



Green Transitions in the Built Environment: Europe



Linda Clarke

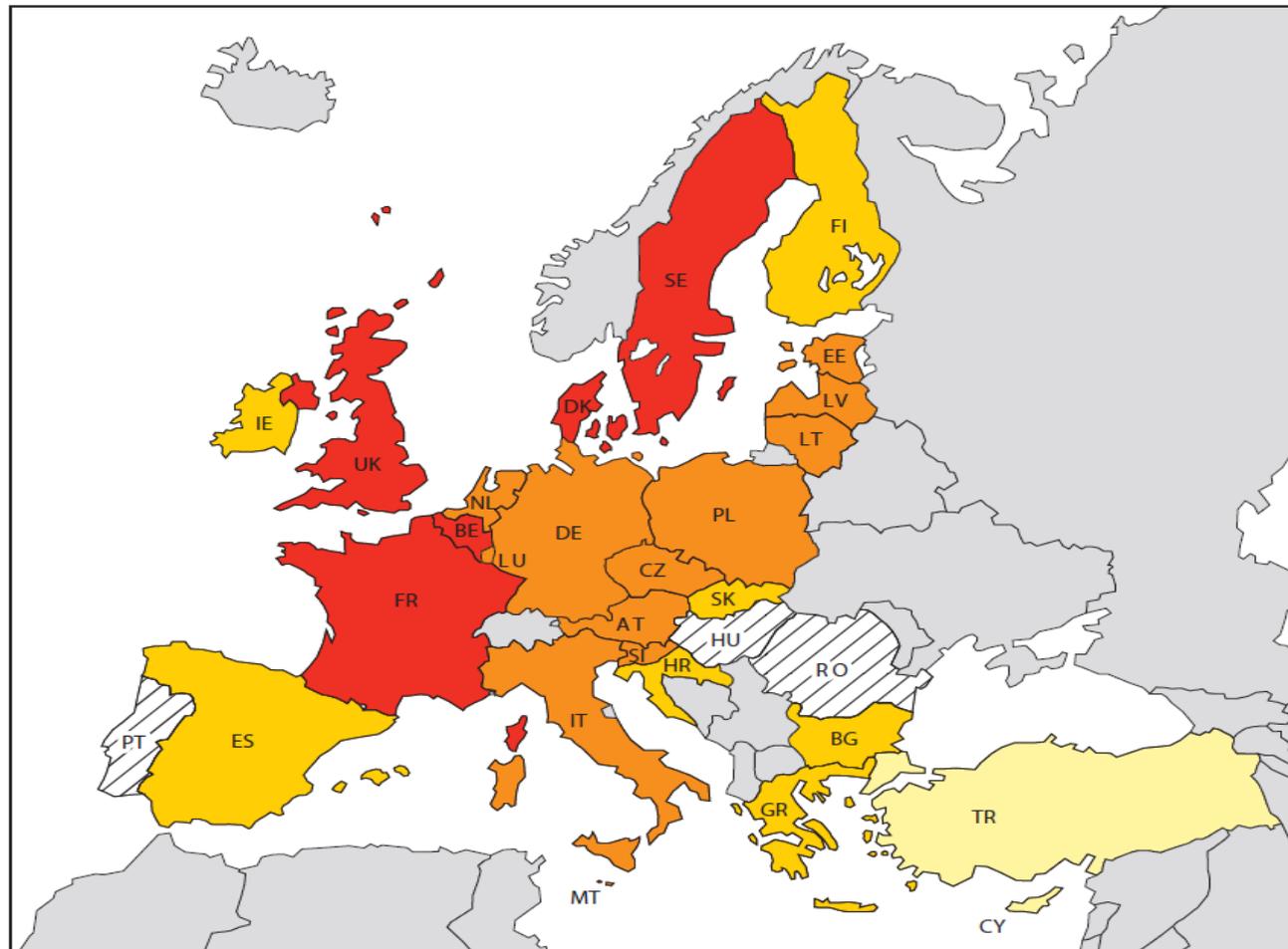
Melahat Sahin-Dikmen

Colin Gleeson

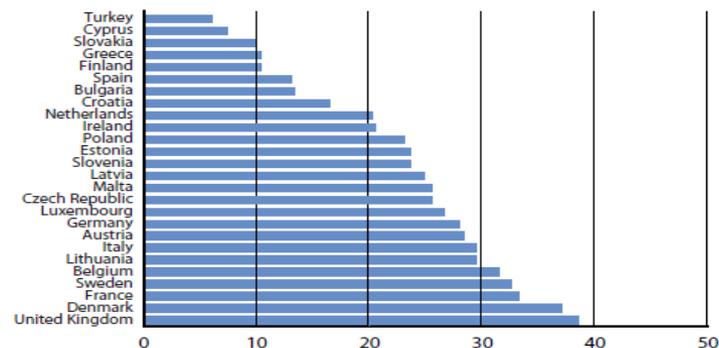
ProBE (Centre for the Study of the Production of the
Built Environment), University of Westminster

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⑩ EU
 dwellings
 built before
 1945
 generally
 “Hard to
 Heat”
 ⑩ Add “Fuel
 Poverty”
 ⑩ HUGE
 WORK
 POTENTIAL



Dwellings built before 1945 (%)



⑩ Source: GEODE

2005, <http://www.ceps.lu/pdf/6/art1143.pdf>

Not responding : Hungary Portugal Romania

Meeting EU 20/20/20 energy targets in construction

- **Targets:** reduce energy use, increase renewable energy, reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 20% by 2020
- **Construction sector** = 40% EU CO₂ end-use emissions:
→ 'near zero emissions' for new + retrofitted buildings by 2020 through energy efficient envelopes & on-site renewables i.e. technically driven targets
- **Difficulties:**
 - Different pathways to low carbon economy
 - Disparities and extreme fragmentation in labour market
 - Different models VET

