

Press Release

Heat sector can be entirely decarbonised by 2050

Brussels, 8th March 2011. Commenting on the two European Commission documents published today “A roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050” (DG CLIM) and the “Energy Efficiency Plan” (DG ENER), the European Renewable Heating and Cooling associations (AEBIOM, EGEC, EUBIA and ESTIF) of the biomass, geothermal and solar thermal sectors express regret that these documents, which will shape European energy policy, systematically underestimate the contribution of renewable heat technologies.

“The 100% renewable Re-thinking 2050 scenario (EREC 2010) clearly shows that heating and cooling in buildings, in district heating and in process heat can be entirely decarbonised via a combined approach of energy efficiency and renewable heat” declares Xavier Noyon, the Secretary General of ESTIF.

“The heat sector represents almost half of the EU’s final energy consumption, i.e. in 2010, 47% of all energy consumed in Europe was in a form of heat. Nevertheless, the decarbonisation of the heat sector receives little attention amongst policy makers. These documents will have a strong influence on upcoming energy policy and both contain only a few minor references to heat in general and renewable heat in particular; not to mention the omission of a single reference to the geothermal sector” points out Philippe Dumas, the Manager of EGEC.

“Heat production from biomass reaches much higher energy conversion efficiency than other bioenergy routes. We would like decision makers to become aware that renewable heat can contribute to both energy efficiency and decarbonisation. If we replace fossil fuels based heat with RES now, it would not only be more efficient and cheaper but will also create local jobs all along the value chain” concludes Mr. Jean-Marc Jossart AEBIOM Secretary General.

While the Energy Efficiency Plan recognises that most of the energy consumed in the EU (i.e. 83% in buildings) is used for heating, cooling and hot water purposes, and the Low Carbon Roadmap states that *“the built environment provides low-cost and short-term opportunities to reduce emissions, first and foremost through improvement of the energy performance of buildings”*, the two documents fail to acknowledge that renewable heat technologies provide market ready, efficient and completely carbon free energy solutions which deserve much more political attention. More worryingly, the Low Carbon roadmap contains a statement on the potential of electricity to cover heat demand. This focus on a single technology is at the expense of entirely renewable heat technologies, and ignores the poor energy efficiency and higher cost of direct electricity use for heating purposes.

The renewable heating and cooling industry associations AEBIOM, EGEC, ESTIF and EUBIA are members of EREC - the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) and have contributed to the Re-Thinking 2050 published by EREC in 2010. The renewable heat associations jointly manage the Renewable Heating and Cooling technology Platform (RHC-Platform).

For more information, please contact:

Philippe DUMAS, EGEC - European Geothermal Energy Council, p.dumas@egec.org

Pedro Dias, Xavier Noyon, ESTIF – European Solar Thermal Industry Federation, xavier.noyon@estif.org,

Edita Vagonyte, AEBIOM - European Biomass Association, vagonyte@aebiom.org;

Eibhilin Manning, EUBIA - European Biomass Industry Association, eibhilin.manning@eubia.org