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Views from the Swedish Union of Tenants on Green Paper for a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies

Introduction

The Swedish Union of Tenants is devoted to making sure everyone has the right to good housing at an affordable cost. We promote better housing for the tenants of today and tomorrow.

Our vision is secure housing that promotes human and social development. Housing is one of the most important aspects of people's everyday lives. The issue of housing affects us all, no matter where and how we live. Access to housing, tenant influence, reasonable rents, a sense of neighbourhood and well-managed housing environments are all important aspects of good, secure housing. Creating good conditions for tenants is crucial for a well-functioning society. When housing works, life works.

Good housing at a reasonable cost is one of the cornerstones for achieving sustainable development. Reduced energy consumption and lower carbon dioxide emissions are in this regard also important.

Sustainable development means that economic, ecological and societal development harmonize. This should be a basic guidance when instruments and regulatory frameworks are being developed.

The situation in Sweden regarding apartment buildings is that they generally have good insulation and are heated with district heating, which causes very low carbon dioxide emissions. Furthermore, many measures have been taken to enhance energy efficiency in Swedish buildings during the last 10-20 years resulting in a decrease in energy consumption from apartment buildings.

Swedish Union of Tenants views

- We believe it is important to have a holistic approach when instruments and regulations are developed within the energy sec-

tor. This approach requires a balanced analysis of the need and requirements for reduced energy use, reduced carbon emissions and a higher share of renewable energy and how these goals interact with each other and a sustainable development.

- It is crucial that EU-level policies take into account the very different conditions in energy sectors and buildings across Europe. The consequences of not doing so could amount to very negative developments where rents soar too high for tenants and that the much-needed production of new apartment buildings in Sweden does not occur. This could lead to further segregation, increasing poverty, inequality and other social problems.
- We believe that overall targets should be set on EU level, but there should also be national objectives. Policies should be implemented at national level because of the very varying conditions in different EU countries.
- For Sweden, cost effectiveness is a precondition for energy efficiency measures within the apartment building sector. Since there are almost no carbon emissions from energy use in apartment buildings, the environmental benefits of investments for lower energy consumption in apartment buildings are fairly limited. That means that these investments should be financed with lower energy costs.
- In the Swedish building sector where most apartments are heated by several radiators with hot water, individual metering is in most cases not relevant or appropriate. Heat is also transferred between apartments making it almost impossible to get a reasonable cost allocation between tenants. A lot of property owners have tried to implement individual metering but have given it up because of soaring administration costs and other difficulties.
- Individual metering of hot water can under some circumstances be relevant. It is however important that the implementation can be assessed by each property owner since preconditions vary a lot.
- The EU research and innovation policies can best support the achievement of the 2030 framework by focusing the resources on scientists and researchers.

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