

The Renovation Wave and Healthy Buildings Simon JONES, AERECO



Commercial Director UK and Ireland for AERECO, Simon JONES is also the Irish representative and Board Member on the IEA-EBC Annex 5 'air infiltration and ventilation centre' (AIVC). AERECO joined EuroACE as a member in May 2020.

We can face the future with confidence, we can learn from our experience and we can deliver a more prosperous Europe for all. But to do so, we will have to give support to the sectors that can deliver most effectively and the most rapidly. There is no doubt that the buildings sector must be one of the sectors to which the most attention will be addressed – and for good reason. We can underwrite the health and well-being of our citizens through holistic energy renovation of the building stock.

As the EU emerges from its long period of confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we face the urgency of ensuring that an equitable, rapid and robust economic recovery is delivered via well-laid plans, properly resourced and fully implemented. The European Commission and the Member States are busy laying out their proposals, and the early summer will be full of debates and negotiations as the plans must be finalised and approved quickly to make an impact.

As soon as we get into the Autumn, the European Commission will publish its strategic communication and action plan to stimulate a *Renovation Wave* across the EU. EuroACE and its members have very high hopes that the *Renovation Wave* will move the dial and ensure that for renovation activity in the EU, we do not see a return to business as usual (read the [EuroACE feedback](#) on the Renovation Wave Roadmap). This is because business as usual was only delivering an energy renovation rate of just 1% per year (on average in the EU), with less than a fifth of those renovations delivering more than 60% energy savings. Given that our buildings, in their operational phase, consume 40% of all primary energy and emit 36% of CO₂ emissions, it is essential that we energy renovate our building stock and capture the huge potential tied up in them. Without a dramatic reduction in energy use in our buildings the goals of climate neutrality and decarbonised buildings by 2050 will be doomed before we start.

Turning to lessons that we can learn from our recent experience of being confined, we note that many, many people across the EU found that their homes were not able to provide comfortable and appropriate environments for home-working, home-schooling and home-life. This was not a surprise to experts in the field that have been monitoring and reporting on the shockingly poor state of many homes in the EU for years. Indeed, old, damp, and draughty buildings abound, with the Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE) finding that over 95% of the buildings in the EU are energy inefficient and in need of deep renovation.



In a [publication by the Renovate Europe Campaign](#) in June 2020, further findings of the BPIE were reported, findings that demonstrate that holistically renovated homes that provide healthy indoor environments lead to very significant savings for public health budgets. For France, the BPIE found that these savings can be as high as €930 million per year. Adding productivity gains and reduced absenteeism raise the value to the economy to as much as €20 billion per year.



At EuroACE, we will be active in calling for renovation programmes to take a holistic approach, ensuring that when the energy performance of the building envelope is improved, the right equipment and controls are installed simultaneously. This is particularly important for the ventilation inside the building as it is through proper, energy efficient and regularly maintained ventilation systems that high-quality indoor air, essential for health and well-being, is guaranteed for occupants. These systems, crucially, control the levels of humidity within the building - a critical element in controlling condensation, damp, and mould with one of the highest impacts vectors on the health of both the occupant and building fabric.

As we move into the new normal of a world that is awake to the reality of a pandemic, our buildings can be safe havens for a full, healthy life, but only when they are energy efficient, healthy and light-filled, providing the best indoor environment for productive, enjoyable existence!

END

For further information

Adrian JOYCE, Secretary General
+32 (0) 2 639 10 10
adrian.joyce@euroace.org
www.euroace.org

About EuroACE

EuroACE represents Europe's leading companies involved with the manufacture, distribution and installation of energy saving goods and services for buildings. EuroACE members employ around 200,000 people in these activities in Europe and have around 1,000 production facilities and office locations. The mission of EuroACE is to work together with the EU institutions to help Europe move towards a more efficient use of energy in buildings, thereby contributing to Europe's commitments on climate change, energy security and economic growth.

EuroACE Members (June 2020)

