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Are labour productivity and residential living standards drivers of the energy consumption changes?

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1. Introduction

The 21st Conference on Climate Change in Paris (United Nations, 2015) agreed to maintain the increase of the average global temperature below 2°C with respect to preindustrial levels, and to continue the efforts to limit that increase of temperature to 1.5°C, also with respect to preindustrial levels. It was thus attempted to considerably reduce the risks and effects of climate change. One of the main measures to achieve this is to reduce energy consumption and to diversify energy sources with the objective of incorporating non-emitters of greenhouse gases.

Energy efficiency improvements and the reduction of final and primary energy consumption are some of the energy priorities in the European Union (Pérez Lombard et al., 2013). In the short term, “Europe 2020: Europe’s growth strategy” set, among its objectives, a target of a 20% primary and final energy consumption reduction by 2020 (European Commission, 2010). For the horizon 2030, the objective established has been the reduction of energy consumption and CO₂ emissions by 27% and 40%, respectively (European Union, 2014). More ambitious still is the European Union’s objective for 2050, since it will attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95%, compared to 1990 levels (European Union, 2011).

Since 2000, Spain has also focused on the aim of reducing energy consumption in order to achieve European Union goals. Some energy efficiency plans have been implemented with a view to improving energy efficiency use. Specifically, during the

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