

Energy Efficiency Directive: 10 Member States lag behind in providing clear audit rules

One year after the transposition deadline of the Energy Efficiency Directive, only 18 countries have transposed the provisions on energy audits as set out in article 8 of the European legislation. This is one of the main findings of a study published today by EUROCHAMBRES, highlighting the negative consequences for business.

According to the directive, large companies are required to regularly undergo mandatory energy audits or to implement energy management systems. Yet, in Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Poland and Spain national legislation is missing, causing considerable legal uncertainty among businesses.

“Larger businesses are generally aware of the December 2015 deadline for conducting mandatory audits. However, the conditions under which these audits have to be performed are, in many Member States, still unclear,” explained Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES.

On the other hand, in those countries that transposed at least some of the rules, provisions on energy audit obligations, qualification requirements for auditors and audit conditions vary considerably and are leading to unnecessary bureaucratic burdens.

EUROCHAMBRES thus calls for swift and full transposition of article 8 across all of the EU to provide full legal certainty for businesses, while keeping the regulatory burden to a minimum.

Insufficient support for SMEs

About half of EU Member States are still behind schedule in the provision of support programmes for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to undergo energy audits – another obligation laid out in article 8 of the Directive.

“SMEs often lack financial resources to perform audits and to implement energy saving measures. That's why the directive specifies the need for tailored support programmes for them. The delays in providing such measures undermines competitiveness and the pursuit of energy efficiency targets, so must be rectified swiftly,” concluded Mr Abruzzini.

Examples of implementation deficits such as this underline the need for the new Commission to pay greater attention to reviewing the impact and effectiveness of existing pieces of legislation. EUROCHAMBRES will duly send the study to First Vice President Frans Timmermans.

The full EUROCHAMBRES report on Energy Audits for Europe is available on <http://bit.ly/1ekYwfv>

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