



## Public buildings under pressure to modernise: Solutions for existing buildings and operations at ISH 2027

**Frankfurt am Main, 28 June 2026. Schools, administrative buildings, sports facilities and swimming pools form the backbone of public infrastructure in Europe. At the same time, many of these buildings are in urgent need of modernisation: a large proportion dates back to the 1960s to 1980s and no longer meet current requirements, either in terms of energy efficiency or functionality.**

With the revised EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), the requirements for the modernisation of public buildings are increasing significantly. Despite stricter European regulations, the modernisation of many existing buildings continues to progress slowly: around three-quarters of Europe's building stock is still considered energy-inefficient, and the annual renovation rate stands at around one per cent. (World Green Building Council / EPBD Factsheet 2025).

This is increasing the pressure on local authorities to develop their buildings in the long term to be more energy-efficient, cost-effective and user-oriented. At the same time, requirements within the buildings themselves are changing. Alongside energy efficiency, the focus is increasingly shifting to the quality of interior spaces. Today, public buildings should not only be operated in a resource-efficient manner, but also create healthy, comfortable and performance-enhancing environments.

Factors such as air quality, thermal comfort, acoustics and smart building control are increasingly being viewed as integral to an overall user experience – particularly in schools, administrative buildings and heavily frequented public facilities. "The requirements for public buildings have expanded significantly. In addition to energy efficiency, the focus today is also on indoor air quality, smart control systems and ensuring sustainable, long-term operational viability. Integrated and flexibly retrofittable solutions are crucial for this, particularly in existing buildings," says Frank Ernst, Managing Director, of the German Association of Air-Conditioning and Ventilation in Buildings (FGK).

At the same time, the way we view public buildings is undergoing a fundamental shift. Increasingly, they are no longer viewed solely from an energy efficiency perspective, but as spaces designed to actively support health, well-being and productivity. As a result of this development, issues such as indoor air quality, user comfort and resilient building concepts are also gaining in importance across Europe.

"Indoor air quality is becoming a central component of sustainable building design across Europe. Energy efficiency alone will no longer suffice in future. Public buildings must simultaneously create healthy, comfortable and resilient environments." REHVA – Federation of European Heating, Ventilation and Air-conditioning Associations

## Renovation During Ongoing Operations

The modernisation of public buildings often has to take place whilst the building remains in use. Measures must be designed in such a way that teaching, administrative operations or public use can continue in parallel. At the same time, different building conditions and technical systems coexist within a single building, which adds to the complexity of the planning process. Added to this are limited budgets, complex approval procedures and long project durations. Against this backdrop, phased refurbishment is gaining in importance. Individual trades are modernised, technical systems are upgraded, and buildings are developed over extended periods. It is crucial that solutions are interlinked, flexible in application, and remain viable both technically and economically.



Solutions for indoor air quality and energy-efficient climate technology are among the key topics at ISH 2027. Photo: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH / Petra Welzel

## ISH as a platform for implementation

ISH 2027 will demonstrate how technical solutions must work together today in order to modernise public buildings step by step. The world's leading trade fair for HVAC + Water brings together technologies that can be specifically integrated into existing buildings – showing how individual measures can be combined into effective overall solutions.

## Solutions for municipal buildings at ISH

A key lever in renovation is the energy supply. The “Heat Generation” solution area showcases systems that enable the replacement of outdated heating technology and support a step-by-step transition to more efficient and renewable energy sources, even within the constraints of existing buildings. At the same time, there is a growing focus on indoor air quality. The “Indoor Air” solution area focuses on concepts that specifically improve air quality whilst also integrating seamlessly into existing buildings.

High-traffic areas also place special demands on modernisation. The “Sanitary Rooms” solution area showcases solutions for durable, hygienic and cost-effective fitting concepts. The special area “Pools & Spas” also showcases applications for swimming pools where water quality, energy use and operation are closely interlinked.

Heavily frequented areas also place special demands on modernisation. The “Sanitary Spaces” solution field presents durable, hygienic and economically efficient concepts for sanitary facilities. In the special area “Pools & Spas”, solutions for swimming pools will also be showcased, where water quality, energy use and operational efficiency are closely interconnected.

As buildings become increasingly complex, systematic planning and control are also becoming more important. The “Software” solution area showcases digital innovations that help to analyse the building stock, prioritise measures and manage renovation processes in a structured manner. Building on this, the “Intelligent Building Control” solution area demonstrates how technical systems can be networked and optimised whilst the building is in operation. Automated processes help to reduce energy consumption, stabilise operations and, at the same time, improve comfort for users.

ISH thus makes it clear that the modernisation of public buildings is not a one-off project, but an ongoing process. It demonstrates how technical solutions can be combined to ensure operational reliability, conserve resources and create sustainable structures in the long term.

ISH 2027 will be accompanied by a varied supporting programme featuring specialist presentations, conference formats and expert forums. The focus will be on current developments in the fields of building technology, water and indoor air, as well as the exchange of practical approaches for the further development of the building stock.

## **ISH**

The next ISH, the world's leading trade fair for HVAC and water, will take place from 15 to 19 March 2027 in Frankfurt am Main. [www.ish.messefrankfurt.com](http://www.ish.messefrankfurt.com)

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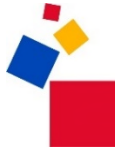
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