

On **26 and 27 September 2018**, the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning is organising, at the **Sheraton Hotel** in Zagreb, the international expert conference **'Energy Efficiency in buildings - for a better tomorrow'**. The conference is organised within the framework of this year's Presidency of the Central European Initiative (CEI) by the Republic of Croatia, with the priorities of the Croatian Presidency being focused on EU enlargement and the transfer of knowledge and experience from the (pre)accession process, economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of culture, migration challenges, intensification of CEI cooperation with other regional and international organizations and continuation of parliamentary cooperation.

The Conference will gather expert speakers from and outside the CEI area, with the same goal:

- to present legislation and strategic documents on energy efficiency and energy renovation of buildings,
- to share experiences in the use of ESI funds for financing energy renovation of buildings and for promoting the use of renewable energy sources,
- to promote the concept of nearly zero-energy buildings (nZEB),
- to present information systems for monitoring and analysis of energy consumption in public sector buildings and systems for measuring and verifying energy savings (SMIV).

In the introductory part, the conference participants will be addressed by Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia and Minister of Construction and Physical Planning Mr Predrag Štromar, the representative of the CEI Ms Elisabetta Dovier, Assistant Minister for Construction and Energy Efficiency in the Buildings Sector Ms Maja-Marija Nahod, and representatives of the European Commission Mr Dimitrios Athanasiou and Ms Janna Schonfeld.

Experts from Germany, Belgium, Austria, Czechia, the Ukraine, the Netherlands, Poland, Italy, Slovakia, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia will present their experiences and examples of good practice to the conference participants.

The theme of the conference is topical for all of Europe, and energy efficiency is one of the strategic priorities of the European Union. The European Union's objective is independence in terms of energy, as well as slowing down overall climate changes.

Efforts are being made to achieve reduction in CO₂ emissions and an increase in energy efficiency through European legislation, by intersectoral cooperation, by connecting international, national and regional shareholders, through EU projects, and by encouraging research in the field of energy.

Thus, also this conference is a place for exchange of ideas and good practices, a place of encounter of numerous professionals linked by the same theme and the same goal.

In Croatia, as well as in the entire European Union, heating and cooling accounts for almost 50% of final energy consumption, out of which 80% in buildings. Europe is striving, in various ways, to reduce emissions of harmful gasses and to slow down climate changes, for which the energy sector is essential.

The Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning of the Republic of Croatia, which has organised this Conference, is in charge of implementing the energy efficiency policy in the buildings sector.

It is essential to point out that by implementing the energy efficiency policy in the buildings sector, in addition to energy savings, we contribute to economic growth, particularly in the

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construction sector and its supporting industries, and the benefits are thus manifold. The implementation of energy renovation programmes, in particular renovation of multi-apartment buildings, implies a reduction in CO2 emissions, creation of new jobs, increase in energy supply security, increase in property market value and improvement of housing conditions.

The implementation of energy efficiency measures undoubtedly generates numerous benefits that significantly exceed the costs of implementing such investments.

The task for all stakeholders and protagonists in the construction sector is to give impetus to active action, using thereby all available potentials, aimed at the adoption of national policies of energy efficiency increase and use of renewable energy sources in the buildings sector.

The Republic of Croatia, as an EU Member State, has incorporated the Union's objectives into its legislation, it is an active participant in international projects and organisations dealing with the topic of energy efficiency, it has implemented, through several energy renovation programmes, by using national and European financing sources, successful refurbishment of buildings.

It is therefore with pleasure that it shares good and bad experiences, and is willing to accept the expertise and experiences of other states, which is one of the goals of this Conference.