



## **Keynote Address: Key drivers for home and building renovation from people's point of view, by Adrian Joyce, Renovate Europe**

*Delivered on June 19, 2019 at the EuroPACE Summit.*

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, it's a real pleasure to be with you and I am sorry that I cannot be here throughout the whole event. Thanks to EuroPACE and the organisers for this invitation as it will allow me to take you through an issue that is weighing on our minds at the Renovate Europe Campaign – how do we motivate building owners to undertake deep energy renovation of their buildings?

### **The context**

We are living through a pivotal time in the history of our species. We have become painfully aware that our actions to increase our comfort and well-being is coming at the expense of our precious habitat – the biosphere on which we rely for all our needs. We are only slowly waking up to the reality of the climate crisis that we have provoked. Our collective challenge is to put into place the actions and measures that will save our species from extinction and those actions and measures must be directed towards drastically reducing our wasteful use of resources, including energy resources.

To succeed, we must take a systemic view, a view that joins up all sectors and that objectively settles on the right way forward, a way that can be agreed by all and a way that has the highest chance of success. This will not be easy, but it will be worthwhile.

As we observe progress on what actions each sector should take, we can see that the technological and process solutions are emerging or are in place, but one danger here is that we may see some actors believing that their approach and their technological solution is the right one, the best one and the only one to pursue.

My conviction is that there is room for a wide range of approaches and technologies and that we will struggle to agree on what combination to support. Extensive dialogue and cross-sectoral research will assist us in this endeavour.

### **Buildings**

Turning now to my own sector – the buildings sector – and to the question that I have been asked to address this afternoon, I would first point out that our urbanised, industrialised and increasingly digitalised society relies on functional, comfortable and safe buildings for the great bulk of its activities. It is a sector that is, by nature, cross-sectoral. As a result, I believe that all in this room will agree that addressing the challenges of very high energy use and very high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from buildings is a foundational action that society must take on and must take on quickly. You will be familiar with the headline figures that 40% of all primary energy produced in the EU is consumed in buildings and that more than 36% of energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions arise from that consumption.

The Renovate Europe Campaign has already been active for 8 years; it has 40 partners that support its objectives, including 15 national partners and it has rejoiced



in the recent revisions of the Buildings Directive that largely answered our call for an ambitious, coherent legislative framework at EU level that will see the energy demand of the buildings stock in the EU being reduced by 80% by 2050. In its work to date, the Campaign has always emphasised the positive, informing policymakers and decision-takers of the multiple benefits that flow from undertaking deep energy renovation of our buildings.

It is probably because we emphasise the positive that we have been successful, and we will continue in this approach.

Over the last 8 years we have gained a detailed insight into the dynamics of deep energy renovation and we have seen at first hand that there are a great number of barriers to the roll-out of successful and high-volume deep energy renovation programmes in the Member States. We have also seen that many actors are mobilised to address those barriers and that our collective understanding of how to overcome them is growing.

The EuroPACE Project is one of many initiatives that is addressing the question of how to sustainably finance the transformation of our buildings and the financial instruments that it is promoting are very promising for many regions in the EU. Its products will form a key part of the financing arsenal that we can use in the years ahead.

Notwithstanding these promising developments, we also realise that for a successful, high-volume programme of deep energy renovation to be rolled out, all barriers need to be overcome. If just one barrier remains standing, then a programme cannot be successful.

### **Key drivers**

When thinking about the remaining, stubborn barriers, the lack of motivation among building owners looms large in my mind as we have repeatedly seen that without a pipeline of projects, even the best designed programmes for deep energy renovation fail to really take off. It also comes to mind as a barrier because so many of the technical barriers, including the availability of financing, have already been addressed and the resulting tools are available in the market.

So, the question of what are the key drivers that could motivate people to take up the challenge of undertaking deep energy renovation of their buildings arises.

On this point, I have a few ideas that I would like to share with you, ideas that need further debate and development before they can be effective in meeting the challenges that I have outlined.

