

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2019

**Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF**

*Re-energizing solar heat*

Version 1.1  
November 2019

## SUMMARY

Re-energizing solar heat, as a motto for 2019, focuses on pointing out our sector's strengths and achievements, both internally and externally.

During this process, it was clear that the engagement of the members was essential, bringing their own experience and expertise. This process involved strategic discussion with CEOs of the sector. This process led to a focus on large scale systems, both solar heat for industrial process and solar district heating. From this work, the priorities were established on concrete policy measures and on the preparation of a communication campaign.

Our sector needs to learn from the approaches of other sectors and have a more positive and constructive messaging. This shall contribute to solidify our position as an essential technology, building trust in its capability to contribute in different dimensions and as a no-regrets solution. Players from the sector need to be the best defenders of our technology and the main contributors to strengthening the sector's reputation. Solar Heat Europe will take this challenge heads-on and mobilise the sector towards the need for more positive messaging from our sector.

In terms of the work on competitiveness, a strong focus was put on addressing major reports and studies on competitiveness and costs. Solar Heat Europe was involved in the main studies about heating and cooling and energy costs. Likewise, the work on modelling was an important dimension, to have solar thermal better reflected and covering some of the gaps identified in previous modelling processes. To carry out this work the support of members and the Board was critical, with inputs and data that made our contributions more consistent and stronger.

We continued working on promoting a level playing field for solar heat and other RES-based options. In this regard, the work on the implementation of the Clean Energy Package brought opportunities to be explored. We have addressed this work with our national members, assessing the NECPs and putting together new proposals in order to better reflect solar thermal in such plans. This is an ongoing work, though we believe the cooperation so far has been positive. We also continued the work on the Multi-Financial Framework negotiation, focusing on a new set of European funds, exploring options that could open opportunities for improved financing mechanisms addressing climate change, including renewable heating and cooling, investment at regional and local level. In this process, we work together with Environmental NGOs on campaigning for the reduction of support to fossil fuel, an important measure in order to bring further investment into RES-H&C solutions.

The negative note is once again related to membership and member's recruitment, where the results were below expectation. This is an aspect where additional work is needed, namely gaining visibility to Solar Heat Europe's achievements and potential, considering a more focused approach to the needs of the different segments.

Internally, we have also met new challenges, with new colleagues in the team and changes in the communications area. Changes bring a loss of experience and knowledge but they also provide opportunities for new approaches and fresh ideas.

We believe to have largely covered the priorities that had been set for this year. Over the next pages, we provide a summarized overview of the work done under the main priorities defined for the year. As usual, we have closed some processes that have led to new challenges, while we continue to address ongoing ones.

## **PRIORITIES 2019**

- **Strengthening the sector's reputation**
  - Build up trust in the sector's potential, consolidating a positive message approach
  - Develop concerted communication efforts & initiatives
- **Enhancing industry's competitiveness**
  - Implement a tailored approach to the different solar heat segments
  - Promote storage solutions and smart thermal grids as central to the future energy system
  - Exploit and disseminate data on best practices, including investment data
- **Promoting an adequate policy framework**
  - Cooperate with members in addressing the Clean Energy Package implementation at national level
  - Explore opportunities for improved financing mechanisms addressing solar heat at European and national level
- **Improving SHE's capacities**
  - Recruit new members
  - Increase Solar Heat Europe's notoriety within sector
  - Enhance member's engagement in SHE's work, while providing quality and innovative services to members

## **Priorities 2018**

### **Cooperate with members in addressing the implementation of the Clean Energy Package**

- Analysis and internal consultation with the national associations on the first drafts of National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs): the documents were overlooking the renewable heating and cooling sector and not mentioning solar thermal.
- Lobbying activities on NECPs, also with the European Commission, to acknowledge the relevance of art. 23 (Renewable Heat Obligations) and the synergies among NECPs, EU funds as ERDF and other provisions from the Clean Energy Package.
- Concerted action with other associations in the renewable heat sector to shape the content of the revised comprehensive assessment on H&C (Annex VIII EED) and its guidelines. Meeting with the European Commission to discuss next priorities.
- Discussion with the Board and the members on the inputs for Horizon Europe public consultation. Participation in the Research and Innovation Days and regular contacts with the European Commission.
- Targeted communication towards policy makers through the Manifesto and other communication materials

### **Explore opportunities for improved financing mechanisms**

- Advocacy activities pushing for the exclusion of fossil fuel subsidies in the next European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Policy. Successful cooperation with environmental NGOs.
- Monitoring and participation in the public consultations on the revision of the EIB energy lending and the sustainable financing dossiers. Indirect cooperation with other industry associations.
- Participation in a joint workshop on solar technologies organised by the European Commission (DG CLIMA) to present solar thermal projects interesting for the new Innovation Fund.
- Monitoring of the debate on the Just Transition Fund and lobbying for a stronger climate and technology focus on Horizon Europe and other funding mechanisms.

