

Heat is half – Energy security needs to deploy urgently renewable heat solutions, avoiding dependency from Russia and China

Brussels, 11th March 2022 – The Solar Heating & Cooling sector supports the European Commission’s goal of reducing Europe’s dependency on gas and oil and stresses that it will be possible only by switching attention to direct renewable heat solutions manufactured in Europe and that can bring immediate results, such as solar heat. The sector also declares that with strong measures, solar heat technology can provide 25 TWh of direct heat in the next 2 years, saving the equivalent of 3 billion m³ of gas annually.

The energy prices crisis is worsening due to the dramatic war in Europe and the tense relations with Russia. These events have revealed Europe’s dependency on imported energy, a long-known matter, but one which has not been tackled proactively, forcing now decision-makers to roll out plans for drastic change.

The Solar Heat industry supports the European Commission’s goal to improve energy security and calls on European decision-makers to integrate into their plans the **deployment of direct renewable heat solutions** that contribute to Europe’s energy independence, as well as to climate neutrality goals.

Heat is the elephant in the room when discussing energy security in Europe. **Heat is half** of the energy consumed in Europe and we can **decarbonise our heat supply with technologies manufactured in Europe**, that **create qualified jobs** within European borders, in manufacturing, installation, and maintenance. Furthermore, solar heat has **available production capacity in Europe**, being able to ramp up the production of the technology given the right support and does not require materials that would cause a bottleneck in manufacturing.

The availability of materials and components and of manufacturing capacity in Europe is essential to **avoid replacing our dependency on Russian energy imports with an accrued dependency from China** for the supply of rare-earth minerals, other critical metals, or equipment.

“There are solutions in the market ready to be deployed. EU should count on available solutions, avoiding relying too much on options which potential to deploy in substantial numbers is still to be proven, such as hydrogen.” states Marcel Cloosterman, from Solar Heat Europe’s Board of Directors. *“The energy system needs security of supply and needs also resilience, as such it cannot be too dependent on electrification, when there are decentralised solutions such as solar heat available.”*, Mr. Cloosterman adds.

“Heat is half of the energy consumed in Europe, while electricity is only 20% and transport is 30%. Many industries that depend on gas and oil for heating processes are now experiencing major problems in their production. This applies, for example, to breweries, textiles, or chemical industries where heat represents 60-85% of their energy consumption. Solar heat can solve these problems now! With over 90% of the systems produced in Europe and not requiring any critical minerals, the technology can be deployed at a fast pace” says Joakim Byström, from Solar Heat Europe’s Board of Directors.

Solar thermal already supplies over 10 million households, hundreds of industries and district networks in Europe with direct renewable heat, which stands as proof of the potential of the technology to reduce dependency on oil and gas, while also contributing to a green transition. With strong measures and support, the solar heat sector can provide additional 25 TWh of direct heat in the next 2 years, contributing to additional savings equivalent to 3 billion m³ of gas annually.

“Solar Heat Europe’s members, in cooperation with Members States and EU institutions, have the capacity over time, to make a major contribution to Europe’s energy independence. At an accelerated deployment speed, solar heat can contribute to Europe’s energy supply with 25 TWh in the next two years and reach a total of 500 TWh in 10 years.” said Costas Travasaros, President of Solar Heat Europe.

In a letter sent to the European Commission, the solar heat sector is providing concrete action steps that would ensure energy security and as such must be included in the emergency measures taken now:

- Immediate mobilisation of 2 000 cities and 40 000 industries to replace gas or oil with direct renewable heat solutions, including solar thermal;
- Boost existing support schemes with an increased budget and higher grants for the installation of new direct renewable heat systems;
- Urgently reallocate funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and from the European Regional Development Fund to investments into renewable heat;
- Mobilise investment from the European Investment Bank, banking system, and investment funds;
- Set up a taskforce with industry to swiftly implement these and other additional measures essential to ramp up production in Europe of solar heat and other EU-produced renewable technologies;



About Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF

Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF's mission is to achieve the prioritisation and acceptance of 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.

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