

Know your market, save more energy

Homeowner or landlord? To convince people to have energy-saving renovations you need to know what they are really looking for



What would motivate you to renovate your house to make it more energy efficient? The cost? The legal framework? An environmental conscience? It also mostly depends on who you are, and if you actually live in your house or if you rent it.

This distinction between homeowners and landlords is not often addressed properly by public authorities or private companies that provide renovation services. Both groups are treated as if they had the same needs. This, at least, is the point of view of **Emmanuelle Causse, Director of European Affairs at the International Union of Property Owners (UIPI)**.

We met her at [an event in Brussels](#) during the European Sustainable Energy Week, where seven Horizon 2020 projects (BRESAER, BuildHeat, P2ENDURE, RENOZEB, REZBUILD, RECO2ST, HEART) shared their experiences. In particular, they pointed out that it is hard to convince investors to make energy-efficiency works, because they appear to be more interested in saving their money than the planet.

What do you mean when you say that “it is the solution that should follow the market, not the other way round”?

For ten years I have been repeating the same thing: we need more awareness raising among the final investor and the final user, but there are two different types of people you need to convince. Of course, the real estate market is a big market, very diverse: you have big real estate companies, smaller real estate companies, and finally you have private individuals, who might be landlords or homeowners. These are two different things. If you talk to homeowners, you can raise awareness on the issue of comfort, or health, or another thing that might be important for them; if you talk to landlords, the only important thing is the money. Of course they want their tenants to be happy: if they are happy they will remain in the apartment. But for landlords it is the financial aspect that is important.

I always have a problem that this type of distinction is not made, because we always consider them as homeowners. They don't have the same interests, they don't have the same objectives. Therefore, we need to differentiate the objectives according to the market, and, of course, according to the big or smaller type of market players.

This market knowledge is missing, I think, in the EU. There are no campaigns made or they never really work.

Many EU projects, which aim at improving energy efficiency of buildings, actually advertise their will to involve the people, the owners, but they have difficulties...

It is such a small drop in the ocean. We need millions of these small drops as we have millions of owners. [70 percent of the population live in their own house](#). That's already quite huge. Another 20 percent are housed in the private rented sector, which is often owned by private individuals. So it's super fragmented. You need to target basically 90 percent of the population. It's crazy; you need very large scale programmes locally or specific to some kinds of group. You also need campaigns for professionals, contractors and architects; because in the end it's the only way you can get a higher take on energy efficiency renovation.

Who should run these campaigns? Institutions or the private sector?

I'm not in favour of campaigns that are sponsored by industries or specific market players because individuals don't trust this type of campaign; they think they are trying to sell them their solutions or services. Public bodies, of course, have a role to play, and any kind of consumer association or members association. I'm trying to push my members to do more of this, some of them are working quite extensively on this, but it's a work in progress.

By Selene Verri