
Brussels, 24 June 2014

“New dawn for large-scale PV manufacturing in Europe: reality or pipe dream?”

The Annual Conference of the European Photovoltaic Technology Platform took place on 24 June 2014 in Brussels during the [European Sustainable Energy Week](#). 110 people including five representatives from the European Commission gathered to discuss the future of large-scale PV manufacturing in Europe.

“The time of excess solar cell and module production capacity is coming to an end,” said Prof Eicke Weber, Director of Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems and speaker for the [European Gigawatt Fab initiative](#) known as ‘X-GW’. “Europe needs to be ready in 3-4 years to manufacture cutting edge, next generation technology cost effectively, which means with extensive use of automation and at GW scale.” The focus has to be on advanced technology, stressed Vidmantas Janulevičius, CEO of BOD Group (which has recently invested in a 70 MW PV cell line and a 50 MW glass-glass BIPV module line in Lithuania): “Producing standard technology will not be competitive.”

Bonifacio García Porras (representing DG Enterprise) shared the view of Vidmantas Janulevičius and Prof Eicke Weber that manufacturing creates high-value jobs and sustains research, development and innovation excellence.

The European Investment Bank has seen some of its PV financings go bad but Jochen Hierl (who works in the Bank’s Due Diligence department) saw light at the end of the tunnel: “The sector has been in crisis, but people now need to understand that new opportunities may be appearing.”

The Chairman of the EU PV Technology Platform, Prof Wim Sinke, concluded: “PV is here to stay. The market is now so huge compared to just a few years ago – tens of GW – that what we once called a niche is now a multi-GW segment. Technology development in PV will increasingly respond to the needs of these different segments.”



Ideas from the Conference will be developed further in one of several works planned by the Platform in the coming months, in particular a report analysing strategy and policy for the European PV manufacturing industry.

Note to editors:

The European Photovoltaic Technology Platform is an initiative which aims at mobilising all the actors sharing a European vision and ambition for photovoltaic solar energy. The PV Platform is an independent and objective body which aims to be the recognised point of reference for key decision and policy makers. The paradigm shift advocated in the new position paper will require a translation of the system level requirements to technology developments on materials, cell and module technology, integration of additional intelligence and other functionality at module and inverter level as well as integration of demand side management and, where needed, storage capabilities. This will not only call for hardware development, but also pose challenges on the software level.

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