

Open letter to EU's Heads of State and Government

Crisis in Ukraine and energy dependency: investing in renewables for heating and cooling will bring security of supply and more competitiveness

EU could save EUR 11.5 billion per year, announces the industry

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AEBIOM, EGEC and ESTIF representing the biomass, geothermal and solar thermal sectors respectively, address an open letter to the Heads of State and Government, ahead of their spring meeting in Brussels.

The growing uncertainties over the crisis in Ukraine show once again all the limits of Europe's energy dependency. According to [Eurostat](#), about one third of EU's total crude oil (34.5%) and natural gas (31.5%) imports in 2010 originated from Russia. The EU energy dependency contributed not only to weaken our geopolitical influence on the international arena but fuelled the dramatic GDP-leakage with the EU having spent €545 billion or 4.2% of its GDP on importing fossil fuels in 2012 alone.

Part of that fuel (in the form of natural gas and heating oil) is used for heating our houses, our offices or for industrial purposes. These energy services alone account for half the EU's energy needs. In these sectors, however, readily available renewable energy solutions, combined with energy efficiency measures, are a practical and versatile option to alleviate our fossil fuels dependency. This option is also much more environmentally constructive and beneficial than developing shale gas in Europe.

Achieving the additional renewable energy consumption in heating and cooling foreseen by Member States between 2011 and 2020¹ could allow the EU to reduce its import of natural gas from third countries by the equivalent of 35 Mtoe per year from 2020. With current import prices (\$11.5/MMBtu or EUR 8.4/MMBtu)², this would save the EU as a whole some EUR 11.5 billion per year.

Over recent years, the lack of awareness and political support to renewables for heating and cooling has meant only modest market development in the sector. However, in view of the upcoming discussion of the European Council on EU climate and energy policies beyond 2020, there is a great opportunity to invert this trend.

Decarbonising our energy sector should not be regarded as a burden, but rather as an opportunity for Europe's industrial renaissance. Clear pledges on renewables for heating and cooling and energy efficiency will increase EU's energy independence, while improving our balance of trade, creating a substantial amount of new local jobs and ensure stable and affordable energy prices to our consumers and industries.

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¹ National Renewable Energy Actions Plans : http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/action_plan_en.htm

² In January 2014. Source: www.ycharts.com