

Energy Efficiency Directive: European Parliament committee report overlooks SMEs

EUROCHAMBRES has criticised the report on the revised Energy Efficiency Directive adopted today by the European Parliament's ITRE Committee for inadequately reflecting the needs of Europe's business community. The European Chamber association was particularly critical of the retention of a 1.5% annual energy companies' savings obligations, which it considers inappropriate for a free European energy market and non cost-effective.

Speaking after the vote, EUROCHAMBRES Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini commented: *"The committee assumes that tough measures and targets for member states will translate into improved efficiency at grass roots level. However, in the current economic climate, we anticipate that many national authorities will simply pass on the burdens to the private sector without investing in much needed support measures."*

Crucial role of SMEs

An extensive, Europe-wide Chamber survey published in 2010 revealed three key factors in ensuring improved energy efficiency across the SME sector: i) provision of support and tools for assessing and controlling consumption (e.g. energy pre-checks and smart meters), ii) tailored advice on possible no/low cost actions and iii) financial support for more substantial improvements.

EUROCHAMBRES regrets that these findings are largely not reflected in the ITRE Committee report.

Support for the majority

Chambers recognise that energy efficiency is a cornerstone of the EU's climate change response. It is also the area of the response to which SMEs – which constitute 99% of all businesses in Europe – can contribute most proactively. Mr Abruzzini continued: *"Lower costs provide a strong incentive, but many SMEs need to be advised and provided with the tools to improve their energy efficiency. EU policy measures like this key directive should focus on ensuring practical support for the majority."*



Chambers of Commerce are catalysts in improving energy efficiency

Every year:

Businesses receiving energy efficiency support from Chambers	202,000
Chambers collaborating with other stakeholders to deliver energy efficiency services	100%
Chambers focusing on EU legislation in delivery of energy efficiency activities	65%

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