

Herman van Rompuy's Opening Address

President of the European Council
REDay2013 - 9th October 2013



"Ladies and Gentlemen,

Energy efficiency is the highest impact measure governments can take to save energy. And "buildings" represent the greatest potential sector for energy savings in the European Union. More than the transport sector. More than the industry sector.

Indeed, the existing building stock accounts for roughly 40% of the Union's primary energy consumption. Existing buildings are responsible for around 36% of the Union's energy-related CO₂ emissions. And they are responsible for 59% of the total electricity consumption in the Union.

That is why undertaking ambitious renovation of the existing building stock can have very significant social, economic and environmental benefits.

Renovating existing buildings is also essential because 90% of them are here to stay. Studies have shown that deep renovation of the Union's existing building stock can save over 30% of its total energy use.

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Herman Van Rompuy

And deep renovation of existing buildings has also the potential to stimulate innovation, to improve health and to create about two million new direct jobs in the Union by 2020. Let's never forget that we spend at least 90 % of our lives in buildings. They are our homes, schools, hospitals, governments, work places and recreational facilities.

To conclude this short message, I would like to congratulate the promoters of the "Renovate Europe Campaign." This Campaign will greatly assist in finding solutions to tap into the vast energy savings potential of Europe's buildings: by demonstrating that energy efficiency in buildings is not a cost but an investment with a great rate of return, and by bringing all stakeholders together.

Because if we want to succeed, Member States but also local authorities, the financing community and industry have to engage.

That is your wish, and also mine, for the years to come.

I thank you."