Getting renovation right for the long-term entails using building materials that are durable, recyclable, and non-combustible, materials that will last for generations and can be recycled at end of their useful life.

In short, fully and effectively implementing the EPBD is an opportunity to create a new generation of energy efficient, acoustically comfortable, aesthetically pleasing and fire-safe buildings – our homes, workplaces, schools, care facilities, and so much more.