

ENERGY LABELS IN PRACTICE: HOW DO HOME-OWNERS FEEL ABOUT ENERGY SAVING AND THE ENERGY LABEL FOR DWELLINGS?

In 2006 the energy label for dwellings was introduced throughout Europe. The aim of this label is to inform home-owners about the energy efficiency of their dwellings and about options for energy saving. But how does the home-owner feel about the energy label? Did it actually contribute to energy efficiency? This year thousands of households are asked for their opinion about this subject.

In 2002, the European Union decided that anyone buying or renting a house will receive an Energy Performance Certificate or energy label. This document should explain in comprehensible language and by means of simple scores how energy efficient a dwelling is, as well as the options for efficiency improvement. As there are mutual divergences, each country was given time to come up with their own label until 2006.

Several years have passed and labels are used all over Europe; it is time to measure their effect. Therefore 10 research institutes

from 10 countries started the IDEAL-EPBD project in 2008. In this project, the effect of the energy labels is studied. The aim of this label is to inform residents and encouraging them into taking energy saving measures in their dwellings. The project team therefore first examined how home-owners theoretically decide whether or not they will start saving energy. The most important part of the project has now started: *what are the experiences in practice?*



INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES IN TEN COUNTRIES

During spring of 2010, in-depth interviews are being held with home owners in 5 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia and Portugal) who have received an energy label or who have moved in the last years. As the label is mandatory, interviews are not only held with energy conscious households, but also with persons who would otherwise not have put much effort in energy saving. The interviews first address renovations and improvements in general. After that, more specific questions about energy saving and experiences with the energy label are asked. It is also important to find out if the households received any other information in addition to the label and if they benefitted from subsidies, for example. This will also be addressed in the questions.

Interviews provide a suitable means to gather information about all details that are important

to home-owners. As interviews are time-consuming, only a limited number of home-owners can be interviewed.

To obtain insight in the experiences of an entire country it is useful to conduct large-scale surveys. Therefore thousands of home-owners in 5 countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK) will be asked to fill in a questionnaire in June 2010. These questions will also address finished and planned renovation activities and experiences with the energy label. As the same questions are asked everywhere, a solid comparison between the countries can be made afterwards. Because each country has its own approach to incentivising energy saving in dwellings, it is interesting to see if this also leads to different results from the questionnaire.

Possibly some of the questions will yield much more positive answers in some countries compared to others. In the final part of the project these differences will be studied. This part of the project runs until the end of 2011. If all strong points are combined and lessons are learned from mistakes, this could improve the impact of the energy label throughout Europe.

Together with other measures, this improved energy label can help realise huge energy savings throughout the European Union.

For more information on the IDEAL-EPBD project, please visit www.ideal-epbd.eu.

JOIN THE DISCUSSIONS ON THIS TOPIC?

Do you have particular ideas on how to improve the energy label? Would you like to have more information on initiatives of the European Commission in this area? Did you recently fill in the questionnaire yourself and would you like to discuss it? All of this can be done at www.buildup.eu. This website has been developed to bring together people who are interested in energy efficiency in dwellings and buildings. The site is open to residents, building contractors, designers, policy makers, researchers and other interested parties.

You can join the discussions on this project at <http://www.buildup.eu/communities>

Below a number of examples of energy labels for dwellings are presented.

Figure 1 - the label for England & Wales

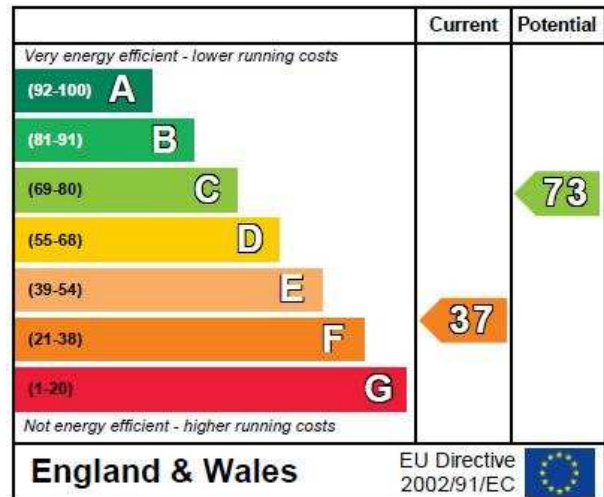


Figure 2 - the label for Denmark

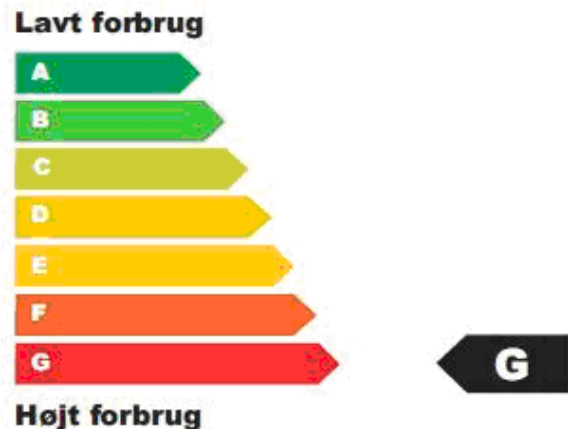
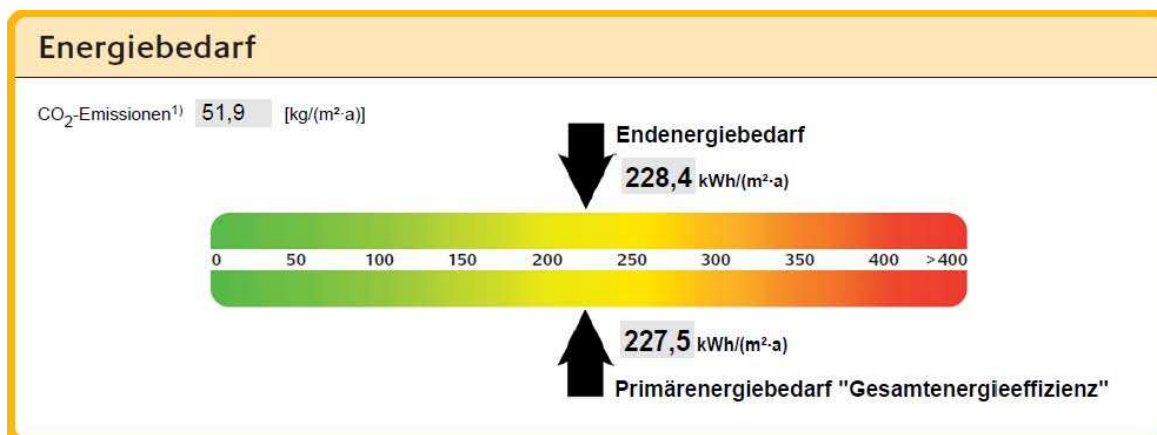


Figure 3 - the label for Germany



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For more information, please visit the projects website:

www.ideal-epbd.eu

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PROJECT PARTNERS

In IDEAL-EPBD a group of 10 universities, research institutes and consultants from 10 European countries participate.



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ENVIROS

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Black Sea Regional Energy Centre (BSREC)

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