**With the BUILD2LC project a faster and more efficient energy renovation of buildings**

On Tuesday, March 13th, a project meeting for the European project BUILD2LC was held in Ljubljana for the first time, promoting the low-carbon innovative renovation of buildings in European regions, in which seven partners from different countries and regions, from Andalusia, Lithuania, Gloucestershire, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia. At the Ljubljana meeting, international partners exchanged experiences in promoting energy efficiency measures, while also recognizing the Slovenian example of measures in a given field.

**The first presentation of regional action plans**

The main goal of the BUILD2LC, a 1.66 million-euro project, is to increase energy rehabilitation of buildings by reducing energy consumption and improving policies that encourage the creation of a market for specialized firms in this sector. The project also emphasizes the promotion of the competitiveness of the economy, investment, the improvement of the competence of operators, the direction to new market, the promotion of innovative solutions and the removal of administrative barriers that impede low-energy renovations of buildings. As many as 75 percent of European households are energy-inefficient, which represents a high potential for initiatives that focus on energy saving and rehabilitation. The BUILD2LC project will thus greatly contribute to the achievement of the European Union's energy goals. Using a multidisciplinary approach based on improving the competitiveness of the construction sector, creating skilled jobs, promoting innovation and eliminating energy poverty, its results can easily be repeated in other regions of the European Union.

At the first project meeting in Ljubljana, the participants presented the draft action plans, which are the result of the previous cooperation of all project partners. Participants in the project want to introduce knowledge and innovations to their local environments by presenting examples of good practices and experience. With this, the project approaches the completion of the first part of the activity, which aims to prepare the action plans of each of the project partners. In the continuation of the project, a two-year implementation of activities and monitoring of results will follow. And as Joaquín Villar Rodríguez of the Andalusian Energy Agency, acting under the auspices of the Regional Ministry for Employment, Entrepreneurship and Trade, said in the introductory part of Tuesday's meeting, is a leading partner in the project, "the project is at a very appropriate moment when partners can qualitatively identify obstacles and concrete challenges for energy efficiency projects and, of course, succeed them in the future ".

**Is ESCO a universal solution?**

While in Andalusia they are learning intensifying cross-sectoral cooperation and looking for various financial resources for energy-rehabilitation projects for public buildings - their scope includes as many as 4,500 regional administration buildings and some 20,000 buildings owned by local government - Lithuania has more challenges in introduction of smart meters in private buildings.

But in the case of Andalusia, according to Ana de la Fuente Abajo from the Red2Red advisory company, as in the case of Lithuania, Renata Adomavičienė from the VIPA agency said, they are looking into the possibility of introducing new ways of financing, such as energy contracting (ESCO) , but the question is, like Ana de la Fuente, "is the ESCO model really the right solution for any energy efficiency project".

**Decisive in the fight against energy poverty**

Mary Morgan and Neil Penny of the Clinical Commissioning Group further explained how the problems of energy poverty in the United Kingdom are addressed in Gloucestershire, which link them both with the physical and mental health of the population, but in the context of their program of eradicating energy poverty, for example, senior citizens are advised to make smaller decisions in housing, which they can adequately maintain, and generally advise the general public how individuals can be energy efficient. In doing so, they cooperate with the authorities as well as with universities and technical schools, which offer even working and technical support in introducing energy efficiency measures to the greatest possible assistance. They also include small and medium-sized enterprises in their efforts to improve energy efficiency, Morgan and Penny said.

Very different stakeholders, from both the public and private sectors, to non-governmental organizations and, of course, end-users, are also involved in their energy efficiency projects in Poland. However, according to Piotr Pawelec from the Regional Development Agency Rzeszow, in their case, like the Andalusians and the Lithuanians, they are mainly devoted to finding new sources of 'innovative financing'.

As Ivana Rogulj from the Croatian association DOOR further said, in Croatia, in the fight against energy poverty, energy consulting services has been used since 2017, with consultations to thousands of test households. In developing this activity, Croatians also recognized the opportunity for additional jobs. In Slovenia, energy consulting has been used for a very long time, which has been recognized by the project partners as very effective.

**Slovenia is on track with its energy efficiency**

Slovenia is currently on track with achieving the national energy efficiency target, but this trend does not mean long-term management of primary energy use, mainly due to the high end-use of energy in transport, which represented 38% of the total final energy consumption in 2015, and it could seriously jeopardize the fulfillment of the primary energy use goal, it was heard at the BUILD2LC project meeting in Ljubljana.

According to Uroš Habjan from the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Slovene government adopted the Energy Efficiency Action Plan for the period 2017-2020 in late December and a long-term strategy for stimulating investment in energy renovation of buildings. For the renovation of public buildings, € 146.7 million of non-refundable and € 25 million returnable funds were earmarked. As part of the past tenders and calls from the current perspective of the European Cohesion Policy Operational Program, 49 formal and substantially complete applications have been received so far, covering the total energy renovation of buildings in the total net floor area of ​​approximately 420,000 m2. As Uroš Habjan also said, two more invitations for the narrower and wider public sector were announced in February and a public tender for municipalities with a total grant value of 39 million euros.

However, in the mentioned operational program of European cohesion policy for 2014-2020, € 5 million is earmarked specifically for solving the problem of energy poverty by subsidizing energy efficiency measures in 500 low-income households. The project partners thus expressed their interest in the activities of the Slovenian Eco Fund in the field of combating energy poverty and the implementation of the domestic ENSVET project. In the second part of the meeting, on Wednesday, March 14, they presented the innovative architectural solution of the Studio Krištof arhitekti, Sistem Dominum.

**Anton Pogačnik: URE requires cooperation!**

A key innovative aspect of the BUILD2LC project is its multidisciplinary approach, which includes the expertise of project partners in various fields. Cooperation of partners from the local area (Local Energy Agency of Gorenjska, Slovenia and Energy Agency Severn Wye, Great Britain), regional level (Andalusian Energy Agency, Spain; Regional Development Agency Rzeszow, Poland; Regional Energy Agency of Northwestern Croatia, Croatia and Jämtland Region Härjedalen, Sweden) and national level (Public Investment and Development Agency, Lithuania) will enable the achievement of European energy efficiency and sustainable development objectives in the construction sector.

In the margins of the BUILD2LC project meeting in Slovenia, the director of the LEAG Anton Pogačnik emphasized that participating in the European project is an excellent opportunity to gain additional knowledge and experience that will be transferred to the local environment.

The BUILD2LC project started on April 1, 2016, and will continue until September 30, 2020.

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