

Achieving REPowerEU targets on rooftop solar and heat pumps through electrical installations

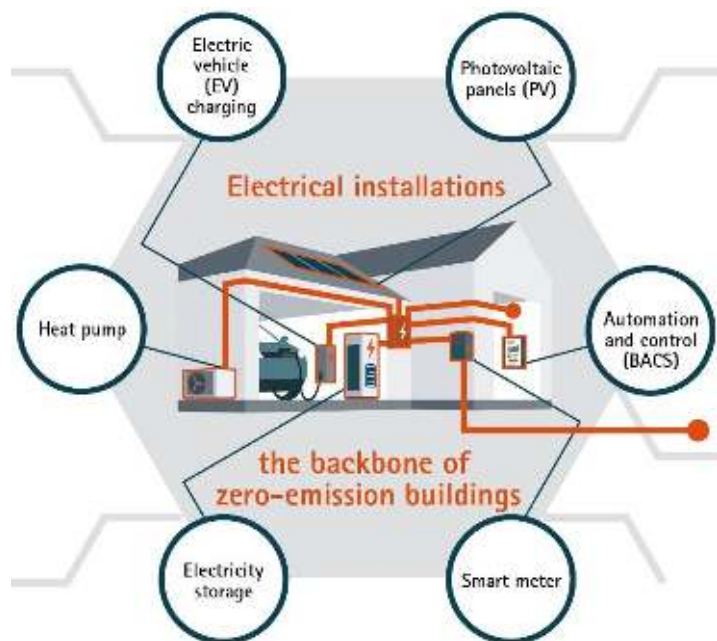
Joint position paper on the proposed recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)

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Scaling up solar installations and heat pumps in buildings are crucial measures to reduce EU's reliance on imported fossil fuels from Russia and to accelerate the decarbonisation and electrification of its building stock. The REPowerEU package aims to double EU solar photovoltaic capacity by 2025 and proposes to double the rate of annual heat pump deployment by 2026.

On-site Solar PV combined with heat pumps furthermore offers a turn-key fossil-free solution and can support households, commercial building owners and industry in the upcoming winters. Swift deployment of solar and heat pump solutions is an essential step on the way to independence from the Russian gas supply.

In total, according to the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, solar roofs can generate 25 % of Europe's electricity consumption.¹



In this unprecedented energy crisis, European households and industries suffer from high electricity bills leading to inflation and wider macro-economic challenges. **Solar PV in combination with heat pumps offers a cost-efficient alternative.** Their deployment will drastically reduce household and industrial electricity bills while strengthening Europe's energy competitiveness, independence and resilience.

We acknowledge the progress made both in the Council and in the European Parliament so far while formulating their position on the revision of Energy Performance in Buildings Directive

¹ Bódis, K., Kougias, I., Jäger-Waldau, A., Taylor, N., Szabó, S.: A high-resolution geospatial assessment of the rooftop solar photovoltaic potential in the European Union (2019) Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, 114, art. no. 109309

(EPBD). We welcome Member States' strengthening the wording on electrification, solar as well as the skills needed (new recitals 28a and 54a). **We also strongly support the proposals by Members of European Parliament's ITRE Committee which strengthens the REPowerEU proposal and calls for obligation of optimised solar energy generation and heat pump deployment potential and recognising the importance of necessary technical capacities for their deployment such as electrical installations.**

For the PV panel and heat pump to be properly integrated into an existing building, the electrical installation of the building must be up to date and adequately dimensioned. **Electrified buildings equipped with heat pumps, solar PV, storage and EV charging have a great potential to contribute to demand side flexibility and an increased utilisation factor of green electricity sources if they are smartly integrated into the energy system.** The EPBD revision offers a crucial opportunity to ensure readiness of buildings and their electrical installations for the uptake of these solutions.

Fast upscaling of rooftop solar and heat pumps will significantly increase the demand for new skills and additional professionals. This skills and workforce dimension must be an integral part of the deployment strategies for such technologies in order to avoid any bottlenecks at installation stage.

