

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002277/26
to the Commission
Marcin Sypniewski (ESN)
(3 June 2026)**

Subject: ETS2 and historic tenement buildings: risk of disproportionate heating costs and lack of possibilities for thermal modernisation

Under ETS2, fuels used for, among other things, heating buildings are to be subject to a carbon price. In many Polish cities, especially in Silesia, there are thousands of tenement buildings on the register of monuments, with conservators restricting or prohibiting the insulation of facades and other key thermal modernisation measures. In practice, residents often have no real possibility to switch to electric or low-emissions heating without drastic increases in expenditure (due to high levels of heat loss). At the same time, ETS2 will increase the costs of heating with gas and other fossil fuels, which may lead to permanent and disproportionate financial penalties for tenants of historic buildings, despite the fact that barriers to modernisation stem from the system protecting historical monuments. The Commission states that the Social Climate Fund aims to mitigate the effects of ETS2.

In connection with the above:

1. Does the Commission allow mechanisms for historic buildings (e.g. compensation solutions or specific treatment) in the application of the ETS2 to avoid disproportionate heating costs when full thermal modernisation is not possible?
2. Does the Commission recommend that Member States include dedicated instruments for tenants and communities in historic buildings (e.g. support for alternative technologies: high-temperature heat pumps, modernisation of internal installations, internal insulation) in their National Social and Climate Plans?
3. Is the Commission considering guidelines (or a legislative initiative) to better reconcile climate objectives with heritage conservation — so that conservation legislation does not prevent reasonable efficiency measures in historic buildings?

Submitted: 3.6.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(14 July 2026)**

EU law includes safeguards to avoid hardship for households living in protected buildings. Under the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) ⁽¹⁾, Member States may exempt protected non-residential buildings from minimum energy performance requirements where compliance would unacceptably alter their character or appearance.

The EPBD does not require mandatory improvements to individual residential buildings but requires Member States to improve the building stock at the national-level with flexibility on which part of the building stock they focus on, while prioritising the worst-performing ones.

Many renovation measures can be applied without compromising architectural or historical merits thanks to technological innovations ⁽²⁾.

The Social Climate Fund supports Member State action to address social impacts of the new carbon pricing for buildings and road transport (ETS2) by assisting the most vulnerable households, who disproportionately live in the worst-performing buildings including historic buildings.

The Social Climate Fund provides Poland an opportunity to finance renovations, heating replacement and advisory services. The Commission encourages Member States to adapt their plans to specific national circumstances to address such issues.

There are also opportunities resulting from the decarbonisation of Silesian district heating infrastructure. Households connected to large district heating systems (>20 megawatt) are not directly affected by ETS2.

Under the existing EU-ETS, until 2030 operators of these systems in Poland are eligible for additional free allocation of emissions allowances, limiting price rises, based on implementation of climate neutrality plans.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02024L1275-20260524>.

⁽²⁾ Some EU-supported practical resources are available: the EPBD and cultural heritage ICOMOS report (exploring practical solutions to reconcile energy renovation with heritage conservation; and the Historic Building Energy Retrofit Atlas with examples of energy interventions compatible with historical merit. <https://publicomios.org/publicomios/jlbSai?html=Bur&base=technica&ref=45348&file=4293.pdf&path=EPBD%20Thematic%20analysis.pdf>; <https://hiberatlas.eurac.edu/en/welcome-1.html>.