



# MALTA ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES ASSOCIATION (M.E.E.R.E.A.)

---

## PRESS RELEASE

13<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The Malta Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies Association (M.E.E.R.E.A.), hails Malta's achievement as the only EU Member State to have fully transposed the EU's Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU into national legislation.

The remaining 27 member states have been hit by legal action from the European Commission, as reported by EURACTIV.FR on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/energy/27-member-states-hit-eu-legal-action-over-energy-efficiency-313293>).

M.E.E.R.E.A. applauds the efforts made by the experts and government in the energy sector, which should yield positive results.

However, transposing the legislation does not mean that targets will automatically be met. It is therefore necessary to complement the legal notice LN196/2014 with an enforcement and monitoring mechanism.

There are also a number of issues apparently pending for months, including the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, which should have been updated according to the exigencies of the Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC. The cost optimal studies for the different types of buildings, as required by the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010/31/EU are also still pending.

Increased energy efficiency in the domestic and commercial sectors – the leading electricity consumers – should also be given priority. Every unit of electricity saved at point of use results in three units of primary energy saved at the power station. There is clearly lack of information and incentives in this area, which may lead consumers to disregard their energy consumption, especially now that the electricity rates have been reduced.

M.E.E.R.E.A. expects the government to launch the initiatives announced in the 2015 budget, by extending energy audit services to SMEs and encouraging efficient energy use in homes and elsewhere. Grants such as those offered for double-glazing in residential buildings should be replaced by more effective ones such as the insulation of single walls.

Guidelines for building zero net-energy buildings adaptable to Maltese conditions should also be published as soon as possible, since under EU rules, all new and renovated buildings emerging after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 will have to be zero net-energy. Initiatives such as those announced by the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) to have a website that provides some of these needs should be accelerated.

The operation of the electricity interconnector with Sicily will lead to improvements both in energy efficiency and the level of carbon dioxide emissions on the supply side. It is now important to focus more on the demand side. Tax incentives or other fiscal measures for contractors or buyers of new buildings may be introduced, should they opt to build or buy high energy efficient homes that go way beyond the minimum requirements.

Incentives in the area of renewable energy should be linked with other grants for energy efficiency. It would be very unfortunate to install for instance photovoltaic panels without simultaneously investing in energy efficiency measures. It would be like throwing precious renewable energy away.

The green energy market needs to be developed and sustained. This can be achieved by adopting a medium term plan for measures and incentives and do away with intermittent one-off grants that do little good for the sustainable development of green jobs and industry.

The systematic drop in new solar heating installations in the domestic sector is of great concern. Unlike photovoltaics, solar heating is a viable energy storage system and alleviates certain peak demand on electrical power generation – a unique feature that is hardly considered. Action should be considered to make more use of this technology. Heat pump water heaters should also be encouraged as an alternative to traditional electric boilers, especially for hot water users that have no access to rooftops.

M.E.E.R.E.A. also feels that the general public needs strong advocacy from the relevant authorities. Energy efficiency tips on websites can hardly be considered a serious campaign. The general public needs to be informed about the latest developments in the areas of energy legislation, energy performance of buildings and other related matters having a direct impact on our national energy bill. In this regard a stronger public relations structure and more effective use of public media channels can help. Such information needs to be accessible, simple and clear.

The public also needs a practical approach that can lead families and businesses to save energy. One suggestion would be the opening of a free phone service for questions on how to save energy and other energy-related issues. Another would be to include a list of energy efficiency measures and related equipment information with each electricity and water bill.

M.E.E.R.E.A. augurs that Malta will keep leading the EU by example - not only by transposing EU legislation but also by reaching and going beyond the related targets.

Now is the time to set the right energy path for Malta.

For any queries, you may contact Eur Ing Charles Yousif, Secretary General