1. Find the means to use the current wave of concern over the effects of climate change to nudge people to take action in their own environment. To do this successfully, we will have to clearly and simply make links in the minds of people that the way we use our buildings is a contributory factor to climate disruption and that we can readily and quickly remedy this by undertaking deep energy renovation of our building stock

2. Further promote the fact that after deep energy renovation, properly executed, our buildings are more comfortable, healthier and more enjoyable to occupy. Knowing that personal benefits arise can be highly motivating for people
3. Ensure that our Member States devise and adopt Long-Term Renovation Strategies that are linked to meaningful actions, timetables and indicators that will see the transformation of our building stock in the EU to a highly energy efficient and decarbonised stock by 2050
4. Ensure that all ideas are on the table in the debate about which actions to pursue. What I mean here is that we should be ready to consider introducing mandatory policies that will accelerate the transition of our building stock. One example that is gaining ground in several Member States is the idea that landlords are banned from letting out properties that fall below a certain energy performance level, usually defined as one of the levels in the national energy performance certification system
5. Another example that should receive more attention is the idea that minimum energy performance standards for existing buildings be adopted at Member State level. Many actors falsely believe that this is already a requirement in law across the EU, but it is rare. Most countries have requirements that apply only when a building undergoes a *major renovation* as defined in the Buildings Directive but does not apply to all renovations
6. A further example that should be given more active consideration is the use of trigger points in the life of a building. What we mean here is that when a building changes hands and the purse is open, it is much easier to invest in the deep energy renovation of the building. We all know that new owners will almost always be planning to undertake some improvement works to the newly purchased building. Having preferential financing schemes available to people at such moments is a key driver that complements the trigger point as a good moment for renovation
7. Utilise an area-based approach to the deep energy renovation of our building stock. Moving away from a building-by-building approach whereby an area, neighbourhood or district is tackled in its entirety in one go, should, in my view, be a highly effective driver to motivate building owners to act. Early experiences with this approach, such as in Scotland or in The Netherlands, have proved to be effective and popular as renovating a whole area in one go improves the quality of life for everyone, eliminating some of the negatives that can arise around feelings of exclusion or discrimination if only selected properties are renovated

I do not pretend that these ideas are entirely original nor entirely practical in the present climate, but they are ideas that I single out as being worthy of pursuit in policy dialogues and consultations across our great continent.

There is one final issue that I would like to briefly address, often referred to as the elephant in the room – the topic of behaviour change.

It is true that the way we live and our expectations about what is due to us in terms of comfort and ease of living has a huge impact on our energy consumption patterns and that very big savings can be made by adjusting or changing our

behaviour. There are emerging debates on this issue that hold promise, such as the topic of energy **sufficiency** recently debated during a week-long conference run by the European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, but I believe that the policymakers are not yet ready for this approach – it will have to emerge from a bottom-up movement first and that may emerge from the ongoing wave of movements on climate change that are ringing around us every week.

So, although I may have drifted somewhat from the title of my intervention, I hope that I have provided food for thought that will feed your deliberations during the afternoon ahead.

**END**

### **About Adrian Joyce**



**Secretary General** of the European Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (EuroACE), whose members are Europe's leading companies that provide the products, equipment and services that go together to create high energy performance in buildings. EuroACE monitors the work of the EU Institutions, and distils those aspects of EU policy and legislation that are of importance to the energy efficiency sector and to the establishment of the market conditions that will encourage, among other things, a significant increase in energy-related renovations to existing buildings.

Adrian Joyce is also the **Campaign Director** of the Renovate Europe Campaign, which was initiated by EuroACE in 2011 in order to stop energy waste in buildings. Its ambition is to reduce the energy demand of the building stock in the EU by 80% by 2050 as compared to 2005.

Adrian Joyce is a professionally qualified architect who, having graduated from University College Dublin in 1984, spent 17 years in private practice (working in the UK, France, and Belgium and in his native country, Ireland) before getting involved full-time in architectural policy. He was, for 18 months commencing in January 2002, the Practice Director of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland before moving to Brussels to join the staff at the Secretariat of the Architects' Council of Europe where he became Director before leaving in July 2011. He holds a part-time post teaching Construction Technology at the Catholic University of Louvain-le-Neuve, Faculty of Architecture, Architectural Engineering and Urbanism – LOCI. He is currently Chairman of the **Coalition for Energy Savings**.