

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN CONSTRUCTION

As of September 30, 2012, Rules on energy efficiency of buildings and Rules on requirements, content and manner of issuing certificates on the energy properties of buildings have been applied in the Republic of Serbia, introducing significant novelties in the field of civil engineering. These rules stipulate the obligation of obtaining energy certificates for new buildings as a requirement for issuing a use permit. An energy certificate (energy passport) is a document containing information on the value of energy consumption within a specific category of building, energy class and recommendations for improving the building's energy properties.

Apart from this novelty, categorization of buildings by energy properties has also been introduced, to which end 8 energy classes have been identified (from A+ as the most energy-saving, to G as the least). New buildings will have to meet the requirements necessary to be classified as class C. Existing buildings have to improve their energy properties after adaptation, by no less than one energy class at the very least.

Buildings with an area of less than 50 sqm net, buildings with a use life limited to two years and buildings that are used during construction and are of temporary nature, manufacturing plants, buildings used for religious ceremonies and buildings under a special regime of protection, as well as buildings whose temperature upon heating does not exceed 12°C, are all exempt from the obligation of obtaining an energy certificate.

Energy passports will be issued by authorized organizations which must have at least two employees holding licenses as chief energy efficiency engineers, who have completed building energy efficiency training.

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The incorporation of these regulations into Serbian legislature is a step towards the harmonization of local regulations with the regulations of the EU. The European Parliament and the EU Council have enacted Directive 2002/91/EC which obligates the member countries to enact a legal framework that will implement the goals set by the Kyoto Protocol, primarily relating to decreasing the emission of harmful gases and sustainable development with rational use of resources. The forming of an Energy Efficiency Agency, whose proclaimed main goal is improving the use of energy resources, demonstrates the readiness to approach this issue systematically, while the adopting of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Action Plan for its implementation were also necessary prerequisites for enacting regulations in the field of energy efficiency in construction.

Enacting legislation is merely a prior condition that needs to be met in order to establish a system that brings obvious benefits and savings to all interested parties. In this, as well as in numerous other cases, the role of the government in firstly setting the foundations of an entirely new system through active measures will be crucial, while in the next stage the government will be in charge of ensuring the continuity of this new system. It is essential that the new regulations are not perceived as one-off obligations that must be met, but as the beginning of a lasting process that has the main goal of establishing efficient and economically sustainable policies in the field of civil engineering.

Finally, there is hope that all the relevant parties will be motivated by a rational interest that is primarily seen in the economic benefits which the adaptation of existing and construction of new buildings in compliance with these regulation will bring. It is certain that a higher quality of construction and lower energy consumption will generate higher revenue from rent or potential sale, while energy savings will also ensure better allocation of resources. Moreover, the positive effects on the environment that will additionally improve living conditions are also not to be disregarded.

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