

Call for tough new targets on European Union energy reduction

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Energy efficiency experts at the University of East Anglia (UEA) are calling for ambitious new targets to reduce energy demand across the European Union.

In a report published today by the Build with CaRe consortium, the researchers propose a new EU target of a 40 per cent reduction in primary energy demand by 2050. The existing target is a 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency by 2020, but the EU is currently on track to achieve only half of this.

The report by Dr Bruce Tofield and Martin Ingham, associate consultants at UEA's Adapt Low Carbon Group concludes that radically improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings is key to reducing global [greenhouse gas emissions](#), and Europe should be leading the way.

A 40 per cent reduction by 2050 for the EU is in line with the ambitions of new Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Davey. At the launch of his new Energy Efficiency Deployment Office earlier this month, he called for a cut in UK energy use of between a third and a half by 2050.

"Buildings are responsible for 40 per cent of Europe's energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, so overhauling their energy efficiency represents the greatest opportunity for energy saving and [greenhouse gas reduction](#)," said Dr Tofield.

"By making its building stock energy efficient, the EU can demonstrate that economic growth is consistent with reduced energy demand and lead the transition to a sustainable world. A long-term target of 40 per cent would galvanise the near-term action on energy efficiency that is essential if action to tackle potentially dangerous climate change is to succeed."

The consensus among [climate scientists](#) is that global warming above 2 degrees can only be avoided if global [greenhouse emissions](#) begin to reduce before 2020. However, current projections show fossil fuel use and [greenhouse gas](#) emissions continuing to increase for decades.

Dr Tofield said he agreed with the EU Commission's Energy Roadmap 2050 that a big reduction in [energy demand](#) is achievable and that very energy efficient buildings should become the norm, but he said many barriers remained.

"The biggest barrier is lack of political will to accelerate progress in energy efficiency," he said.

"New build ambition is insufficient and the rate of building refurbishment to achieve high standards of energy efficiency is far too low. Political will to transform buildings will demonstrate EU leadership on climate action post-Durban. Cities across the EU can lead this change."

Build with CaRe is a consortium of local authorities and universities from five countries across the North Sea region, funded partly by the European Regional Development Fund. Its aim is to make energy-efficient building design the mainstream. A key strategy is the promotion of the innovative 'passivhaus' concept which can reduce energy use for heating and cooling buildings by 90 per cent. Adopting passivhaus quality as the building industry standard for both new build

and refurbishment of existing buildings will also bring financial and well-being benefits for occupants.

John Helmfridsson, a passive house expert at Passivhuscentrum in Västra Götaland, Sweden, and a Build with CaRe partner, agreed: "[Energy efficiency](#) is becoming a main competitive advantage to countries and companies investing in the issue. To not use or further develop knowledge would be hazardous, not only to the environment but to the European economy."

More information: 'Refurbishing Europe: An EU strategy for energy efficiency and climate action led by building refurbishment' by Bruce Tofield and Martin Ingham is published on Monday February 27. For more information or to download the report, visit www.buildwithcare.eu or www.lcic.com

Provided by University of East Anglia

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