EU recognition of heating and cooling sector welcomed by Euroheat chief

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Euroheat and Power’s president has welcomed the increased recognition by Brussels of the bloc’s heating and cooling sector.

This week saw the publishing of the EU’s Energy Union strategy, and European Commission chiefs have been highly vocal about the importance of the sector to the bloc’s overall future energy policy.

“The heating and cooling sector is finally getting the attention it deserves at the centre of the EU energy policy debate”, said Frédéric Hug, Euroheat & Power President (pictured) at the opening of a session on “Sustainable Local Thermal Energy Systems”, an event organised within the framework of the European Commission’s High level conference on “Heating and Cooling in the European Energy Transition.”

Hug told the gathering, “It is now time to make the right choices for sustainable heating and cooling supply. District Heating and Cooling networks are designed to pull together local resources and provide a vital route to market for a wide range of efficient low carbon technologies such as large scale heat pumps, which could be otherwise difficult to integrate into the dense urban environment.”

Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete had signalled out the role of heating and cooling in his speech unveiling the strategy on Wednesday while Marie Donnelly, Director of Renewables at the DG Energy of the European Commission told a gathering at the Westminster Energy Environment and Transport Forum in London on the eve of the announcement, that the priority for the bloc needs to be heating and cooling rather than power.
“Heating and cooling of our buildings consumes 46 per cent of our final energy, with power at just 21 per cent. So often at meetings we debate about electricity when really the key issue we need to address is heating and cooling – at last this is an issue being taken up by the commission.”

Donnelly, who told the forum that there should be an end of year strategy in place for heating and cooling in Europe, reinforced that message through reference to recent headline events in the East.

“The crisis that has been brought about by Russia- is a heat crisis, not an electricity crisis – it is not the lights that will go out, it is the heating. The Energy Union (policy announced Wednesday) is about refocusing what we really need to address in terms of our energy policy.”

Thomas Nowak, Secretary General of the European Heat Pump Association (EHPA) which co-organised the event, added in his concluding speech “I would have been delighted to see that heating and cooling deserved the same attention in the Commission’s package on the Energy Union as it is given during this week’s conference days. Let’s not forget that the Energy Union debate gained momentum with the gas supply crisis, which is a heating crisis. In this context our event gave proper attention to efficient, sustainable and available solutions to heating and cooling.”

He also insisted on the untapped potential of heat pumps and District Heating to meet EU’s main energy policy objectives: “Heat pump technologies can be used in a variety of mature applications in distributed and centralised systems. The combination of large heat pumps and district heating grids is an appropriate choice to increase the share of renewable heating in densely populated areas. Both contribute to meeting all the objectives of the Energy Union.”