INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Interview with Dominique Ristori, Executive Director for Energy at the European Commission

What connection do you see between the long-term work that you are doing at the European Commission and the Solar Decathlon Europe 2014?

Dominique Ristori: In the spirit of the Solar Decathlon Europe 2014, the European Commission considers renewable energy and housing of the future as key issues for the future of Europe. It is important to identify today the challenges that the UE will face, with solutions that will help create a competitive economy alongside inherent safety and low carbon emissions. It is in this spirit that the European Commission is engaged in a long-term strategy, launching a new framework for the EU climate and energy for 2030. This includes a reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40% compared to 1990 levels, a binding target for the European Union to share renewable energies, which are carried at least at 27%, and new ambitions for policies regarding energy efficiency. Once this is achieved, the EU will reap many benefits: it will move further towards a low-carbon, competitive and secure energy system that ensures affordable energy for consumers. In addition, the security of energy supplies in the EU will be strengthened, thus lowering Europe’s dependence on energy imports; this will bring new opportunities for growth and employment, while having an impact on prices in the longer term. 40% of our energy consumption can be placed on buildings: an economic saving in this segment is essential. Thus, in keeping with the mandate of the Solar Decathlon Europe 2014, a focus must be placed on the potential use of sustainable energy in the building sector, creating high quality yet affordable housing, thereby inspiring and stimulating the next generation of architects and engineers.

Can Solar Decathlon Europe be an opportunity to improve the perception of issues related to the sustainable city?

Solar Decathlon Europe 2014 is undoubtedly an important highlight for all to grasp the challenges of sustainable cities: the intelligent integration of sectors such as energy, transport and ICT to optimize energy consumption through innovation and synergies between strategic networks. The arena of discussion is considered crucial by the European Union. In 2012, the EU launched a partnership for innovation that targets cities and smart communities. Improving energy consumption
in cities means improving the quality of life of 70% of EU citizens. And since 70% of the energy is also consumed in urban areas, developing energy efficiency will support Europe toward a competitive low carbon economy, toward the stability of investments and on to the security of energy supply. In addition, it will help ensure that energy remains affordable for households and businesses.

What is your roadmap for energy efficiency in the building sector?

The EU is strongly committed to the development of energy efficient buildings. With the Directive on the energy performance of buildings (2010/31/EU), the Union wants to ensure that at the end of 2020 all new buildings have a «near-zero» energy consumption. This applies to public buildings by the end of 2018 and means that buildings must demonstrate very high energy performance, with as close to zero or lowest energy calculations that would be covered by renewable energy sources, preferably produced on-site. This can only be achieved with the active participation of Member States, supportive of the process and ensuring the achievement of such results. In this context, they have to plan for this ambition, and for this transition, by first defining the threshold of consumption in kWh/m². It is clear that such efforts should be consistent with long-term strategies in renovation of existing buildings established by the Directive on Energy Efficiency (2012/27/UE).

Do you think that the Solar Decathlon Europe 2014 can illustrate the energy policy that you advocate?

The Solar Decathlon Europe 2014 is a platform for companies concerned with sustainable energy housing; and a vision for the future of Europe. This event will allow the European Commission to put into perspective the framework for 2030: to combine its objectives in the fight against climate change and the need to meet these objectives at a reasonable cost. The objectives of the EU energy policy require improved energy efficiency and a more developed sustainable energy plan. A competitive, secure and sustainable energy system is impossible without such a plan.

TEAM S’ ANGLE

Caliber of Deliverables is increasing: the fine promises for the Competition

Every three months, experts from Solar Decathlon 2014 receive a report - called a Deliverable - which describes a detailed update of each Team's project.

The role of experts is to monitor, assess, provide comment and guide the work of Teams presented in the Deliverables. On March 1, Teams submitted their fourth Deliverable - 4 out of 7 total Deliverables.

According to the Experts, the level of work is very high. The competition level is sure to be intense between Decathletes and of high quality for visitors.
Michel Desjoyeaux, highly skilled seafarer, was officially designated as the Guardian Sponsor of the Solar Decathlon Europe: «Privileged observer of the deterioration the planet, I realize the importance of preserving it. I, at my humble level, am committed every day through my choice of living in a solar home but also through my passion as a sailor, where innovation is not only the assurance of victory but rather an environmental participation. I am confident that the Solar Decathlon challenges can only be springboards to boost applied research in this domain. That is why it is a great honor to be the sponsor of this great event», says Michel Desjoyeaux.

On the occasion of the recent press conference, Cécile Duflot, Minister for Housing and Equal Territories, active supporter of the Solar Decathlon 2014, reiterated France’s keen interest in this event. Through the press conference, she also encouraged the recruitment of volunteers: «Since 2002, nearly 2,500 young volunteers have joined this adventure to make it a success. For the 2014 edition, more than 20 different missions are proposed to volunteers who want to take part before, during and after the Competition. New specialized channels emerge every year in the curriculum of higher education: these demonstrate the young people’s interest environmental concerns. We appeal to all those who wish to contribute concretely while enjoying the experience of a great event, focused on renewable energy and green innovation: join the Solar Decathlon 2014 volunteers’ team!», claims Cécile Duflot.

**EVENT OF THE MONTH**

**“Spirit Garden” or the return of spring solaire à Versailles**

Versailles celebrates the return of spring and buds with its sixth edition of «Spirit Garden» on 29 and 30 March, which will highlight the solar theme this year.

More than 8,000 visitors and sixty exhibitors are expected to attend this event rich in activity, celebrating garden and landscape art. Spirit Garden is now part of the calendar of major events in Versailles.

First, because this festival fits naturally in the history of the royal city, but also because it allows many local to express their creativity. This event has become a must for all lovers of gardening; it highlights the «green» potential of the royal city, the true cradle of French gardening.

It pays tribute to ancestral know-how related to the recovery of green spaces and reconnects with the vocation of Versailles as a garden city.

The 2014 edition will feature the theme of the sun, simultaneous to the preparation of the Solar Decathlon 2014: the youngest will be invited to participate in certain activities and workshops will animate the exhibit during the day with the aim of raising public awareness and educating participants on the different facets of the sun.

More info on www.espirit-jardin.fr

**Our partners boost the success of Solar Decathlon Europe**

SOLAR DECA THLON EUROP 2014
CSTB SOLAR SAS
10 Cours Louis Lumière
94300 Vincennes
Tel : +33 (0)1 40 50 29 34
Fax : +33 (0)1 40 50 29 10
contact@solardecathlon2014.fr

Michel Desjoyeaux, double Vendée Globe winner and official guardian sponsor of the 2014 Solar Decathlon.