### **Solar thermal costs and industrial competitiveness**

- Active participation in the Clean Energy Industrial Forum
- Role in the advisory board for the EU Commission report on the Competitiveness of Renewables (key action to highlight new lower solar thermal costs)

- Participation in the Research and Innovation Days and advocacy activities to have a stronger solar thermal role in the next R&I funding programme.

### **Other relevant areas**

Continued support to key structures for Solar Heating and Cooling and key support areas for Solar Heat Europe work. We indicate below some highlights, covering some of the main actions and activities.

- **RHC-ETIP and ESTTP**
  - Support in the work of RHC-ETIP Board, the activities of ESTTP and the HWG Industries
  - Contribution to the RHC position paper on Horizon Europe (inputs on the need for urgent actions, RES industrial leadership and energy security).
  - Inputs to Horizon Europe public consultation as ESTTP and as RHC-ETIP (based on the joint position paper on Horizon Europe)
  - Contribution as ESTTP and HWG Industries to the RHC 2050 Vision (potential of ST technologies and sector integration, thermal storage, and key targets).
  - Development of a draft engagement strategy to involve external stakeholders in the platform activities and deliverables
- **Standardisation & Certification**
  - Promoting Solar Keymark Network and quality assurance as a relevant framework for the sector in Europe;
  - Supporting the functioning and administration of SKN; including the management of the Solar Certification Fund and the implementation of its communication strategy;
  - Standing cooperation with TC312 and joint organisation, with SKN support, of a workshop on the future of standardisation for solar thermal;
  - Cooperation with TC312 and several members on an initiative to address standardisation of hybrid systems.
- **Communication:**
  - Build up trust in the sector through stressing the positive trends for the market in our reports, editorials and articles.
  - Consolidate a positive message approach with a series of articles in one of the most influential EU news outlets (Euractiv) spreading the important role of solar thermal energy and renewable heating and cooling in the energy transition.



- Continuation of the bi-weekly Membership Briefing Service, with a revised concept, based on member's inputs.
- Since a pop-up to register to the newsletter was set up, there has been a clear increase of the number of registrations.
- Improvement of the Solar Heat Newsletter content in term of aesthetics and attractiveness for the readers so it attracts more attention to the articles and traffic to our website.

▪ **Solar Keymark Network:**

- administrative support to SKN and SCF
- promote better external communication, with Marketing Working Group
- Launch and development of new SKN database
- Exploit options to include package label tools under SKN

▪ **Policy & advocacy:**

- Main action area, cross-cutting to SHE's work
- Advocacy work towards EC and EP (eventually PermReps)
- Providing support and getting feedback from "Policy Working Group"
- Coordinate work with nat'l solar trade associations
- Manage standing partnerships:
- DecarbHeat; DecarbEurope; CoolingEU, etc.

▪ **Projects:**

- Manage ongoing projects:
  - SecRHCI
  - Tender on RHC R&I (PP2041)
  - "Our solar Town"
  - HARP
  - LabelpackA+ (reporting)
- Interact with ongoing solar thermal related projects
- Explore funding opportunities for projects relevant for Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF

**Events & meetings:**

- Organise membership focused events:
- Thematic webinars
- Workshops (one day event with 3 workshops)
- External events
- Being considered:
- Experts meetings with industrial sectors
- National events promoting segments
- Exhibition on solar heating & cooling



**Market intelligence:**

- monitoring of the situation in the European market
- Collect data on costs and other metrics (storage and other)
- Improve information and reporting on
  - market segments

**Interdisciplinary task forces:**

- Covering policy, market intel, comms
- Focused on each market segment
- Solar Heat for Industrial Processes
- Solar District Heating
- PVT collectors