

EHPA - Too low-hanging fruit is not sweet enough

EU Stakeholder - Press Releases



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Too low-hanging fruit is not sweet enough (and eventually neither clean nor cheap)!

A "heating and cooling package" under next Commission to better address costs and benefits?

Check the presentations below:

[Transformation of the heating sector by Rainer Hinrichs, BEE](#)

[The cost of bad action, why going net-zero is the right thing to do by Roland Joebstl, EEB](#)

The context

At a lunch debate organised by the European Heat Pump Association (EHPA) on "[The costs of a low level of ambition in greening the heating and cooling sector](#)" and hosted by EUFORES President MEP Jeppe Kofod on 30 January, representatives from industry, civil society, the European Commission (EC) and MEPs from several countries and political groups (Jeppe Kofod, Bendt Bendtsen, Theresa Griffin, Jo Leinen, Gesine Meissner and Paul Rübige) brainstormed on the next policy actions **needed for the EU to effectively and fully decarbonise "heating and cooling", the most important sector for the EU in terms of energy consumption, by 2050**, after the recent adoption by EU co-legislators of new energy laws and the publication of the EC draft 2050 Long term Strategy in December last year. [The costs of a low level of ambition in greening the heating and cooling sector](#)

Setting the scene

Roland Joebstl, from the European Environment Bureau (EEB), explained the economic consequences of insufficient action on climate change globally and in Europe in particular. "*The impacts of climate change are real*", he said, "*driving forest fires in California and Sweden and crop losses in Germany and Denmark already today. Despite these warnings, our European climate targets are insufficient, and we are currently on a path leading to climate breakdown equivalent of each and every European citizen having to work one whole week per year to make up for the damages because of insufficient action and lack of investment in clean and efficient, climate-proof solutions.*"

Rainer Hinrichs-Rahlwes, from the German Renewable Energy Federation (BEE), also representing event supporter EREF, the European Renewable Energies Federation) illustrated the importance of getting it ambitious enough on heating and cooling "in one shot", due to the inherent lock-in effect in this sector (i.e. once replaced, a system will not be changed again for at least 15-20 years!). He presented a [German study](#) showing the generally low or insignificant fuel and CO2-savings arising from the replacement of old boilers by new condensing boilers (notably compared vs RES and CHP using alternatives). Thus, he **warned against the potential negative impact of the "too low-hanging fruit" in the heating and cooling sector** and invited policy-makers to promote "ladders" allowing to pick the "higher-hanging sweeter, cleaner and eventually even cheaper fruits".

Thomas Nowak from the European Heat Pump Association (EHPA), who moderated the event, **reaffirmed the specificity of the heating and cooling sector of having all the technological solutions for full decarbonisation available as of today, but in a distorted market**. He also mentioned that various parts of the industry had joined forces to accelerate the transition, in the framework of the DecarbHeat initiative (www.decarbheat.eu).

Innovative ideas

Since the modernisation of heating and cooling addresses societal objectives reaching far beyond clean energy and climate change, such as energy security, industrial policy, more non-delocalisable jobs, citizens' health, etc. and since many more actions would be required now at Member State level to implement the EU legislation arising from the "Clean energy package", **Jepe Kofod suggested that instead of submitting a traditional "gas package", next EC should propose a comprehensive "heating and cooling package", specifically user-centered and addressing the issue in a comprehensive manner, including aspects not looked at so far.**

His colleagues and the other participants in the event agreed on the need to reinforce action at EU and national level and suggested additional dimensions that could fuel into – according to the organisers of the event – this new "heating and cooling package", such as measures to improve public and private funding schemes and taxation systems, to raise the awareness and confidence of EU citizens on the topic (notably through innovative user platforms), to support the upskill ability of people working in SME's, to promote the exchange of best practices, etc.

To be continued

Participants agreed on the need to continue the discussion on this topic, notably by **making the modernisation of the heating and cooling sector a policy priority topic for the EU** for instance in dossiers such as the 2050 LTS.

Member of the industry agreed to follow-up and further elaborate on this innovative idea of a comprehensive and genuine EU "heating and cooling package".

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