

## Solar incentives belgium

The Flemish government will halve the solar panels premium from a maximum of EUR1,500 (\$1,594) in 2022 to EUR750 from Jan. 1, 2023. It will also end the home battery premium earlier than initially announced, from April 2023. The premium for heat pump boilers, on the other hand, will be retroactively doubled.

The government of Belgium's Flanders region will halve the solar PV premium for residential installations from Jan. 1, 2023. The scheme was introduced in January 2021, after the region's net metering scheme ended, and it currently offers a premium of up to EUR1,500. For solar panels commissioned in 2023, the premium will be reduced to a maximum of EUR750. The contribution will be EUR150/kWh for the first 4 kWp and EUR75/kWh from 4 kWp to 6 kWp systems.

"We have no problems with [the measure]. It was announced clearly that it was going to happen, and we fully understand that the premium is no longer needed simply due to the high electricity prices," Dirk Van Evercooren, managing director of Flemish renewable energy association Organisatie voor Duurzame Energie (ODE) Vlaanderen, told pv magazine.

The measure will also impact those who placed their panel orders in 2022 but only have them installed and inspected in 2023. Flemish Energy Minister Zuhair Demir justified sticking with Dec. 31, 2022, rather than the order date as the cut-off point over fraud concerns, which allegedly took place when the region issued green energy certificates. The premium is scheduled to end altogether in Jan. 1, 2025.

"We do not approve of this [decision]. If there is a path that is announced and suddenly [the premium is reduced and ended] quicker than announced, this causes problems for the sector because sales have already been signed," said Van Evercooren. From January to April 2023, the premium will be reduced to EUR150 and EUR125 for batteries up to 4 kWh and between 4 kWh and 6 kWh, respectively.

Given the premium's low value, the government's unexpected decision is nevertheless unlikely to considerably affect Flanders' home storage market, according to Van Evercooren. Home batteries' peak shaving services are also expected to become more important in the region in 2023.

"We also see that the [home storage] business proposition for installers has changed. On Jan. 1, 2023, there will be a new capacity-based grid tariff introduced in Flanders. Now the battery systems are not being sold as a complement to the PV installation, but rather [as a way] to lower your grid fee. Batteries will help reduce the peak demand from the grid, which is exactly what this capacity-based tariff is looking at," Van Evercooren explained.

The premium for heat pump boilers, on the other hand, will be retroactively increased from EUR450 to EUR900 for the period between July 1, 2022, and Dec. 31, 2025. It will remain capped at 40% of eligible

investment costs for the purchase and installation of the devices, excluding VAT.

"I think heat pumps are one of the future-proofed technologies, and they are now getting the attention they deserve," Van Evercooren concluded.

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