Making technical careers and education attractive to new applicants is the first steppingstone to provide the number of installers needed for a climate neutral Europe. Then, upskilling the essential labour force is necessary for the smart integration of solar and heat pumps in buildings and energy systems, and ensure the electrical safety of our buildings with adequately dimensioned and professionally installed electrical installations, wiring and connections. Finally, re-skilling opportunities can support workers seeking to transition from 'brown' or fossil sectors towards the clean energy sector. This serves as a pre-requisite to achieving REPowerEU targets and ensuring buildings play their role in addressing energy security as well as decarbonisation and electrification of EU energy supply, while providing a new level of consumer value and engagement. **Properly addressing the skills and workforce dimension of the energy transition will also yield socio-economic benefits with green jobs and value added at local level, spread across the EU's regions.**

Therefore, we call on European policymakers to close the loop and address the following asks in the EPBD revision:

- Support obligations and numerical targets for **optimised solar energy generation and heat pump deployment potential** along with the necessary technical capacities, as called for in MEP's Ciarán Cuffe EPBD report, via new article 9a and as called by MEP's Ciarán Cuffe and Sean Kelly via amendments to article 3. **Include electrical installations into the mandate, as proposed by Seán Kelly (EPP).**
- Consider **electrical installations as Technical Building Systems (TBS)** for their optimal design, dimensioning, management and monitoring ensuring adequate integration of renewables, heat pumps and EV charging, as called by MEP's amendments from the Greens/EFA, EPP, S&D and Renew Europe.
- **Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)** (Art 16 and Annex V) must **integrate information about the latest inspection of the electrical installations and its readiness to install new major equipment**, as proposed by S&D in ENVI. Inspections should also assess the readiness of TBS (including electrical installations) to work with renewable energy, as proposed by EPP. Every dwelling owner or tenant should have an easy access to information about whether their building and electrical system is ready to add a PV panel, heat pump, EV-charging point and other equipment.
- **Member States should assess the gap between the available and needed workforce to reach REPowerEU objectives and carry out the installations planned in National Building Renovation Plans (NBRPs)**, as adopted by the ITRE Committee in the framework of EED and RED revisions and put forward by Seán Kelly (EPP) in ITRE EPBD debates. This stock-taking exercise is the most sensible starting point to devise a roadmap to scale up training capacities and address any skills and worker shortages. Accordingly, sufficient training programs should be made available, and participation should be promoted and supported, especially among SMEs. Including KPIs in NBRPs to track efforts on skills and workforce, as put forward by EPP, should be included in the EPBD.
- As proposed by Pernille Weiss and Maria da Graça Carvalho (EPP), **the Commission should set up a dedicated Platform aiming to promote exchanges among Member States, social partners, academia and industry players to support up- and re-skilling efforts in the framework of the EU's climate and energy targets**, similarly to the Just Transition Platform. It should also be complemented by an EU-wide campaign aiming to attract more workers to renewable and energy efficiency careers.
- **Mandatory solar installations and heat pump deployment on new buildings should be extended to buildings undergoing a suitable renovation.** Solar installation and heat pump must be systematically considered when a building is undergoing a major renovation, a renovation of the building envelope, a change in heating system or the installation of EV-charging. The increasing need for cooling must be taken into consideration during renovation, too. This is a low-hanging fruit, no-regret solution, already adopted in several member states
- **The mandate should be extended to all non-residential buildings**, of all sizes, as well as relevant infrastructure such as carparks. All public, commercial, and industrial customers profit greatly from cheap solar electricity and an efficient heat pump system.

Contacts:



Quentin de Hults
Director Green & Healthy Buildings
quentin.dehults@copperalliance.org



Julie Beaufils
Secretary General
j.beaufils@europe-on.org



Jozefien Vanbecelaere
Head of EU Affairs
jozefien.vanbecelaere@ehpa.org



Dries Acke
Policy Director
d.acke@solarpowereurope.org