
Brussels, 29 September 2017

The strategic and crucial role of PV in the energy transformation globally and in Europe will require a higher level of ambition for the annual European PV market

The 33rd EU-PVSEC PV technology conference and exhibition hosted this week the first edition of the EU Solar Industry Forum. The success of the Forum highlights the continuous interest for PV industry development and the importance of European manufacturing.

Participants emphasized the faster-than-expected development of the global PV market, poised to reach 100 GW per year in the near future, and the evidence that PV is becoming the cornerstone of the necessary energy revolution. Europe remains the technological leader in the PV sector and is home of a manufacturing industry sustainably producing along the complete solar value chain. European research centers are amongst the best globally, and own the vast majority of patents applied for global solar manufacturing. Participants refused to accept a view in which Europe disappears from the manufacturing map and highlighted the numerous competitive advantages of Europe. In other words, services are not an alternative to a real manufacturing industry that creates value. The entire industrial value chain must stay in Europe, otherwise our key R&D and equipment actors will rapidly disappear, or move to places where the markets are developing.

As a summary:

- The EU PV manufacturing industry must be considered as an industry of strategic interest for Europe and treated as such e.g. under the Juncker investment plan and the IPCEI.
- Our “Open Letter” has been signed by more than 110 research centers, equipment suppliers, materials providers, and module manufacturers. Existing examples of competitive European players are showing that manufacturing is competitive in Europe under a condition of automatization, the presence of an integrated value chain, and access to competitive capital. Europe can and must maintain, and develop the treasure of competitive solar manufacturing along the whole value chain.



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- Innovation and new technologies offer opportunities, from wafers to modules, and other components of PV systems, but the PV cell technology remains the core of the value chain. In that respect, R&D centers require adequate funding and wafer and cell manufacturing should be supported.
- Economies of scale are essential; therefore, the GW scale is required to offer the necessary economies of scale to be competitive.
- Europe needs to play the game of its competitors and implement programs such as the "Top Runner" Chinese program to support its industry, without penalizing the market or closing borders to quality products from global competitors. Such a program could promote advanced technologies, efficiency and sustainability.

In order to provide an internal market for European manufacturers and respect European commitment taken during the COP21 in Paris,

- Obstacles to PV development must be removed, such as unjustifiable grid taxes, prosumers taxes, and restrictions to installations. Targets for EU installations must be increased significantly.
- Call for tenders with cost-only constraints that favor the cheapest competitors and ignore, among others, environmental sustainability and total quality aspects, should be abandoned and replaced by technology-oriented calls.

A single voice for the EU PV Manufacturing and R&D industry.

In order to go forward and present alternative options, the European Technology & Innovation Platform for Photovoltaics, EUREC, EERA and SOLARUNITED, will continue to promote the development of the PV industry and cooperate with institutions to support the PV industry in Europe.

The Solar Industry Forum will return during the 35th EU-PVSEC in 2018.





SOLARUNITED is the Global PV Industry & Technology Association. Formerly known as the International PV Equipment Association (IPVEA), it promotes the interest of the upstream part of the PV value chain globally.

EUREC, the Association of European Renewable Energy Research Centres, representing, since 1991, Europe's research community in renewable energy to the EU institutions

Note to editors:

The European Technology and Innovation Platform Photovoltaics (ETIP PV) is a continuation of the European PV Technology Platform (EU PVTP) and the Solar European Industry Initiative (SEII) in a single platform under the new SET Plan governance. The ETIP PV's mission is in line with the Energy Union and the SET Plan priorities with focus on "Renewable technologies at the heart of the new energy system" and Europe to become "number 1 in renewables". ETIP PV gathers all the relevant stakeholders of the PV sector, with arrangements for cooperative discussions with member states (MS), associated countries (AC), and the Commission services. Its main role is to provide consensus-based strategic advice on all issues relevant to progressing research and innovation (R&I) efforts.

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