

Photovoltaics: Engine of European Innovation and Development

AMSTERDAM, 19 June 2012 - More than 150 high level stakeholders of photovoltaic solar energy (PV) gathered in Amsterdam at the 7th General Assembly of the European Photovoltaic Technology Platform to discuss the great opportunities and challenges of this booming sector. The theme of the meeting was: "Photovoltaics: Engine of European Innovation and Development", emphasising that in spite of the economic crisis and fierce global competition, PV can make great contributions to the European energy system and economy. The Platform chose Amsterdam to host this high-level event in the Netherlands, one of the first countries in Europe where grid parity has been reached for households. Grid parity is expected to kick off large self-sustained markets for PV.

On the occasion of the General Assembly of the European Photovoltaic (PV) Technology Platform more than 150 members of the Platform and other selected stakeholders gathered to discuss the opportunities and challenges of the European PV industry sector, related to manufacturing as well as large-scale deployment. Innovative approaches, the transition from incentive-driven to self-sustained markets for PV, as well as long term scenarios were analyzed by industry and research representatives. During these challenging times PV continues to largely contribute to innovation and economic development in Europe and it will do so in the future if supported by adequate policies and measures.

Ed Buddenbaum, a high level representative from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation opened the General Assembly, stressing the importance of the PV Industry for the Netherlands in terms of creation of employment and the transition to a sustainable energy system. He showed how PV fits very well in the new Dutch innovation policy, based on selection of economic Top Sectors and the establishment of so-called Innovation Contracts (large public-private partnerships)

One of the most valuable achievements of the PV Platform, the recently updated Strategic Research Agenda (SRA2) has been presented by Jef Poortmans, PV Program Director at IMEC. Published at the end of 2011, the Platform's SRA presents the common view of PV experts (from industry and academia) on R&D priorities to achieve cost reduction, efficiency increase, enhanced system performance, integration, sustainability and other targets for 2020 and beyond. Research, as a key driver of innovation is to be further supported through funding under Horizon 2020 and research initiatives such as EMIRI (focused on innovative materials), which

were also presented in depth.

Large scale integration of PV into the grids is a priority for achieving the up to 12% of the European electricity demand by 2020 as foreseen in the Implementation Plan of the Solar Europe Industry Initiative. "We found an innovative solution to face the challenges of the large scale integration through this demonstration project." said Achim Woyte, R&D Manager at 3E SA, the coordinator of the MetaPV project while presenting the major achievements of this €9.4 M initiative.

Wim Sinke, chair of the Platform, concluded the meeting by stating that large-scale deployment of PV offers great opportunities for the European industry. This is especially the case in relation to intelligent and multifunctional systems for the residential sector, but also for several other innovative forms of use.

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 Platform's Mission is to develop a strategy and corresponding implementation plan for education, research and technology development, innovation and market deployment of photovoltaic solar energy.

For more information:

Craig Winneker, Media Relations.
E-mail: c.winneker@epia.org