

Tell us a bit about your company. What does it do and in which way is it involved in energy efficiency?

RDZ has always been involved in energy issues. Since the very beginning of its UFH business, our company has supported energy-saving solutions. While the Italian Law 373/76 focused the attention to the Energy consumption in the building industry, UFH technology started to spread in the country. In 1990s energy concern was reinforced by eco-friendly matters, and RDZ began to promote heating/cooling systems which could be combined with alternative energy sources (biomass, geothermal energy, solar energy, industrial waste, etc.). Nowadays, energy efficiency is imposed by the law. On this scenario RDZ offers complete energy-efficient solutions from the energy production (heat pumps) to energy distribution and management (surface heating/cooling and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery).

When do you think the nZEB (near-zero buildings) will become a reality?

This topic is extremely thorny in Italy. Even if energy efficiency is now imposed by the law, on our historical background the demand for new buildings is quite poor, and the recent economic downturn is still affecting it negatively. As a result, Nearly Zero Energy Buildings are becoming a reality only in limited contexts. Nonetheless, we must think about the renovation and retrofit of the existing buildings which consist in high energy-consumption buildings. In order to promote nZEB technology, financial incentives and simplified bureaucracy shall be supported by important regulations which can make demolition and reconstruction easier. In the meantime, Public Authorities can set a good example by retrofitting government buildings.

How do you see the energy efficient building market in 10 years?

New constructions will use energy-efficient technologies for sure. This implementation will be helped by local regulations and by the awareness that energy-efficient technologies will maintain the added value of the buildings. In parallel, old buildings will be also improved by energy-efficient technologies only if economics and politics are able to support them properly.

What do you think are the main barriers for energy efficient solutions in buildings?

People are quite aware of the necessity to pursue energy efficiency (both for economic and ecological reasons) and suitable technologies are ready. However, we have to consider the following barriers:

- Too many houses, cottages and residential complexes have been built since 1990s in the absence of any regulation. Those buildings are highly energy-consuming and some of them are now unused.
- Demographic trend and economic crisis started in 2008 have reduced people's spending power. This has meant a serious lack of trust in the future as well as great uncertainty in the labour market, which both make any construction investment very hard.

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