



Press Release

The European Strategy on Heating and Cooling: the opening of a door that the European Commission and Member States must rapidly walk through.

Brussels, 16 February 2016 – The European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF) welcomes the publication of the European Strategy on Heating and Cooling. This is an important milestone to improve the policy framework for the solar thermal sector, as it sets the direction for the incoming EU legislative revisions for 2016.

The long-awaited Strategy on Heating and Cooling has been released today by the European Commission. It engages the EU in a series of actions to promote the decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector, including a reinforced promotion of renewable heating and cooling.

In particular, the Strategy calls for a 'comprehensive approach to speed up the replacement of obsolete fossil fuel boilers with efficient renewable heating technologies'. The Strategy rightly recognises synergies between renewable heating and cooling and energy efficiency measures, such as building refurbishment. It also recognizes the relevance of packages of space and water heating systems under the energy labelling framework. These packages can be combined with solar thermal to reach the best available technology class (A+++), particularly in the case of water heating, where such packages can only be composed using a solar thermal system.

We welcome the fact that consumers are put at the centre of EU's energy policy. We hope these will become more than words, recognising and addressing the decentralised dimension of the heating and cooling sector and the need to engage and support consumers in operating a vital change towards renewable heating and cooling in their homes. Placing consumers at the centre of the energy system also means providing them with diverse options for their heating and cooling. Hence the references to electrification need to be balanced with the need of not overwhelming consumers on their future energy bills or tax payers with unnecessary infrastructural investments on power grids, while ensuring an effective decarbonisation.

The Strategy rightly points out the need for the decarbonisation of heat for industrial processes, although it falls short in properly identifying tools and solutions to be addressed.

Recently, Commissioner Cañete called for the need to unlock the great potential of renewable heating and cooling¹, and recognized its central role within the Strategy. The Commission is now called to a consistency exercise over the 'year of delivery': intentions stated in the Strategy must be transposed into legislative actions. The role of solar thermal as a key technology to promote a rapid and cost-efficient switch from inefficient boilers must be fully promoted across the future Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, and Energy Performance of Buildings Directives. The Commission must pursue its intentions and push for Member States to focus their incentives on non-fossil fuel based heating and cooling technologies such as solar thermal, and develop synergies between renewable heating and cooling and energy efficiency, including on financing measures such as the Smart Financing for Smart Building Initiative.

ESTIF Secretary General, Pedro Dias, commenting on the news, said: *'the Strategy shows that finally the EU institutions are acknowledging the importance of the heating and cooling sector, and in particular the need to decarbonise it using renewable heating and cooling in combination with energy efficiency at local, decentralised level'*. He added: *'While time runs short for reaching the 2020 targets and we set in place the regulatory frameworks towards 2030, we must ensure that the Commission and Member States are able to promote consistency between our decarbonisation goals, the Energy Union Strategy, this Heating and Cooling strategy and the renewable heating and cooling potential to generate economic growth and jobs'*.

View the whole EU Strategy on Heating and Cooling [here](#).

More information and contacts:

Stefano Lambertucci, Policy Officer: stefano.lambertucci@estif.org

¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-171_en.htm?locale=en