

Survey highlights lack of information and funds as main obstacles to greater SME energy efficiency

A new EUROCHAMBRES survey*, presented at a European Sustainable Energy Week event in Brussels today reveals that businesses are conscious of the importance and benefits of using energy more efficiently, but most of them lack the information and resources to do so.

Four out of five companies surveyed are aware that energy efficiency would reduce their energy bill, and three-quarters acknowledge its role in the fight against climate change. In this respect, about half of the businesses surveyed have already implemented spontaneous measures, such as motivating their staff to be more energy-conscious, or more efficient lighting (e.g. efficient light bulbs), heating /cooling and office equipment (computers, printers, etc.).

Yet only a quarter of businesses have already undertaken a professional energy audit to identify savings potentials and over 40% of them do not have a specific member of staff in charge of energy issues. This is generally due to financial constraints.

Three-quarters of respondents feel they don't have the best energy supplier, but often lack the necessary information to switch to a different one. Similarly, the vast majority of interviewed companies do not use any form of renewable energy.

In general, a clear distinction can be drawn based on the size of the business: the smaller it is, the less time, personnel and funds are allocated to energy topics.

The survey clearly suggests that better information and advice, as well as funding schemes and financial incentives would deliver considerable improvements in energy efficiency among Europe's 20 million SMEs.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, commented: *"SMEs' contribution is essential for the EU to reach its ambitious goal of 20% reduction of energy consumption. Using energy efficiently is a pre-requisite to the achievement of other climate change goals – after all, it is senseless to pump water into a leaking pipe. Raising business awareness of the financial benefits is a pragmatic first step towards greater take-up of energy efficiency actions by SMEs."*

The 'CHANGE' project – How Chambers promote Intelligent Energy to SMEs

The survey was carried out in the framework of the project "CHANGE". CHANGE helps SMEs optimise their energy use by developing a European network of intelligent energy advisors and by enhancing practical assistance to SMEs. CHANGE involves 60 national/regional/local Chambers in 12 European countries and is coordinated by EUROCHAMBRES and co-financed through the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme. Further information is available via www.eurochambres.eu/change.

** The survey was completed by over 2000 companies of all sizes and sectors in 12 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Spain, Sweden*

[EUROCHAMBRES' survey "Energy Efficiency in SMEs: Success Factors and Obstacles" can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=2323](http://www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=2323)

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