

## **Building a Renewable Future: The EPBD's unique chance to decarbonise heating and cooling.**

***Brussels, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – Solar Heat Europe (SHE), the voice of the solar heating and cooling sector, welcomes the European Commission's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) and stresses the need to transition to readily available renewable heating and cooling technologies such as solar thermal.***

As an early holiday present, the European Commission published yesterday the much-awaited revision of the EPBD, in line with the climate-oriented Renovation Wave and the FitFor55 Package. This legal act promotes the improvement of energy performance and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU's building stock.

In the EU, three out of four buildings are energy inefficient, a worrying fact, especially during the cold season. The Solar Heat sector fully supports higher climate ambitions, and we remain ready to decarbonise buildings with already available solar thermal technology.

***"Heat represents half of the energy we consume in Europe and space and water heating represent 80% of the energy consumption in households. We can only achieve climate-neutral buildings if we are effective in decarbonising heating and cooling using alternatives, such as solar heat systems"*** said Costas Travasaros, President of Solar Heat Europe.

Solar Heat Europe fully supports the EPBD's ambition to decarbonise the EU's building stock to zero-emission-buildings by 2050. The newly established national building renovation plans, underlined by minimum energy performance standards (MEPS), must be strengthened, and target the worst performing buildings across the EU. In addition, the solar heat sector welcomes the prioritisation of incentives for vulnerable consumers and people most affected by energy poverty (around 1 in every 4 households).

***"Giving sufficient incentives is crucial! Changing an old heating system for a renewable one requires a higher upfront investment, but will reduce costs, save energy, and avoid CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We need to support consumers in that initial investment. This is where our governments can really make a difference"*** added Pedro Dias, Secretary General of Solar Heat Europe.

The text includes many improvements over its previous version, but the current climate emergency warrants these, and additional, outstanding measures. To this end Solar Heat Europe supports:

- **Renewable heat, on-site or in district heating networks:** Space and water heating should be locally supplied, either on-site or via district heating networks. Using renewable energy such as solar thermal allows to reduce lifecycle costs, stabilize energy prices and increase security

of supply. Priority should be given to the replacement of outdated heating and cooling systems running on fossil fuels.

- **Long-term renovation strategies:** The renovation challenge is enormous and needs specific long-term strategies, that can give guidance and strong signals to stakeholders. These should consider also, as a specific goal, the planned replacement of space and water heaters.
- **Minimum Energy Performance Standards:** MEPS must be strengthened to transition our energy system as quick as possible, and they must focus on the overall life-cycle energy efficiency of the building and the systems.
- **Skilled Workers & Transparency:** It is essential to increase the number of installers qualified to integrate renewable heating and cooling solutions. Installers will also have to play a key role in providing clear and transparent information to consumers about renewable alternatives will accelerate the deployment of renewable heating and cooling.

As representatives of the solar heat sector, we encourage a bold and ambitious EPBD, one that diversifies our energy mix and protects our planet.

### **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](https://www.solarheateurope.eu) represents directly or indirectly over 90% of the industry, across the value chain.

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