Interview

Eduardo Maldonado | *Concerted Action EPBD*

BUILDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY: CREDIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION

BUILD UP energy solutions for better buildings

What's next for energy efficiency in buildings? "Cities of NZEBs" says Eduardo Maldonado, coordinator of Concerted Action EPBD.

EDUARDO MALDONADO | CONCERTED ACTION EPBD

Concerted Action EPBD - funded under Intelligent Energy Europe - **facilitates member state collaboration on designing national programs, raising awareness and driving take-up of energy efficiency**. Members represent national authorities from 29 countries. The current Concerted Action (ending in 2015) deals with the implementation of the Recast EPBD.

What is next for Recast EPBD implementation?

The Recast EPBD states there will be a revision of legislation in 2017 to determine how member states are proceeding towards 2020 objectives. The revision will provide an opportunity to re-evaluate progress on cost optimality, nearly zero-energy buildings, certification and inspections, support schemes and incentives, as well as synergies with the Energy Efficiency Directive, and bring ambitions into line with the current situation in member states – hopefully setting realistic and achievable targets to meet the goals for 2020 and beyond.

How has building energy efficiency policy evolved throughout your career?

There is little comparison between now and 30 years ago. The three big successes are: **minimum building regulations now exist in all member states** that are fit for purpose and improved every five to seven years. Secondly, **building energy rating and certification exists in all member states**. Although there is room for further improvement, certification is highlighting inefficiencies in existing building stock and regulation is setting higher standards for new buildings. For example, a building built today will have a higher energy efficiency rating than one built over 30 years ago. Thirdly, **information is available at a national level on both the technical and non-technical elements of energy efficiency and energy saving measures**. However, although advances have been made, Europe and its member states are lagging compared to the ambitions in the Recast. It is evident that legislation must be improved through the introduction and enforcement of fines and penalties for non-compliance.

> **'Implementation of legislation must be improved through the introduction and enforcement of fines and penalties for non-compliance'**

How about targets for nearly zero-energy buildings?

The greatest challenge is to reach a stage whereby NZEBs are not only demonstration projects but become normal building practice. We should be moving towards a city of NZEBs rather than just referencing individual buildings.

There is a **lack of progress on defining NZEBs**. Next year, member states must report progress, but few targets were set for 2015 - so it will be difficult to assess successes.

What are the greatest challenges to up-scaling energy efficiency in existing building stock over the next five years?

Improved credibility for certification and raising public awareness are massive challenges. A step change is required so that when someone goes to buy or rent a property they ask how much energy the building consumes – like the car industry, where buyers evaluate performance based on fuel consumption.

It is of upmost importance that rigorous quality control measures are put in place across all member states. Strict compliance checks are required, as few penalties exist for incorrect ratings.

The importance of certification should be better communicated. Many building owners view certification solely as a legal requirement – an added cost – compulsory when selling or renting a property. An effective certification and inspection market benefits everyone – and accurate building certificates have the potential to raise the value of a property.

MORE INFO…

- www.epbd-ca.eu
- Implementing the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) - Featuring Country Reports 2012
- Country Facts

How important is raising awareness among building owners, users, tenants and landlords around building energy efficiency and behaviour change in buildings?

More work is needed to 'mainstream' energy efficiency - political will often follows the will of the people. It is of upmost importance that **building and energy professionals and experts raise awareness around the associated benefits of energy efficiency**.

There is an **urgent need for a sustained awareness campaign** to educate the wider public around the benefits of energy efficiency and the detrimental effects energy 'hog' buildings have on future resources. However, this campaign is a long-term plan and does not sit well with the short-term political cycles! Targets and plans should be set out for a generation ahead – about 15-20 years – but this equals approximately five political cycles.

In conversation with Sadhbh Ní Hógáin (PRACSIS)

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