



Hubert Lyben
Managing Director Flemish Social Housing

"The energy requirements for new homes in Flanders are becoming more stringent. The existing stock is in need of energy refurbishment. The social housing sector is facing major technical and financial challenges not only in Flanders, but throughout Europe. Cooperation with European partners to share knowledge and experiences is the key to success. With the establishment of the Flemish Energy Platform for Social Housing and cooperation within the project POWERHOUSE EUROPE Flemish Social Housing is working towards the realization of sustainable, environmentally friendly and energy efficient housing."

Hubert Lyben
Managing Director Flemish Social Housing

Hubert Lyben
Managing Director Flemish Social Housing

CONTEXT

Increasingly stringent energy requirements are a major challenge for social housing

Since 2006, the energy legislation (Flemish transposition of the European Directive EPBD) standards for new construction projects in Flanders are in place. After a period of four years in which people could gain experience with this new context working, the energy standard level was reduced in 2010 from E100 to E80. Recently, the Flemish Government announced further tightening steps: for 2012, they propose a maximum level of E70, in 2014 following a ceiling of E60.

This increasing stringency is a challenge for social housing:

- **Technical:** The traditional building concept will change at different points, such as wider wall cavities, air tightness testing and system concepts with integration of renewable energy. Both architects and contractors must master these new techniques.
- **Financial:** Construction projects are getting more expensive without the option to raise rental income. Cost efficiency by f.i. and economising scale and alternative financing are therefore important.
- **Tenants:** The residents of future housing being motivated

and guided in the use of new techniques (eg more importance of awareness about ventilation in airtight homes).

The existing building stock needs an energy facelift

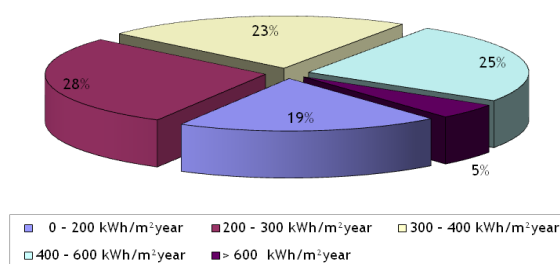
Under the 20-20-20 objectives, the Flemish Energy Agency has an Energy Renovation 2020 program. This program focuses on existing buildings and has three objectives: replacing all single-glazing, insulating roofs and installing efficient heating systems (eg condensing boilers). After a period of encouraging and awareness raising, in 2020 these measures will be mandatory for all existing housing (both social housing and private rental and owner occupied housing).

At the request of the Flemish Minister for Housing all social housing companies in 2010 were asked about the current state of their building stock. The results show that there are no less than 45% in need of at least one of the three energy renovation measures.

Refurbishment measures

BUILDING STOCK	DWELLINGS	HOUSES	APARTMENTS
DOUBLE GLAZING / ROOF INSULATION / CENTRAL HEATING	55%	49%	61%
DWELLINGS TO IMPROVE	45%	51%	39%
SINGLE GLAZING	21%	24%	17%
NO ROOF INSULATION	23%	34%	18%
NO CENTRAL HEATING OR ELECTRIC HEATING	18%	20%	18%

Average EPC value (50.000 dwellings ~ 35% building stock)



OUR WORK ON ENERGY

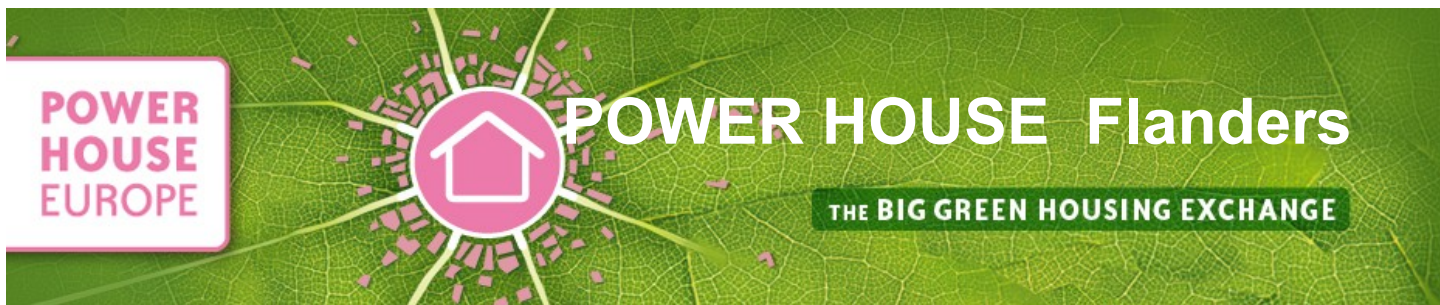
Flemish Energy Platform for Social Housing

