Energy efficiency is a precondition of an effective response to climate change and the active engagement of companies of all sizes is essential.

Energy efficiency is also a key factor for European businesses to achieve energy and cost savings and thus to their competitiveness and sustainability. Thanks to their close daily contacts with the business community, Chambers act as a first port of call and catalyst in improving businesses’ energy efficiency. The Chamber network raises awareness on energy efficiency matters, delivers training, provides financial advice, liaises with other local energy stakeholders and encourages especially smaller businesses to take energy audits. About 200,000 companies per year benefit from these Chamber energy efficiency services.

Catalysts in improving energy efficiency
Two success stories...

**Bespaar en verdien!**
The Netherlands

“Bespaar en verdien!” (Save and Earn!) is an energy investment scheme for SMEs in the province of Limburg. The Limburg Chamber of Commerce and the Province of Limburg created a fund of €1.85 million in order to support entrepreneurs in realising energy-saving measures for their company. Any company in the province of Limburg can apply for a ‘voucher’. €1000, €2500 and €5000 vouchers are available and distributed according to the total amount of the energy bill of a company. The voucher is used for an energy scan, performed by a certified company. The energy scan will result in a number of practical energy-saving recommendations, for which the rest of the voucher is used. The vouchers cover a maximum of 33% of the costs. 630 companies have received a voucher to date. This has led to an investment increase of more than €2 million. In addition, the scheme has resulted in a saving of more than 30,000 tons of CO₂, more than 3 million kWh and supported the use of 700,000 m³ of natural gas. This has resulted in almost €600,000 in energy savings per year, or €2,700 per company.

www.bespaarenverdien.nu

**Energy Future**
Austria/Czech Republic

The project “Energy Future” (duration: three years, €2.3 million) is funded by the programme European Territorial Cooperation Austria-Czech Republic. The Chamber of Commerce in Lower Austria, as lead partner, sets in common with several partners of Lower Austria and Czech Republic a cross-border focus on energy as well as a signal to a common energy future. The aim of this project is to develop sustainable co-operation in the field of efficient use of energy as well as renewable energies. Businesses are among the key target groups of the programme, notably through the provision of ‘energy checks’ for entrepreneurs via an on-line tool which offers tips for energy savings in company buildings. Also on offer to businesses are energy efficiency advice services, training sessions for energy consultants, a cross-border conference on “energy efficiency in SMEs” and a series of workshops in Austria and the Czech Republic.

www.energyfuture.eu

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**European Chamber recommendations**

- **Information and Advice** – Prioritise the delivery of information and support to SMEs, a considerable yet still largely untapped source of energy efficiency improvements.

- **Energy Audits** – Ensure easier access to energy audits for SMEs.

- **Energy Measurement** – Work with member states to stimulate the take-up by businesses – especially smaller ones – of energy measurement and management systems, a key factor in achieving improved efficiency.