



Build Better Lives aims to ensure decent, affordable and energy efficient homes and buildings for all. It brings together nearly 100 social justice, housing, climate, and youth civil society organisations, in a pan-European, people-oriented campaign for a socially just built environment that lifts millions out of energy poverty.

One Month Left: Urgent call for ambitious, inclusive, and socially just National Building Renovation Plans

Dear Ministers and responsible authorities,

With the first draft of National Building Renovation Plans due by 31 December 2025, just weeks away, this is a pivotal moment to advance a just transition in our built environment. These plans will determine not only how countries contribute to EU climate and energy obligations, but also how effectively they deliver decent, affordable, and energy-efficient homes for people across Europe.

As the Build Better Lives campaign, a multi-stakeholder movement that brings together nearly 100 social justice, climate and youth organisations calling for decent, affordable, accessible, sustainable and energy efficient buildings, we are writing to urge Ministers and responsible authorities to ensure that its forthcoming National Building Renovation Plans (NBRP) meet the highest standards of ambition, inclusivity, and social justice.

The Plans must address the intertwined crises of unaffordable housing, energy poverty, and climate breakdown, while ensuring a fair and inclusive transition that benefits all people and communities.

We recommend that the National Building Renovation Plan:

1. Ensures meaningful participation

Responsible authorities should proactively engage with local governments, civil society groups, community representatives, building professionals, youth movements, tenant and trade unions, and vulnerable communities including Disabled Persons' Organisations, through transparent, inclusive processes with clear timelines, milestones, and accessible consultation platforms. They should publish the results and show clearly how public input, especially from marginalized and energy-poor groups, shapes the plan.



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2. Prioritises deep and holistic renovations

To meet our climate and energy goals, deep integrated renovations must be central to national strategies. Furthermore, we must **prioritise deep renovations of the worst-performing buildings** to maximise climate and social benefits. The NBRP should make **deep renovations the norm**, prioritising comprehensive upgrades that combine **insulation, renewable heating and cooling, and passive design** to achieve high energy savings, climate resilience and better indoor environmental quality in one or staged steps. Prioritise “neighbourhoods/districts of action” to deliver integrated neighbourhood and district-level renovation projects backed by stable funding, coordinated energy-housing-urban planning, structured citizen engagement, and strong social safeguards for vulnerable groups.

3. Phases out fossil fuels and accelerate renewable heating and cooling

The NBRP should chart a clear pathway to **end fossil fuel use in buildings by 2040 at the latest**, with milestones for 2030 and 2035. A **“worst-first” approach** should target the most polluting systems and poorest-performing buildings, including multi-apartment blocks and rural homes with high energy needs. Deep renovations must go hand in hand with the **deployment of renewable energy systems** integrated into renovation projects to deliver both comfort and decarbonisation.

4. Puts social and climate justice at the core

Improving energy performance should support and enhance **housing security and affordability**. The Plan should include **strong social safeguards** that protect tenants and vulnerable homeowners from rent hikes, displacement, or speculative renovation practices. Public funding must be linked to affordability commitments, ensuring rent stabilisation, cost neutrality of renovations, and reinvestment of savings in social outcomes. Social and community-led housing should be prioritised, ensuring that the benefits of the transition reach those most affected by energy poverty and poor housing conditions. Making the building stock accessible for persons with disabilities should also be part of the NBRPs.



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5. Ensures adequate, accessible, and well-targeted financing

Ambitious renovation plans demand ambitious investment. The NBRP **should ringfence funding for low-income and energy-poor households**, offer layered financing solutions according to different income groups' situations and ensure full cost coverage for the most vulnerable groups. Financing schemes must integrate **economic, gender, racial, and age equity considerations**, and account for diverse housing tenures, especially in complex multi-apartment buildings. To enable this, the Plan should **align the NBRP with the Social Climate Fund**, leverage **other EU instruments like the Cohesion Funds and ETS-2 revenues** and also diversify sources of private financing notably through incentives (e.g. VAT reductions), thus ensuring financial measures support and protect vulnerable groups.

6. Empowers local authorities and builds capacity on the ground

Delivering large-scale, inclusive renovation depends on **local capacity and leadership**. The NBRP should set concrete targets to strengthen the administrative and technical capabilities of municipalities, especially smaller or under-resourced ones. Dedicated funding for local staffing, training, and the creation of **One-stop shops** for renovation advice will help households and communities access available **pro-active support**. The Plan should also activate multi-level governance, aligning national, regional, and local efforts, and foster cooperation with trade unions, energy communities, NGOs, and social service providers to link renovation projects with job creation and social inclusion.

NBRPs are more than an administrative requirement: it is an opportunity to build a fairer, climate proof, and more resilient future for all.

By making bold and socially just decisions today, Ministers and responsible authorities can set an example of forward-looking leadership in the just transition of our built environment.

We stand ready to support this important effort, including by facilitating dialogue between stakeholders and sharing technical expertise from our member organisations.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to ensuring decent, affordable, and energy-efficient homes for all.

Yours sincerely,

Supporters of the **Build Better Lives Campaign**

