

Press Release

## **Property industry on the EU Buildings Directive: "A mix of ambitious targets and pragmatism will drive climate protection forward in Europe"**

**Berlin, 12 March 2024** – From the perspective of the property industry, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) adopted in Strasbourg will make a decisive contribution to climate protection in Europe. "Today, the European Parliament has taken an important step towards the decarbonisation of buildings," says ZIA Managing Director Dr Joachim Lohse. "It is good for the property sector and also for citizens that there is finally certainty - especially with regard to Minimum Energy Performance Standards." Prioritising the buildings with the worst energy performance is exactly the right approach, Lohse emphasises. With the "worst-first" approach, Europe can achieve a lot in terms of climate protection in a relatively short time span. The revised Directive is characterised by a mix of "ambitious targets and pragmatism".

With the EPBD, the European Union is now setting standards for new buildings at a very high level of efficiency. The "zero-emission building" completely excludes on-site emissions. "It's the right way to go as there are sufficient climate-neutral technologies on the market, especially for new buildings," explains Lohse. The task now is to "keep a careful eye" on the national implementation of the Directive. From the perspective of the property industry, it is unclear whether further tightening of the already very strict new-build-standards is necessary in Germany to meet the EU-requirements. "This would make construction even more expensive and thus significantly increase the housing shortage and the risk of social tensions," says the ZIA Managing Director. "It is good for the Member States to have sufficient flexibility in national implementation."

Regarding the solar expansion obligations set out in the EPBD, particularly for existing commercial property, Lohse calls for the removal of tax barriers in Germany. Concerning stricter requirements for the expansion of charging infrastructure on and in buildings, the property industry insists on the existing flexibility options in the German Building Electromobility Infrastructure Act (GEIG) in order to enable expansion in line with demand.

ZIA adheres to the fact that there is an inconsistency within the climate policy course set in Europe and calls for the philosophy of the EPBD to be transferred to the EU's Taxonomy Regulation. "The Taxonomy primarily promotes the improvement of highly efficient buildings instead of taking a 'worst-first' approach like the Buildings Directive," says Lohse. Here, too, the following applies: a broad improvement of energy-inefficient buildings, without necessarily having to reach the highest level, brings a faster and greater CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction than the current taxonomy approach.

Background: The Directive is part of the Fit for 55 legislative package and sets guidelines for the decarbonisation of the EU's building stock. It marks an important step in the implementation of the Green Deal to achieve the European climate targets. In December of 2023, the Parliament and the Council of the EU reached an agreement on the revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. Following its adoption in Parliament, the Council must now give its final approval so that the Directive can be published in the Official Journal and enter into force.

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## **ZIA**

The German Property Federation (ZIA) is the leading umbrella association for the property sector. With its registered office in Berlin and a European office in Brussels, it speaks through its about 400 members, including 30 associations, on behalf of approximately 37,000 industry companies right across the value chain. ZIA provides comprehensive, unified representation for the interests of the real estate sector in all its diversity at both national and European level, including as a member of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the German Economic Institute (IW). The President of the association is Dr Andreas Mattner.

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