

EU Green Week - Power sector highlights air quality benefits of electric heating

06/06/2013

Despite progress in recent years, air pollution in the EU's most densely populated areas still exceeds air quality standards, especially for pollutants such as particulate matter, ground-level ozone, and nitrogen dioxide. Electricity can play a large role in reducing such emissions, by replacing the use of fossil fuels in residential heating.

EURELECTRIC brought this message to European policymakers today, raising the issue in a session on residential heating and air quality, which it had coordinated at this year's Green Week.

'The benefits of using electricity to heat houses are clear: unlike traditional heating with oil, coal, or gas, electricity produces no emissions at the point of use. Moreover, Europe's electricity is increasingly delivered by carbon-free sources - from heat pumps to solar panels. As such electricity becomes more widely available across Europe, there is a clear need to get the political framework right so that customers can make the most of this cleaner source of heating', said Owen Wilson, Chief Executive of the Electricity Association of Ireland and Chair of EURELECTRIC's Environment and Sustainable Development Committee.

Dr Wilson called for a level playing field between the available technologies to fully reap the benefits of power sector decarbonisation across the EU, presenting the Irish example to illustrate both benefits and challenges of growing electricity use for heating.

The 2013 edition of Green Week, the biggest annual conference on European environment policy, is taking place in Brussels from 4 to 7 June. This year's theme is air quality.

For more information, visit the Green Week's website at <http://greenweek2013.eu/>.

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