



European Economic and Social Committee



# A participatory model for energy efficiency in the building sector

MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2014, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Paris

MACIF Auditorium, 17-21 place Étienne Pernet 75015 Paris

## CONCEPT NOTE

The building sector plays a key role in the European economy, in terms of contribution to GDP, job creation and promoting greater energy efficiency. It has become vital to achieve this objective, which is at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy and the EU's energy and climate policies. Europe's ageing building stock represents both enormous potential and a huge challenge in terms of reducing demand for energy.

The example of France shows that there is determination at all political levels to drastically cut energy consumption:

- At national level, a 50% reduction has been set as a target for 2050. New legal requirements are planned to ensure a rapid transition towards less energy-intensive housing, and an Energy Efficiency Charter applicable to public- and private-sector tertiary buildings was signed last October.
- At regional level, the Île-de-France region set itself the target of tripling the pace of housing rehabilitation to 125 000 units per year, 25% of which are to be "low-consumption buildings".
- At local level, over 100 French cities have signed the Covenant of Mayors committing them to exceed the European target of 20% CO<sub>2</sub> reductions by 2020.

However, there is increasing criticism of an overly narrow vision of energy efficiency. Civil society is calling for a more participatory approach so that individuals – ordinary citizens, residents, neighbours, etc. – have a say in how buildings are managed. Over the next few years there will be new "stakeholders in change", especially individuals who are making a positive contribution towards ensuring that civil society has a specific role to play in energy efficiency projects.

Hence, the conference is distinguished by its participatory approach and the specific contribution of three partners to making this happen:

- the European Economic and Social Committee has designed a "European energy dialogue" comprising awareness-raising activities and methods promoting effective involvement to ensure public acceptance of the new energy policy;

- as an insurance provider, Macif Île-de-France feels that housing is a crucial issue for the region's future, as reflected in its agenda as a mutual company and its approach to corporate social responsibility;
- through the theme of energy efficiency, Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute is pursuing its general approach to the creation of a European Energy Community based on joint action and solidarity, as proposed in 2010.

The conference will be structured around three main issues:

1. What kind of governance do we need for energy efficiency 2.0 in Europe, its countries and regions?
2. Stakeholders in change: who are they, and what have they achieved?
3. Civil society involvement: closer cooperation for greater (energy) efficiency

One original feature of the conference will be "unprecedented cooperation" between architects and town planners, as well as representatives of the construction sector and local, regional, national and European political circles concerned by these issues. To enable as much dialogue as possible with energy efficiency practitioners, immediately after the conference there will be a visit to a social housing renovation site in Paris; this visit will also examine the involvement of all civil society players with an interest in the renovation project.

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