

NZEB in 2030: fiction or reality?

The European Green Deal, and more recently the new European directives for Energy Performance of Buildings have brought up new requirements in the construction and real estate areas, in the scope of the carbon neutrality in Europe until 2050 and of the reduction of the greenhouse gases by 55% until 2030.

It deserves special attention and concern the obligation of new buildings to become "near zero" until 2030, or even the obligation of energy renovation upon a new leasing or a renovation.

If on the one hand the construction industry is one of the sectors with the largest carbon footprint and the buildings are responsible for 40% of the energy consumption in the EU and for 36% of the greenhouse gases; and that 75% of the existing building stock is energy inefficient and also that only 1% of the buildings is subjected to improvement works, it is also true that the whole industry is engaged and committed, as it should be and would be expectable from responsible companies and entrepreneurs, to achieve the carbon neutrality goal in Europe and improvement of our buildings' energy performance.

But let us think about 2030... This is tomorrow! Revise processes and procedures in a short nine year period might be difficult and unrealistic, specially in an industry which activity spans for 5, 10, 15, 20 years. Therefore we question if this goal and this deadline may be considered true and plausible.

The problem is that **along** with these new requirements, and I repeat that we should obviously welcome these, **we see no other type of public action, any measures to facilitate them to, ultimately, create counterparts or compensate those who will have to implement and make them a reality.**

It is required caution in a sense of keeping realistic goals, feasible, and above all that will not undermine our current efforts to create affordable housing and stimulate the existing rental market.

That is, this is not a problem for the high end residential real estate, as all the new or rehabilitated buildings have high energy performance, with excellent efficiency levels, **this becomes an issue to enable residential projects for the middle class.** This is precisely the issue that requires creating aid, compensating mechanisms and measures to enable these new requirements, specially because we are talking about a sector already overburdened with rising costs of raw materials and construction, and victim

of excessive and increasing taxes, a sector in which the context costs, specially red tape costs, delays in licensing, legislative and tax instability or scarcity of land and buildings available to build or rehabilitate, increase even more the production costs and impair the onset of many projects for the medium class.

The conditions must be created by fostering more green real estate projects. One good solution would be the creation of alternative, green, low-interest funding lines or revitalization of the Green Bonds market, so popular in Europe, both by private approaches and the capital market, and public approaches, channeling European Green Deal, RRP, ELPRE and Development Bank funds.

We must also **readjust the national laws to the new European requirements.** We cannot have a Community imposition that compels us to adopt more photovoltaic solutions while the national regulations in many historic centers bans these solutions nor can we be compelled by the EU to install electric chargers in every parking lot when the national laws virtually impair them.

Because if nothing is done in terms of public policy and state support, both in terms of taxes and financial support, as well as legislation, these goals shall be (once more) nothing but fiction, besides many affordable housing projects that will never become reality. Now, fewer new projects shall also be equal to a smaller energy performance of the building stock, meaning a total failure of this national and European plan. We will be around to see what happens...