

Promoting the renovation, transformation and re-use of existing buildings over demolition and new builds



Manifesto for the
EU institutions

Time to Act:
for high-quality
architecture and living
environment for all



ACE key policy priorities for the EU institutions

Promoting high-quality architecture and living environment for all

- Recognising the value of architecture as a key lever for high-quality living spaces
- Embedding the values of the New European Bauhaus in EU legislation
- Developing a proposal for a Planning Services Directive

Advancing the highest standards in education and ensuring the upskilling of professionals

- Aligning with the International Standard of Training (5+2)
- Resolving the problem of mixed qualifications
- Ensuring the up-skilling of professionals

Establishing a SME-friendly regulatory framework

- Ensuring strict reciprocal application of the Government Procurement Agreement and International Procurement Instrument
- Revising the Public Procurement Directive

Favouring architectural and planning solutions in the built environment

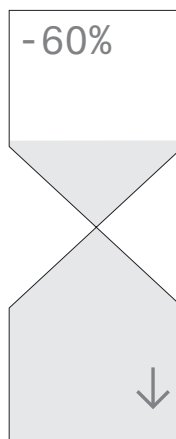
- Tackling whole-life impact of the built environment and apply circular economy principles in the construction sector
- **Promoting renovation, transformation and re-use of existing buildings over demolition and new builds**
- Adapting living spaces to the effect of climate change through architectural and planning solutions

Challenge: How to boost renovation in the EU, to save energy and deliver healthier and more comfortable buildings for citizens?

Solution: Prioritise the renovation, transformation and re-use of existing buildings over demolition and new build.

Background

Buildings' GHG emissions must be reduced by 60% if we are to achieve the EU 55% GHG emission reduction target by 2030. With the Renovation Wave strategy, the EU set the objective to at least double the annual energy renovation rate by 2030 and to foster deep energy renovations - this should result in the renovation of 35 million building units by 2030.



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ACE Policy Position

Not only cutting down GHG is at stake. A profound and radical renewal of our built environment is needed to achieve healthier, more inclusive and pleasing spaces that are resilient to climate change, are affordable, and can be operated and maintained with less energy and natural resources. In so doing, renovation can generate far-reaching social, environmental and economic benefits. While demolition can be the best option in specific cases, building conservation/retrofit should always be envisaged as the preferred option. The ACE calls for:

- Adopting a holistic approach and going beyond energy retrofit: Functional and aesthetic upgrades of buildings and neighbourhoods are essential to optimise the impacts of energy efficiency measures and improve the well-being of occupants.
- Supporting integrated district approach: Neighbourhood approaches allow for a more holistic approach for buildings that are spatially related (eg. housing blocks) and to address the broader community ecosystem (transport, district heating, etc.). Public authorities should identify districts to roll-out integrated renovation programmes.
- Ensuring the quick deployment of one-stop-shops: One-stop-shop are key for delivering tailored advice and financing solutions to homeowners throughout their renovation projects. Their services should rely on the expertise of architects, who have the skill set to help people to re-imagine their living spaces and bring a holistic approach to renovation.
- Supporting the use of Renovation Passport (RP): When implementing the recast EPBD, Member States should support the use of RP and articulate them adequately with high-quality architecture principles, Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI), logbooks and financial incentives.
- Leave no one behind: Those experiencing energy poverty should be prioritised. Renovation strategies must go hand in hand with policies that protect against gentrification and should be elaborated with the participation in inhabitants.

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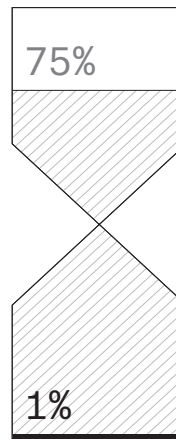


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The ACE supports the House Europe initiative, which calls for a right to reuse for existing buildings based on three key pillars:

- **Boosting renovation and reused of materials with tax incentives:** The VAT Directive must be amended to fully exempt sustainable renovation works from VAT.
- **Setting fair rules to assess the risks and potentials of existing buildings:** The introduction of EU-wide standards for risk assessment of the building stock is necessary to harness the potential of existing buildings and promote investment in renovation projects.
- **Setting new values for the embedded CO2 in existing structures:** Current regulations do not assign value or price to the embedded energy in existing buildings, making it financially advantageous to demolish and rebuild rather than preserve.



Ca. 75% of the EU building stock was built before 1990 and is energy inefficient.

Yet, only about 1% of the building stock is currently renovated each year.

Source: EU Commission.

Links

- [ACE Statement For affordable and quality housing](#)
- [Statement A sustainable, fair and beautiful built environment to address the climate and biodiversity crisis](#)
- [The role of architecture in energy efficient construction](#)

