

# Press Release

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## KBC Economics: Belgium's renovation pace remains far too low

**MyHome in KBC Mobile brings all housing information together in one place and helps families plan their renovation better**

The Belgian housing market is under pressure. While households are faced with high property prices, more expensive building materials and stricter sustainability standards, the pace of renovation has been decreasing for years. Research by Johan Van Gompel (KBC Economics) shows that an acceleration in pace is necessary if we are to meet climate targets. At the same time, the need for guidance, clarity and affordability is growing. This is why KBC is gathering all the relevant housing and renovation services from KBC and its partners into one central location in KBC Mobile: MyHome.

### Housing renovations in Belgium: at the current pace we won't achieve our goals

The newly published research report<sup>1</sup> by Johan Van Gompel, Senior Economist at KBC, shows that the current renovation pace in Belgium is far too slow to meet the European 2050 climate target. Achieving carbon-neutral housing by 2050 will require tripling or even quadrupling the current home renovation pace. Despite government incentives, the 'renovation intensity' has nearly stagnated for the past 25 years. While there was a notable spike during the Covid crisis, the number of renovation permits has since fallen to exceptionally low levels. This shows that there are still significant barriers – including financial and others – that inhibit renovation.

### What are the barriers to renovation?

- **Old housing stock:** A large proportion of the Belgian housing stock was built before 1981 (66% in Flanders, 78% in Wallonia and 93% in Brussels). New housing construction since 2011 has been limited.
- **Energy-guzzling homes:** Belgium ranks worst in the EU27 after Luxembourg for emissions from residential heating/cooling.

<sup>1</sup> Research report KBC Economics

- **Slow progress:** Energy-efficiency is growing, but is still below the EU average. Only 10% of Belgian homes are heated using renewable energy (EU27: 25%).
- **Renovation intensity:** The number of renovation permits as a proportion of the number of existing residential buildings has hovered around the same level for 25 years.
- **Financial barriers:** The high costs of renovation are accompanied by stricter sustainability standards and sometimes long (projected) payback periods. Households opting for a purchase/renovation combination are faced with paying substantially more for their property.
- **Other barriers:** Socio-demographic (ageing population, smaller households), technical/organisational (protected buildings, finding contractors, temporary relocation) and information (lack of knowledge about renovation options and grants, other priorities).
- Emissions from heating and cooling decreased almost three times faster than in the rest of Europe between 2008 and 2023. In 2023, 31% of Belgians also reported that their home had become more energy-efficient in the previous five years (25% in EU27). There are some caveats to that progress, though, as part of the decline is related to the switch from heating oil to natural gas and often involves only limited renovations.

Despite recent progress, the renovation challenge remains huge. To meet European targets, some 80% of Belgium's housing stock still needs to be addressed, for an estimated total cost of around 350 billion euros<sup>2</sup>. In this respect, uncertain factors such as population ageing and the future price of fossil fuels play an important role. Removing barriers – from improving knowledge about renovation and providing guidance to continued supportive policies for vulnerable households – as well as improving the liquidity of the housing market, therefore remains crucial, as new homeowners often have to carry out renovations.

## What does the KBC loan portfolio show?

Despite the challenges, our customers are showing a growing willingness to invest in their homes and in saving energy. An analysis of KBC's own loan portfolio shows that:

- The number of **new renovation loans** increased by **14%** in 2025.
- The number of **energy loans** rose by **19%**, with strong growth in **home batteries (+160%) and heat pumps (+30%)**.
- **Digital-first** remains dominant: **73%** of instalment loans and **20%** of mortgage loan applications are started digitally.
- In response to the increasing affordability pressures on the housing market, KBC **introduced a financing solution for first-time buyers at the end of 2025 that allows borrowing up to 100% of the property value**. Young buyers are increasingly encountering obstacles due to limited equity and high purchase and renovation costs, particularly in the context of the energy transition. At the same time, full financing implies a higher level of indebtedness, which requires a careful assessment of individual financial capacity. The measure fits within a broader context of market developments and does not constitute a structural solution to the underlying challenges of the housing market.

## Getting started immediately with the right partners

While our loan data show that customers are willing to invest, the complexity of the market makes it clear that financial support alone is not enough. More customers are failing to find their way through the multitude of products on offer, and often do not know where to start. The need for clarity is confirmed by research carried out by CBC<sup>3</sup> : Belgians are willing to make their homes more sustainable, but face a massive lack of clear information on EPC standards and renovation

<sup>2</sup> Cost estimated by the National Bank Belgium

<sup>3</sup> Observatoire CBC

support; 69% feel insufficiently informed and 71% do not know what grants or help are available. In addition, more than 6 out of 10 Belgians favour a digital platform that combines the full range of products and services around their (future) home, making access to information and day-to-day management a lot easier.

By logically connecting financial solutions, digital tools and specialists, KBC creates an integrated environment that guides families through every step of their housing journey. Clients often know what they want, but not whether it is feasible. KBC helps them discover this quickly and easily. In KBC Mobile, users immediately gain insight into their budget, planning and possibilities, while partners support them with expertise and advice.

**Immoscoop** gives home seekers faster access to new and high-quality properties. **Setle** allows families to create a realistic renovation simulation — from insulation to aesthetic upgrades — including a report suitable for a credit application. For those looking to sell, **Immowinkel** provides all the necessary certificates and inspections in one place, allowing the sales process to start more smoothly. **Impact Us Today** helps customers make renovation quotes and projects concrete, offering guidance for everything from solar panels to insulation or new windows.

In addition, **Eliq** provides real-time insight into energy consumption, along with personalised saving tips tailored to the household's profile. And through **Switch Together** customers can easily join group purchases for gas and electricity, enabling them to switch to a more affordable and greener energy contract in just one click.

This is how KBC Mobile becomes a central platform where families can not only make the right choices but also act on them immediately. Kate becomes their first point of contact, while customers can always seek personal advice from branch experts and KBC Live.

### **MyHome: everything you need for your home under one roof – with extra benefits**

From March, KBC will bundle all home-related information and renovation tools in one clear dashboard in KBC Mobile: **MyHome**<sup>4</sup>. MyHome gives households control over their housing budget, the value of their home, renovation planning, energy consumption and required certificates. The dashboard offers:

- A single hub for loans, insurance, renovation advice and energy insights
- Access to partners such as Setle, Eliq, Immoscoop and 'Impact us today'
- Automatic storage of certificates, quotes and inspections
- Personalised insights using smart budget and energy indicators

Customers can apply for certificates through Kate or immediately arrange the installation of their solar panels or insulation. Those who take these steps will automatically earn Kate Coins<sup>5</sup>, which they can subsequently use to save money when purchasing other products and services from KBC and its partners. With this integrated approach, KBC aims to provide maximum support to households in their energy transition and housing ambitions. By focusing on innovation, collaboration with partners and digital solutions, we are combining our efforts to build a more sustainable and affordable future for all.

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KBC press releases are available at [www.kbc.com](http://www.kbc.com) or can be obtained by sending an e-mail to [pressofficekbc@kbc.be](mailto:pressofficekbc@kbc.be).

<sup>4</sup> The MyHome dashboard is only available to customers who have opted for 'extra convenience'. However, customers without this option can use our partners' services via the 'Extra services' button.

<sup>5</sup> Kate Coins are exclusively for customers who hold a current account at KBC and who have opted for 'personalised' commercial offers in KBC Mobile.