Transition pathways to low carbon economy (Hampton 2015)

- **Market-based**: e.g. carbon-pricing, labour as commodity, high control and specialisation
- **Ecological modernization**: e.g. retraining, assumptions of proactive investment, ‘just transition’, labour as restricted agent
- **Radical transformation**: integrated and regulated energy supply, labour power, broad occupational capacity, high qualifications, labour as active agent

Labour market constraints to achieving nZEB

- ***Varying IR models:*** social partnership (Denmark and Germany) to weak/marginalized TU involvement (UK, Italy)
- ***Varying workforces:*** D and UK =2.3m IT=1.4m, DK= 0.3m
- ***Domination of small/micro firms*** (95-98%, only Germany more medium-sized firms)
- ***Significance of self-employment:*** 49% of workforce UK, 43% Italy, 12.7% Denmark, 11% Germany
- ***Declining training,*** severe skill shortages
- ***Reliance on migrant workforce***
- ***Recruitment crisis:*** Aging workforce, fewer young people, very small female workforce

Germany: construction trade union IG Bau (281,000 members)

- ❑ Social partnership model, with mainstreaming of LEC into vocational education and training (VET) programmes
- ❑ IG Bau supports transition to low energy construction (LEC)
 - ❑ restricted capacity to respond given declining membership (20%)
 - ❑ fear that cannot prove that sustainable economy creates jobs
 - ❑ climate change not high on agenda
 - ❑ no written policy on green transition
 - ❑ priorities to safeguard jobs
- ❑ Calling for further intervention and regulation by government with proposals on retrofitting, LEC and recycling



Denmark: United Federation of Danish Workers (3F, 265,000 members)

- Firmly embedded social partnership with LEC embedded in VET curricula
- Set up Green Think Tank to develop proposals
- Publications on green transition strategy (e.g. *Energy Strategy in Enterprises based on Worker Involvement*):
 - increased use of renewables and district heating
 - establishing circular economy
 - reducing energy consumption,
 - creating jobs
 - reducing urban-rural divide
 - incentivising and expanding retrofitting
 - educating and training workforce
 - protecting environment



BUT restricted capacity and prioritising of
collective bargaining, H&S etc.

UK: Unite (1.4m members: construction 150,000) policies

2016 policy conference, building on support for 2015 Paris calling for:

- balanced energy policy
- commitment to protecting jobs and workers' interests in both the old and the new energy sectors
- increased use of renewable energy sources, clean coal technology and carbon capture systems
- good terms and conditions of employment for workers in all energy sectors, training and redeployment opportunities for those affected by changing technology, union representation in green energy industries.
- increased investment in public transport and electric vehicle manufacture
- promotion of retrofitting for potential to create 'green' jobs, reduce energy consumption and tackle fuel poverty

A local Scottish alternative : Glasgow City Building



- **Joint Trade union Council**, local authority + housing association
- **Direct labour force** – 2,200 employed, regulated contract chain, direct employment
- **Manufacturing arm** employing 270, 60% with disabilities
- **Highly unionised:** Unite, Unison, Community
- **Large-scale training provision** and workshops, including for LEC
- **Social housing** with two-thirds reduction in energy costs, combining: green technologies, locally-sourced and assembled materials, high level insulation and airtightness, efficient heating systems (air source heat pump)
- **Repair & maintenance** all Glasgow City Council building
- Not-for-profit organisation social ethos
- Increasing Scottish government involvement

Italy: FILLEA-CGIL (CGIL 5.5m members, higher in north, limited social partnership): a new strategy

Strategy:

- Reduction in use of cement by 50% by 2020, to be eventually replaced by low emission and environmentally friendly materials, e.g. hemp and lime
- Protection of environment from spread of concrete-based building construction and unnecessary urbanisation
- Inclusion in public tenders (resisted by cement industry and politicians)

Active involvement in debates

- Membership of *Trade Unions for Energy Democracy* (TUED) and *Legambiente*
- *BROAD initiative* (IT, DE, POL, SLOV) to promote social dialogue on green construction, analysing just transition for labour and proposing:
 - clauses in EWCs and IFAs, recognising worker representatives as active agents in transition to sustainable construction
 - promotion of decent, good quality employment and working conditions, reorganisation of production chains, inclusion migrant workers, support for workers' qualification, retraining and specialization, etc.

BUT: energy awareness of members low

Transitions to nZEB for the European construction sector trade unions

- Awareness of nZEB limited at sectoral level
- Environmental policies articulated by EU

Ecological modernization policies – labour as participant?

- Tackle climate change, with emphasis on renewable energy
- Alignment of sustainable economic and energy policies, Retrofitting of existing housing stock
- Preparing and (re)training workers for transition

Radical transformation – labour as active agent?

- End speculative construction and use of high-carbon products
- Develop social dialogue on just transition in construction
- Create alternative employment & training model through engagement in social house building

An end to the building of new homes, zero-soil consumption and a reduction in building on greenfield sites *

FILLEA-CGIL, the biggest Italian union in construction, is calling for an end to the construction of new homes. This may seem paradoxical, but is not: we are calling for a halt to uncontrolled overbuilding. We must instead redevelop built-up areas and old town centres.

There is such a level of overbuilding in Italy that it is not even possible to distinguish between different areas. Cities are increasingly encroaching surrounding areas, overflowing with unbroken lines of industrial warehouses and superstores. That is exactly why we need a new urban strategy, capable of drastically reducing the consumption of land and the use of cement with the aid of tools and interventions that must be agreed upon and shared between the national government, regions and local authorities.

National Congress of the Fillea CGIL on 3 April 2014 in Roma