

EC adopts energy efficiency and renewables measures

The European Commission has adopted a proposal which will, for the first time, enable all Member States and regions in the European Union to invest in energy-efficiency and renewable energy measures in housing, with the support of European Cohesion Policy funding. The measure, presented in the European Economic Recovery Plan, will be targeted at low-income households. In practice, this means the EU will be able to co-finance national, regional or local authority schemes to install double-glazing, wall insulation and solar panels in housing. "The residential sector is responsible for a quarter of energy consumption in Europe. With this measure we are going to help European citizens to improve the quality of their homes, while making a substantial contribution to our climate change and security of supply policies," says Energy Commissioner Andris Pielbalgs. The proposal allows the whole EU-27 to benefit from ERDF support for energy efficiency and renewable energy investment in all types of buildings, although interventions can target only low-income households. So far, through the Cohesion Policy, the 27 EU Member States have planned to invest €4.8 billion on renewable energies and €4.2 billion on energy efficiency and energy management measures. Buildings alone are the source of 40 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU. Some EU studies conclude that an average EU householder could save between €200 and €1,000 per year, depending on their energy consumption, by making their homes more energy efficient. The Member States and the Parliament are yet to adopt the Commission's proposal.

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