



European Solar Days: For a bright future!

15 days to raise awareness on the contribution of solar energy to Europe's energy independence and security

Brussels, 4th April 2011 - On the 1st of May 2011 the European Solar Days (ESD) will envelop the entire continent, aiming to promote the advantages of properly harnessing the energy of the sun. During two weeks, over 5,000 events will take place in 17 countries all around Europe. The campaign will conclude with a panel debate in Brussels on the 26th of May tackling the critical question of solar's contribution to Europe's energy independence and security of supply.

The European Union (EU) has pledged to increase the share of renewable energies in the overall energy mix to 20% by 2020. Solar energy can bring an important contribution to reaching this target. Provided that boundary conditions are met, solar photovoltaic electricity could account for up to 12% of the EU electricity demand by 2020. At the same time, solar thermal could meet up to 3.6% of the low temperature demand in the EU. The potential of solar energy remains essential in reaching Europe's climate ambitions. Since solar energy can be produced where it is needed, it ensures energy independence at local, regional and individual levels.

In light of the recent debates on Europe's energy mix, switching to solar energy is not only feasible; it's also strongly desirable for the European society as a whole. The European Solar Days aim to demonstrate that there are few substitutable forms of energy which can compete with the benefits of solar: a free, clean and, above all, infinite energy source. The annual solar irradiation to Earth surpasses many times the combined global resources of gas, oil, coal and uranium.

"Both solar photovoltaics and solar thermal energy have a key role to play here as the technologies are rapidly progressing, bringing along advanced, reliable and low-maintenance systems" said Eleni Despotou, Secretary General of the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA). "Seizing solar energy's potential will also create thousands of new jobs. In addition, solar thermal and photovoltaic energy do not produce polluting gases or detrimental emissions, seconded Xavier Noyon, Secretary General of the European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF). The sun can provide it all in the context of the current energy challenge: sustainability, security of supply and independence", they concluded.

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Note to editors:

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The European Solar Days were originally launched in 2002 in Austria with the “Day of the Sun”. Positive feedback encouraged organisers to develop the event further into an annual pan-European campaign running over a couple of weeks.

The European Solar Days are intended to promote the use of solar energy in Europe through a wide range of events: fairs, hands-on exhibitions, presentations, races of solar-powered devices, conferences, debates etc. Over the past 9 years, the initiative has drawn an increasing number of supporters: in 2010 more than 6,500 events were held across several EU countries. Event organisers included various organisations working in the solar equipment manufacturing industry as well as local authorities or educational institutions. In 2011 around 5,000 events are planned at local, regional and national levels.

The 4th edition of this Europe-wide campaign is organised by the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA) together with the European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF) and a network of some 25 affiliated organisations, including NGOs, businesses and local governments. The European Solar Days’ project is supported by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme of the European Commission.

For more information on the European Solar Days, access the official campaign website:

<http://www.solardays.eu/>

About the organisers (ESTIF and EPIA):

The European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF) is the voice of the solar thermal industry, actively promoting the use of solar thermal technology for renewable heating and cooling in Europe. With around 100 members from 19 European countries, ESTIF represents the entire supply chain: manufacturers, service providers and national associations, which together cover 95% of today's solar thermal market.

With over 240 Members drawn from across the entire solar photovoltaic (PV) sector, the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA) is the world's largest photovoltaic industry association. EPIA Members are present throughout the whole value-chain: from silicon, cells and module production to systems development and PV electricity generation as well as marketing and sales. EPIA's mission is to deliver a distinct and valuable service driven from the strength of a single photovoltaic voice.

For more information

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