

COMMUNICATION

**from the European Affairs Committee of the Federal Council
to the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council**

pursuant to Article 23 f (4) of the Austrian Constitution

17 January 2017

COM (2016) 761 final

**Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending
Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency**

and

COM (2016) 765 final

**Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending
Directive 2012/27/EU on the energy performance of buildings**

The two proposed directives are part of the so-called “Energy Union Winter Package” and comprise numerous proposals intended, above all, to increase energy efficiency, promote the use of renewable sources of energy and address the issue of fairness for the consumer. At EU level, the energy efficiency target is to be increased from currently 27% to 30% by 2030, while the target for energy suppliers to increase their energy savings by 1.5% per year remains unchanged. This obligation is to be extended to 2030.

The package now on the table is to extend the energy efficiency obligations already existing at EU level. However, the Federal Council wishes to express its concern regarding the eligibility of political measures, which will only count toward the achievement of these targets if they are initiated after 31 December 2020. This cannot be in the interest of energy efficiency and would result in an operational vacuum for all stakeholders in this field. Meaningful measures would be delayed merely in order to meet the formal criteria. These transitional measures should therefore be reconsidered. Moreover, the system of collecting information on consumption should be revised within the framework of a thorough cost-benefit analysis; the provisions regarding the installation of smart meters can be left to the Member States. The costs of installing smart meters for the measurement of heating are enormous and are not necessarily outweighed by the benefits of smart metering systems. In

this context, special attention must also be paid to data protection issues.

In the building sector, energy efficiency is to be increased through renovation measures. At the same time, support for “smart financing” of building renovation is to be introduced to mobilise private investments in the energy efficiency of buildings. As regards the renovation of existing buildings, retrofitting obligations as well as the need for new installations and other technical measures are issues that deserve special attention. The obligation to present an energy performance certificate as a prerequisite for the construction, sale or renting out of dwellings, providing up-to-date information on the energy efficiency of a building, should be sufficient. Today already, sellers and lessors of buildings are aware of the fact that positive energy efficiency data allow them to obtain a higher price when selling or renting out a building or flat. An obligation to meet more stringent criteria or deadlines would not be in the interest of citizens, nor would this be conducive to a meaningful, step-by-step improvement of energy efficiency. Moreover, the introduction of a “smartness indicator” would impose an additional burden on sellers and lessors as well as buyers and tenants, as it would involve enormous retrofitting costs and run counter to the fundamental objective of promoting so-called low-tech buildings.