OBESSU
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The Enniscorthy Forum

SUPPORTING THE UNITED NATIONS AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) has signed a letter of intent to join the Buildings Action Coalition (BAC) in partnership with the Enniscorthy Forum, other coalition members, and the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction to support and advance the principles of high performance in buildings and the built environment. Anna Weinrich and Andrew Victory, Board Members of OBESSU, and Barbara-Anne Murphy, Chief Executive Officer of the Enniscorthy Forum, signed the letter of intent in a signing ceremony organized at the Enniscorthy Castle on the occasion of the second summit of the Enniscorthy Forum.

A non-profit organisation, the Enniscorthy Forum in its role as secretariat for the BAC inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to collaborate on a worldwide mission to improve buildings to reduce carbon emissions while keeping them affordable as well as healthy and comfortable. The Enniscorthy Forum and its partners will work in collaboration with UNEP to promote and demonstrate the transformative benefits of high-performance buildings and to ensure take-up of best practice methods in planning, design, and construction across the world.

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Anna Weinrich noted: "*As part of the second Summit of the Buildings Action Coalition, we all become witnesses to a multi-faceted coalition of actors who are keen to make a difference. A coalition with people from different paths of life, who are equipped and ready to rise to the challenges of climate change and sustainable development.*
As part of this coalition, OBESSU wishes to bring its experiences and knowledge that resulted from a long term ongoing process of student-led political activism and mobilisation extended from national to regional and international level. To use the platform it offers as an organisation to support and shape this initiative as we move forward."

Andrew Victory confirmed: "*OBESSU represents a vast network of student unions. We are deeply engaged in activities on advocacy, campaigns, and specific projects of interest for our members. All three activities can contribute to the vision and objectives of the Buildings Action Coalition."*

Barbara-Anne Murphy observed that "*We look forward to welcoming the OBESSU to the Buildings Action Coalition and collaborating with their network of student unions to mobilise local and national governments and community-level players to change how buildings are conceived and delivered. Youth must be at the table and have important role to play in this initiative.*"

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is the platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland and brings together Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations from all over Europe.

The Enniscorthy Forum, located in County Wexford, Ireland, was established to support the United Nations' sustainable development agenda, focusing on Buildings and the Built Environment, Energy, Diplomacy, Health, and Education.

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Background

Memorandum of Understanding with UNEP

The agreement between the buildings action coalition and UNEP calls for collaboration on the following activities:

- Advocate for market transformation and catalyze real action.
- Develop specific projects and activities, for example, best practices for retrofits, notably for historic buildings; best practices for data centers; and best practices for buildings/grid interface.
- Track progress towards zero emission, efficient, and resilient buildings, and construction.
- Develop policy guidance and capacity building for the transition.
- Work with the community of stakeholders and UN bodies to develop objectives, targets, and recommendations to support attainment of the Buildings Breakthrough Target.
- Work with academia worldwide to advance the science of buildings and the built environment and to ensure comprehensive education of the professional communities needed to improve building performance.
- Extend the network of BAC members globally to support countries and construction industry stakeholders to transition towards zero emission, efficient, and resilient buildings, and construction.
- Mobilize resources and develop joint projects to support countries and construction industry stakeholders to transition towards zero emission, efficient, and resilient buildings, and construction.
- Disseminate knowledge, experience and best practices and work with industry groups to provide demonstrations and proofs of concept.

Buildings Breakthrough Target

*"Near zero-emission and resilient **BUILDINGS** are the new normal by 2030"*

- The Paris Agreement commits the world to limit the rise in global temperature to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C (compared to pre-industrial levels). To keep 1.5°C target alive, need to halve global emissions by 2030 and reach global net zero emissions by the middle of the century.
- Key to achieving this will be the Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda, launched at COP26 by a coalition of world leaders whose countries collectively represent over 70% of global GDP.
- The Breakthrough Agenda is an international clean technology plan to keep 1.5°C in reach. It will be taken forward under joint stewardship of Mission Innovation and CEM from COP27 onwards.
- The 1st set of government-led Breakthrough goals launched at COP26 covered five key emitting sectors representing more than 50% of global emissions:
  - ***CLEAN POWER*** *the most affordable and reliable option for all countries to meet their power needs efficiently by 2030.*
  - *Zero emissions **ROAD TRANSPORT** the new normal – accessible, affordable and sustainable in all regions by 2030.*
  - *Near zero emissions **STEEL** the preferred choice in global markets, with efficient use and near-zero emission steel production established and growing in every region by 2030.*
  - *Affordable renewable and low carbon **HYDROGEN** globally available by 2030.*

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- *Climate-resilient, sustainable **AGRICULTURE** the most attractive and widely adopted option for farmers everywhere by 2030.*

- At COP27, countries developed a package of 28 priority actions to decarbonize those sectors in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- Countries are also working to launch new Breakthroughs in new sectors – such as France and Morocco on buildings and Canada on cement. These are being launched during 2023.

The Enniscorthy Forum and its Buildings Action Coalition

The Enniscorthy Forum is a non-profit organisation established in Enniscorthy, Wexford in 2021 with the support of the Irish Government to accelerate attainment of the United Nations' development agenda.

The Forum's work on high-performance buildings was initiated following contact between Scott Foster, then director of the Sustainable Energy Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and Enniscorthy-based champions of the Passive House movement. Those discussions led at first to the release of the UN's framework guidelines for energy efficiency standards in buildings and then to the launch of the UN's High Performance Buildings Initiative.

