



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Environment: Give your opinion on reducing the environmental impact of buildings

The European Commission is gathering views on how to reduce the environmental impacts of buildings. Buildings use a large amount of resources when they are designed, built, used and demolished, and their impact on the environment, energy consumption and climate change is significant. Improving construction techniques is therefore important to help Europe become a more sustainable economy.

The consultation asks citizens, businesses, NGOs and public authorities for ideas on how to reduce the impacts of the construction sector, make buildings more sustainable and create green opportunities for businesses.

The environmental impacts of buildings go beyond energy consumption for heating, cooling and lighting. In the EU, buildings account for:

- 42 % of final energy consumption (during their use phase)
- 35 % of greenhouse gas emissions (during use phase)
- 50 % of all extracted materials are used in building (construction and use)
- 30 % of water consumption (during construction and use)
- 30 % of total generated waste (during construction, demolition and renovation).

This shows how existing EU policy initiatives in the area of environmental performance of buildings, which mainly target energy efficiency, could be complemented with policies for resource efficiency looking at a wider range of resource use and environmental impacts, across the life-cycle of buildings.

At present there are no common criteria to measure the environmental performance of buildings. This makes it difficult for stakeholders in construction to factor environmental aspects into their business and purchasing decisions.

Contributors are asked for their views on the main environmental issues for the buildings sector, availability of data, systems to assess and communicate environmental performance of buildings, how to stimulate demand, and how construction materials could be used more efficiently.

Next Steps

The consultation is open until 1st October 2013 at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/buildings_en.htm

The Commission is planning to present ideas in a future Communication on Sustainable Buildings.

Background

On 20 September 2011 the European Commission adopted the [Roadmap to a Resource-Efficient Europe](#). It states that existing policies for promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in buildings need to be complemented with policies for resource efficiency, which look at a wider range of environmental impacts across the life-cycle of buildings and infrastructure and that the European Commission will put forward a Communication on Sustainable Buildings in 2013.

For more information:

Link to ENV website on Sustainable buildings:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/buildings_en.htm

See also:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/about/roadmap/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/escp_en.htm

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