



SUNRISE - Press release

SUNRISE's first big event takes place during the EU Sustainability Energy Week

Brussels, June 21, 2019

Over 170 SUNRISE's stakeholders gathered on June 17-18 at the Academy Palace of Brussels, in connection with the EU Sustainable Energy Week, as one of the Energy Days. Renewable energy experts from Academia, Industry and Policy addressed the current state of the initiative and its priority research directions.

Discussions showed how solar conversion by artificial photosynthesis for fuel and chemicals could contribute to climate neutrality and negative emissions by developing an ambitious yet realistic roadmap, and aligning action in research, innovation and industry policy – while ensuring the involvement of all the stakeholders. This was SUNRISE's first big event since it became a Coordinated and Support Action (CSA) in March 2019.

SUNRISE's vision and governance

During the first day, speakers shared their latest advances and their fit into SUNRISE's vision towards a clean energy future. Researchers like Jens Nørskov or Marcella Bonchio pointed out the importance of real collaboration between Industry and Academia, as well as the need of financial support. **"It is a Sputnik moment for Europe, we need to approach politicians and convince them that Europe can lead the way of the renewable sector," stressed Jens Nørskov, Professor at the Technical University of Denmark.**

Policy makers of the European Commission, Member States, Industry and funding bodies representatives also joined the meeting by taking part in a panel debate. The discussion tackled the governance and funding steps of large-scale research initiatives under the coming framework programme Horizon Europe. **"Besides doing research, it is important to make the people dream of your goal. Branding is key in order to get visibility towards public authorities and decision makers and thus, increase the chances of getting financial support," explained Jean-François Buggenhout, head of the Flagship unit at DG Connect.**

On the way to a handy roadmap

Invited keynote speakers like former IPCC vice-chair Jean-Pascal van Ypersele from UCLouvain, and Harvard University Professor Daniel Nocera were present on the second day. While the Belgian researcher stressed the need for a transition to a net zero emissions' economy through CO₂ storage, the American scientist gave a lecture on carbon-neutral fuels and renewable-based fertilizers. **"The world depends on an existing energy infrastructure that has already been paid off. In industrialized countries, renewable energies can piggy-back on it, while in**



developing countries stand-alone and distributed devices will be more effective,” highlighted Daniel Nocera.

The talks were followed by an innovation workshop and three parallel roadmapping sessions, where participants were challenged to nurture collectively a comprehensive science and technology roadmap towards a climate neutral economy. The direct exchange with the stakeholders was at the centre of the roadmapping activity. Ongoing discussions should allow the **research initiative to adopt and release a dynamic first roadmap’s draft by the end of August 2019.** With this document, SUNRISE’s stakeholders will ensure the EU can continue to show leadership in the renewable energy sector.

Energy storage and decarbonisation

On June 20, SUNRISE participated in the EU Sustainable Energy Week both with a stand and a session. The initiative’s coordinator Huub de Groot took part in the panel session ‘Energy storage to boost EU decarbonisation and competitiveness,’ together with representatives of the European research initiatives Battery2030+ and Energy-X.

“We are not yet in the money with solar to fuel, but the market potential is there, on the scale of hundreds of billions yearly. **We have to team up with fundamental, applied and industrial research to be there in time learning how to manufacture solar fuels and chemicals for a zero and negative emissions’ circular economy,**” concluded Huub de Groot.

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