The Flemish Energy Platform for Social Housing was founded in May 2009 and since then meets quarterly. Each consultation is organised around a specific energy theme. During the dis-

CONTACT

Mr Bernard Wallyn
E-mail: bernard.wallyn@vmsw.be
Phone: + 32 2 505 45 22
Web: www.vmsw.be

POWER HOUSE Flanders



discussion session social housing companies can share their views about potential bottlenecks, good or bad experiences in practice, financial problems etc.

The interest in the platform is growing. Currently, about half of the social housing companies take part. Each time approximately 40 participants including managerial, technical or social staff come together.

Themes:

- **September 2009:** Collective heating systems, Energy Regulations
- **December 2009:** Social economy: energy savers
- **March 2010:** Home Forum: Annual Conference
Three sessions: 1) energy platform, 2) sustainable neighborhoods 3) pilot projects
- **May 2010:** Study visit to sample project Sterrenveld, Wezembeek-Oppem
- **September 2010:** Heritage Poll, Energy Renovation Program
- **October 2010:** Installation of roof insulation with energy savers.

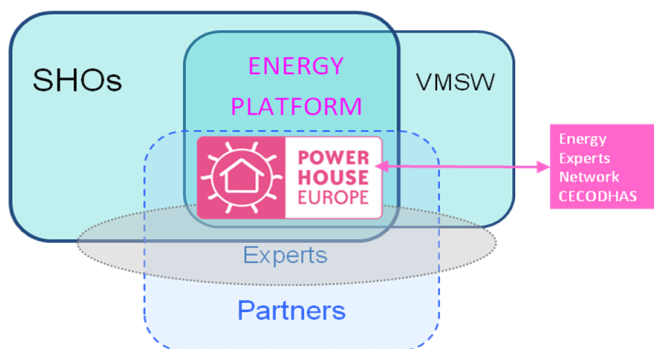
A common theme running through all consultation meetings is the growing investment cost for the realization of new projects. Social housing companies are concerned about the affordability of social housing. Because the rent is primarily determined by income, there is no incentive to build low-energy projects. It is hoped that the introduction of an energy levy can solve this discrepancy.



Further going up of the vision of the platform members is guaranteed by the representation of the VMSW in various working groups on policy level. VMSW plays an active part in consultation meetings with stakeholders and the steering of policy studies. A concrete example of direct information flow from people working on the ground to policy makers is the vision text on the more stringent energy requirements in 2012 which was based on a survey of platform members.

NETWORKING

The platform was initially designed as a forum within the social housing sector. It focuses on knowledge exchange between social housing companies. Experience from within the sector is more convincing than examples from a different context, sector or country. Positive evaluations of colleagues can be decisive to define the step to newer (energy) technologies.



In the future, the platform will attract more external partners, each with their own expertise to contribute. Potential new partners are research institutions, local and regional authorities and various professional organizations in the construction industry.

EXCHANGE

We provide continuous support for members:

Energy Support: Questions about specific legislation, scope, standard requirements, roles of architect and energy reporter, etc. are treated individually (telephone / e-mail). The big advantage is that you can rely on a correct interpretation of the context of social housing and experience with similar projects. Only in the second instance is called the general desk of the Flemish Energy Agency.

Training: Training as an energy expert - recognized for the format of energy performance certificates (EPC) - was offered by VMSW to employees of social housing companies. The training package has been adjusted, eg with sample exercises from public housing. There was also attention for copying similar properties.



Website: Woonnet has a specific extranet portal on energy. All information about renewable energy grants, pilot projects, information, etc. will be brought together. With their own agenda and news section, the members are informed of the latest developments.

Exchange with other countries

Social housing companies in Flanders are mainly interested in low-energy and / or passive concepts for house building. Which construction method and system concept were used? Are the projects viable in the long term and how we recover the initial extra cost? Can residents adapt and do they effectively have a reduced consumption? Hopefully the experience from abroad can answer these questions and convince the Flemish housing companies.

