

Renewable heating and cooling is essential for EU's stronger ambition on Climate and Green Recovery

Brussels, 16 September 2020 – The Solar Heating & Cooling sector welcomes the European Union's increased ambition regarding our common Climate commitments and stresses the need for faster deployment of renewable heating and cooling solutions.

European Commission's President, Ursula von der Leyen, in her SOTEU address, presented the ECs proposal for a higher ambition, stressing our commitment to the Paris Agreement, while reiterating the relevance of the European Green Deal and the Next Generation EU initiatives as part of the new growth strategy for Europe.

"As President von der Leyen mentioned, what is good for the climate, is good for business, it is good for us all. Our sector is a clear example that it is possible to create simultaneously value for the climate and the economy, creating jobs and generating exports, while providing a solution that is clean, competitive, and an example in terms of circularity." stated Costas Travasaros, President of Solar Heat Europe.

Higher targets for Climate and for Renewable Heat

As a sector that contributed to a sustainable green transition over the past decades, Solar Heating and Cooling welcomes this stronger commitment. *"We believe that 55% is the absolute minimum that the Member States need to agree to"* stated Pedro Dias, Secretary General of Solar Heat Europe. *"This commitment must prioritise higher and mandatory targets for direct renewable heat."* he added.

The heating and cooling sector represents 51% of final energy consumption in Europe and approximately 27% of EU carbon emissions. As such, decarbonising this sector is crucial for European carbon neutrality goals and renewable heat solutions are key in making that happen.

"We support the idea that stronger measures are needed to bring us from the 41% that the Member States have pledged in their National Energy and Climate Plans, to 55% the President von der Leyen proposed. This can be done with higher ambition in terms of having more efficient renewable heat, such as solar thermal, in our buildings, and our industry." Dias stated.

Renovation Wave

Space and water heating represent 75% of energy consumption in European homes. Considering that buildings account for more than one-third of Europe's emissions, it is essential to reduce their demand with energy efficiency measures and to supply the needs with renewable solutions, such as solar heat. This shall be an essential element of the Renovation Wave, as well as of the new European Bauhaus.

Currently, there are over 10 million solar thermal systems operating in European households and businesses. All these solar heating systems include thermal energy storage, to an overall capacity of 180 GWh. This combination of solar heat and thermal storage is essential for the future buildings in Europe. Furthermore, the supply of district heating with renewable heat is an efficient way to decarbonise the heat supply in many European cities. If the right measures to promote a fast-paced transition are put in place, the number of households benefitting from sustainable solar heat can grow more than threefold in the next decade.

Sustainable Industry

Process heat represents more than 60% of energy use in the European manufacturing industry. The decarbonisation of industry is inevitable, though it needs to be sped up to be in line with our Climate targets. The Green Deal needs to incentivise change in European industry: with the right instruments in place, decarbonisation can be sped up while supporting the competitiveness of European companies.

Solar heating already presents innovative solutions for several industrial sectors, as the food and beverage industry or the pulp and paper one. Solar process heat solutions have been growing in number and size, reaching new records every year and our sector can deliver a much larger number of solutions all over Europe. In this regard, the financing support related to Next Generation EU can provide an essential push for new investments in this area.

Next Generation EU and the European solar thermal industry pledge

The solar thermal heating and cooling sector welcomes the allocation of 37% of Next Generation EU budget on the European Green Deal objectives. The European solar thermal industry offers options and solutions for decarbonisation all over Europe. While Denmark is world leader in Solar District Heating, Cyprus presents the higher number of solar thermal systems per capita.

The potential and the commitment of the solar thermal heating and cooling sector is reflected in a common pledge stating its commitment to a 'Green Recovery'. This pledge gathers more than 200 entities from 28 European countries and is accessible at [SolariseHeat.eu](https://www.solariseheat.eu).

"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 Europe's energy and climate targets," said Costas Travasaros, President of Solar Heat Europe. *"Our sector has been contributing to a sustainable green transition over the past decades. We therefore welcome this commitment from the European Union to pursue higher ambitions",* Travasaros added.



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, with a total energy generation of 25.6 TWh_{th} and avoiding yearly an equivalent of 6.8 Mt CO₂ emissions. For more information visit SolariseHeat.eu.

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](http://SolarHeatEurope) represents directly or indirectly over 90% of the industry, across the value chain.

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