The Enniscorthy Forum has now teamed up with UNEP to raise the performance of the built environment globally by activating critical investments that "move the needle" on decarbonisation, resilience, and improved quality of life.

The Enniscorthy Forum hosts the secretariat for the BAC, whose members include:

- organisations and institutions that operate at community level and that provide implementation-oriented education and assistance to building developers, contractors, architects, and engineers, as well as regulatory and planning officials. They also provide community centric knowledge development and sharing, connecting with resources, and accelerating uptake of high-performance buildings.
- a group of thought leaders in the built environment developing a set of objectives, targets, and recommendations for buildings and the built environment that that complement and offer visibility on tangible outcomes for the work of UNEP's Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC) and the newly articulated Breakthrough Target for Buildings.
- industry partners providing examples of application of best practices in countries around the world to demonstrate their validity in different climates, stages of development, and regulatory, legislative, and physical infrastructure.

Support for GlobalABC by the BAC is expected to facilitate the transitionn to zero emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction.

The coalition members who signed onto the MOU include the Building Energy Exchange (New York City, USA), passivhausMaine (Freeport, Maine, USA), Passive House Network (national network headquartered in New York City), Passive House Institute (Darmstadt, Germany), Passive House Canada (Vancouver, Canada), River Clyde Homes (Glasgow, Scotland), and Onion Flats (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

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Letters of Intent to join the MOU were signed by Passive House for Everyone (Brooklyn, New York), Zero Ambition Partners (Dublin, Ireland), A2M Architecture (Brussels, Belgium), AECB (Lancashire, UK), and Passive House Massachusetts (Boston, Massachusetts).

Improving the performance of the built environment is the most effective way to meet the climate challenge while improving quality of life globally. Delivering on the promise requires collaboration among all stakeholders in the built environment working quickly and at scale around the world. That is the shared vision on which the Enniscorthy Forum's Buildings Action Coalition and UNEP's Global ABC partnership is built.

Buildings Action Coalition Programme of Projects and Activities

The description of BAC projects and activities is a living document – it will evolve as the work progresses. It provides partners a substantive overview of the program's current working agenda and, taken as a whole, indicates the underlying vision that guides BAC efforts. The projects are conceived to support the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, and more immediately, the objectives of the GlobalABC and the Buildings Breakthrough Target set forth by the governments of France and Morocco.

The vision underlying the BAC is far-reaching, to deliver on the goals of development in enduring ways. The vision can be expressed several ways.

First, both quality of life and decarbonization are critical to assessing building performance. Quality of life improvements within buildings over the past century have been substantial and are a common metric of development. But those improvements have been fueled with carbon-based energy. The task now is to continue the improvements – high performance buildings can deliver dramatically on a range of criteria – while eliminating the carbon dependence.

That twin vision is well illustrated by the projects outlined herein.

Second, buildings are a portal to dramatic improvements in the entire built environment and the many services it provides. Whether the focus is information and communications technology (ICT), transportation, water, waste, or other facets of an integrated built environment, today's technology and know-how make possible vast improvements in the quality of life. The improvements can address issues of poverty, resilience, social justice, and the UN principle of leaving no one behind – as well as carbon emissions.

Third, when the link between high performance buildings and non-carbon- based energy services is explored more fully, a broader possibility emerges. By demonstrating what is possible, advanced buildings can facilitate a shift to not only green energy, but to a green economy – one that is better integrated with the natural environment, with less waste, circular economy, multifaceted returns on investment in sustainable progress, and new economic opportunities.

Done at scale and with an eye to equity through design, such transformation can help create new types of communities, *New Buildings & Energy & Communities*, in which the backbone of community design links decarbonized energy services, buildings and the built environment, and new economic and social dynamics.

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Current Projects and Activities of the BAC

I. **Innovation Projects**
   a. **Building-Grid Integration Research**
   b. **Retrofit Strategies**

1. Retrofit Best Practices: Ensuring Performance From Retrofits
2. Commercial & Multi-Occupancy Residential Buildings at Community Scale
3. Retrofit Strategies: Rural Residential Buildings
4. Retrofit and Historical Preservation
   a. **Creating a Global Supply Chain**
   b. **Data Centers**
   c. **Standardizing Building EE Progress & Creating a Credits Market**
   d. **Building Performance Verification**

II. **Communications**
   a. **Brussels-Washington DC Building Performance Collaboration**
   b. **Strategic Communications Group**
   c. **Global South Outreach Initiative**
   d. **Business and Economic Case(s) for High Performance Buildings**
   e. **Ice Box Challenge Initiative**

III. **Education, Workforce & Community Development**
   a. **Curriculum Transformation Task Force**
   b. **ASHRAE Education and Outreach Initiative**
   c. **Paths to Workforce and Community Development**

1. Passive House Education Through Creative Arts
2. Building Sustainability for Students: A TransAtlantic Partnership
3. Requity Project: Students Building Skills, Homes & Community
4. Workforce Education in Sustainable Buildings & Energy: Creating a Paradigm & Roadmap(s)

IV. **Macro Strategy & Policy**
   a. **Collaborative Cities Initiative**
   b. **Future of Utility Regulation Task Force**
   c. **Building Energy Codes**
   d. **Draft UN Protocol on High Performance Buildings**

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