Further exchanges with CECODHAS members is certainly desirable around interesting financial schemes (eg ESCOs and European support programs), use of corporate systems for heating and electricity (both in scale of the building as on local level) and the use of ICT applications to assist users.

TOOLKITS

The toolkit brings together relevant results of energy projects in the social housing. You will find a selection of manuals, reports and best practices from different European projects.

The toolkit includes four categories. Issues such as fuel poverty, dialogue with tenants and residents discussed behavior com under 'Social'. Different strategies for insulation, ventilation are explained under 'Technical'. Under 'Examples' you will find the renovation results of pilot projects that demonstrate energy savings and could reduce CO2 emissions come under 'Tecnical'. Finally EPC learns you more about the Dutch experience with the energy performance certificate. You can also discover how to manage the complete certification of a building stock.



The VMSW will continue to enlarge this collection. It is emerging as a wealth of information that social housing companies, but also other partners from the construction industry who are active on energy can make use of.

More information: www.vmsw.be> professionals> sustainable living> Toolkit



FINANCE

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The Flemish Enterprise Agency launched a call for projects in July 2010 for a total budget of 3 million Euro specifically for social housing. That was the first time that the social housing sector was a specific target group within ERDF. Social housing

companies could present refurbishment projects, replacing the single glazing or outdated heating system. Projects in which both measures are combined, are given a higher priority.

For the two measures they are working with a fixed allowance of 100 euros / m² (glass) and 500 euros per apartment or 800 euros per house (renovation central heating). In this way, the ERDF forms an extension of the REG Flemish subsidies for social housing, of which the budget is almost used, and no other funds were available at the Flemish government.

Experience shows:

- The ERDF procedure for submitting a project is too complicated for social housing companies (especially for smaller companies). Many questions in the Web application are not related to normal working conditions of a social housing company. The procedure focuses on private initiatives.
- The total budget is limited: depending on the selected projects about 3,000 homes can be handled. Recent figures show that more than 50,000 homes require energy refurbishment.
- Other energy interventions (such as roof insulation) are not supported. Projects receive a higher score, but without financial compensation. Total Renovation is not encouraged.

The selection of projects will follow in March 2011.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- **March 2011:** consultation meeting Flemish Energy Platform for Social Housing
- **April 1, 2011:** Home Forum

VMSW - Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Sociaal Wonen

VMSW - the Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Sociaal Wonen is mainly charged with the implementation of the Flemish housing policy priorities. It does so by planning, assisting, and financing the activities of 102 social housing companies which build, promote, construct, refurbish, let and sell social housing, both rental and ownership. It also provides technical, legal and financial assistance (VMSW operates as a bank in that it fi-

nances the projects of these social housing companies and also grants mortgage loans to private buyers with a small income of social houses). Moreover VMSW collects existing data in order to feed into and assist in the future policy making.

THE PROJECT

With the support of the European Commission's "Intelligent Energy - Europe" programme, POWER HOUSE EUROPE will serve to accelerate empowerment of residents and up-skilling of professionals working to reduce the carbon footprint of the social housing sector. This will be done by drawing on the existing European pool of know-how and resources and facilitating the exchange of success stories and lessons learned.

POWER HOUSE EUROPE is a gateway to:

- Tools for social and cooperative housing professionals to support the development of their energy efficiency strategies;
- An on-line forum for information and knowledge exchange between professionals in the social housing sector;
- Information on strategies, legal, institutional and financial measures which have proved successful around the EU and the CECODHAS-Housing Europe Energy Policy work;
- Examples of both retrofitting of older properties and low energy new construction, effective partnerships with residents, ICT applications for empowering residents and more;
- Updates on development and policy discussions on EU legislation related to energy efficiency and renewable in housing;
- Updates on EU project funding and structural funds;
- Partnerships between local social and cooperative housing providers;
- POWER HOUSE National/Regional platforms which gather enablers of the energy transition from all sectors to work in partnership.

CONTACT

Mr Bernard Wallyn

E-mail: bernard.wallyn@vmsw.be

Phone: + 32 2 505 45 22

Web: www.vmsw.be

POWER HOUSE Flanders