

*Frans Timmermans
Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal*

*Kadri Simson
Commissioner for Energy*

Brussels, 24 July 2020

Subject:

Our ref: O.P2009-P

Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,
Dear Commissioner,

We thank you for your work on keeping the climate crisis and energy transition central to the COVID-19 Green Recovery package. Our society is facing unprecedented challenges requiring swift and decisive action. The COVID19 pandemic showed us how resolute Governments and populations can be in addressing a crisis. That resolve and courage should also be applied to the main crisis we all face: Climate Change. In dealing with a global public health crisis, we need to face its economic consequences, without undermining our common efforts in fighting climate change.

The Solar Thermal sector is strongly committed towards bringing positive change to our world and to our societies. We provide solutions that contribute to decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector, which represents 51% of the final energy consumption and approximately 27% of the EU carbon emissions. Decarbonising this sector is critical for the European Carbon Neutrality goals.

Furthermore, this decade is decisively important in reaching this transition, considering that new heating systems for residential, commercial, or industrial applications installed after 2030 must be carbon free, as they are likely to still be operating by 2050.

The solar heating and cooling industry looks confidently at this challenge, facing it as an opportunity to build our economic recovery based on our paramount climate goals. While aiming at reducing EU's energy needs and striving for a cost-efficient approach to clean, affordable and competitive solutions, the solar thermal sector commits 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

The delivery of the expected results also implies commitment and support from public authorities. As such, the solar heating and cooling industry is calling on your government, as well as other European, national, regional, and local policy makers to take decisive action. This

call for action includes both demand and supply-side-oriented measures, which are described in the attached document.

Our industry's pledge and call-for-action have insofar been subscribed by over 100 companies and organisations from our sector, established in over 15 European countries.

European policy-makers are well informed about the advantages of solar thermal energy. This technology is one of the most efficient means of generating sustainable energy. Remarkably, European companies are leading in terms of innovation in this industry, namely in large systems, such as district heating or solar heat for industrial processes. It is a well-established pan-European industry, essentially driven by SMEs, that creates local added value by generating jobs in manufacturing, distribution, commercialization, and maintenance.

Solar heating and cooling allows to reduce the dependency from fossil fuels and from centralized energy supply, allowing consumers to produce their own heat, be it at residential, commercial, or industrial applications, contributing therefore to improving societal and environmental conditions. With low levelised costs of energy, it provides competitive solutions for European companies. Furthermore, its competitive life-cycle costs can as well help in reducing energy poverty. Solar thermal can also play an important role in the overall energy system, including in sector integration, as every solar heating system integrates energy storage, therefor contributing to stabilising energy supply and demand.

Still, there are important barriers to be tackled, including the higher upfront investment required in comparison with incumbent solutions. The call-for-action we have the honour to provide in annex, identifies several priority measures that can enhance the uptake of this technology and assist in the development of this European industrial sector.

The new recovery package for Europe, is an outstanding opportunity to “Repair, Reform, Remodel”, as proclaimed by the European Commission. Such an important initiative should also ensure a bright future for decentralised renewable energy solutions and helping to set a new energy paradigm in your country. Solar Heat Europe, on behalf of the whole European Solar Thermal Industry, would only be pleased to cooperate with European and national stakeholders in this remarkable initiative, in the making of a milestone for both the promotion of renewable energies in Europe and its member States.

Yours faithfully

Costas Travasaros
President
Solar Heat Europe

