

Solar heat: European solar thermal industry commits to Green Recovery

Brussels, 24 July 2020 – Following the approval earlier this week of the Recovery Package by the European Council, the Solar Heating and Cooling industry launched today its pledge, committing to a green recovery and launching a call-for-action by policy makers in Europe.

The European solar thermal industry got together in a common pledge to state its commitment to a 'Green Recovery'. "We want to demonstrate that the European solar thermal industry is ready to do its part in bringing about an economic recovery in line with the continent's energy and climate targets," said Pedro Dias, Secretary General of Solar Heat Europe.

"Our sector has been contributing to a sustainable green transition over the past decades. We therefore welcome this strong commitment from the EU leaders", Dias added, referring to the agreement reached earlier this week at an historic European Council, where the Recovery Package was approved.

In the industry's pledge, the signatories, a group of over 150 private and public entities from more than 20 European countries commit to:

- Promote a multi-technology approach to heating and cooling
- Introduce in the market new solutions for decentralised, secured, decarbonised heat supply and thermal energy storage
- Increase the positive exporting balance of our sector
- Step up research and development activities
- Support the objectives of a sustainable, resource-efficient, and circular economy

"Delivering on these promises will require some commitment and support from the public sector", states Costas Travasaros, President of Solar Heat Europe. "As such, we are also presenting a call-for-action, urging governments to implement several essential measures, such as phasing out fossil fuels and provide consumers with soft loans so they will opt for efficient, renewable solutions."

"The next 10 years will be crucial to transform and decarbonise the heating market, because we will need zero-carbon residential, commercial and industrial heating systems by 2030, since all new systems installed afterwards will most likely still be running in 2050.", stated Travasaros. "We need swift action and to consider solar heating and cooling in Europe's recovery plan", Travasaros added, referring to the National Recovery Plans, that shall be submitted to the European Commission next October. "We are willing to contribute to this discussion in all European countries, with ideas, proposals and a strong commitment from our sector.", Costas Travasaros concluded.



[Download the European Solar Thermal Industry Pledge](#)

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About Solar Heating and Cooling

Solar Heating and Cooling, often referred to as Solar Thermal, is a well-known technology that captures solar energy in the form of heat. This technology is used for residential needs, such as space and water heating, or even commercial and industrial applications. There are over 10 million solar thermal systems installed in Europe.

Solar thermal is part of the solution to tackle the climate crisis, reducing the use of fossil fuels for heating and cooling, avoiding, during 2018 alone, an equivalent of 6.8 Mt CO₂ emissions. The estimated total thermal energy generation of solar heating and cooling systems operating in Europe corresponds to 25.6 TWh_{th}. This is equivalent to the entire annual heating demand of Cyprus and Estonia together. In what concerns economic aspects, the solar heating and cooling sector achieved a combined turnover of 1.85 billion Euros in 2018, employing approximately 18 800 people.

Most of the solar thermal systems are used for hot water preparation, though there are also large systems, supplying industrial processes or district heating networks. The largest of these systems, operating in the town of Silkeborg, Denmark, reaches a staggering peak capacity of 110 MW_{th}, which represents 156 000 m² of solar collectors.

Solar heat systems have the particularity of including always thermal energy storage. In fact, the total thermal energy storage capacity connected to such systems in Europe is estimated at 180 GWh_{th}, over thirty-fold more than the total power storage capacity in Europe. Given its flexibility, this technology can easily integrate different renewables solutions.

About Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF

Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF's mission is to achieve the prioritisation and acceptance for solar heat as a key element for sustainable heating and cooling in Europe and to work for the implementation of all necessary steps to realise the high potential of solar heat. With members in more than 15 European countries, Solar Heat Europe represents directly or indirectly over 90% of the industry, across the value chain. Solar Heat Europe also ensures that solar heat technology develop and grow in Europe through different actions such as providing information and statistics on the sector or by advocating for better regulation or encouraging the EU policy makers to shape a favourable environment for heating and cooling technology.

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