Industry associations welcome renewable heating strategy

Material supplied by Anamaria Olaru, Communications & Events Manager of the European Biomass Association E-mail: olaru@aebiom.org

The EU renewable heating and cooling sector welcomes the relevance given to renewable heating in the Communication on Energy Security strategy, just published by the European Commission.

The European Commission has now published its Communication on Energy Security, which proposes a set of immediate actions to address the current crisis, but mostly concentrates on other measures to be implemented in the longer term. The proposed measures include moderating energy demand, as well as increasing energy production and developing energy technologies in the EU.

The European Biomass Association (AEBIOM), European Geothermal Energy Council (EGEC) and European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF), the industry associations representing the biomass, geothermal and solar thermal sectors, respectively, welcome the relevance given to renewable heating in the Commission's strategy.

"The current security of supply emergency is mainly a heating crisis," said Jean-Marc Jossart, Secretary-General of AEBIOM.

"The renewed concerns for our security of supply lie in the EU's heavy dependency on energy imports, mostly used for heating purposes in the residential, services and industrial sector, which can be replaced with renewable sources," he added.

"It is very positive that the strategy highlights the need to increase energy production in the European Union, namely by using endogenous resources such as renewable energy," mentioned Pedro Dias, Secretary-General of ESTIF. He continued: "In particular, we welcome the European Commission's proposal that Member States accelerate fuel switch in the heating sector to renewable heating technologies, as one of the key actions to be implemented".

"We must remember that our societal challenges go beyond energy security, they include providing affordable heat and securing a sustainable future," said Philippe Dumas, Secretary-General of EGEC. He added: "According to projections from the industry, the EU could reach a 25% share of renewables in the heating and cooling sector by 2020. At the current average import prices for natural gas, this would save the EU as much as 21 billion Euros annually!

AEBIOM, EGEC and ESTIF have recently released a position paper entitled 'Renewables for heating and cooling and EU security of supply. Save over 20 billion Euros annually in reduced fossil fuel imports'.