European Solar Thermal Electricity Association

ESTELA

Press release

Solar thermal power plants contributing to Europe's renewable energy supply: kick off of ESTELA business activities in Brussels

Brussels, May, 13 2008

The newly-founded European Solar Thermal Electricity Association (ESTELA) has commenced business with the opening of its offices in the Renewable Energy House in Brussels. The association represents the combined interests of European companies active in the field of solar thermal power generation.

ESTELA is the successor association to the former European Solar Thermal Power Industry Association (ESTIA). ESTELA was founded in August 2007 and is member of the RES umbrella association EREC (European Renewable Energy Council). Most of the European companies active in this fast-growing market have already joined the association, particularly the German and Spanish companies.

The association's objective is to raise the profile of solar thermal electricity generation. It supports the European industry for the implementation of solar thermal power stations and is a point of contact at all political and administrative levels, particularly for the institutions of the European Union. ESTELA therefore provides support for the creation of a sustainable energy system in Europe in order to counter ongoing global warming. Solar thermal electricity generation is thus able to make a significant contribution to achieving the European Union's energy and climate protection goals. The proportion of renewable energy within the European Union is due to reach 20 percent of final energy consumption by 2020. "Solar Thermal Power from plants in Southern Europe can contribute with up to 30 GW by 2020. An even bigger contribution is possible if solar power is imported from plants developed in Northern Africa" says José Alfonso Nebrera, President of ESTELA.

According to the Renewable Energy Directive proposed by the EU Commission, Europe will be able to develop and import this solar electricity and to increase its security of supply by virtue of an improved energy mix. The association supports the extension of feed-in tariffs or other incentives for solar electricity imports and the creation of a framework for private investment, as well as the development of the necessary power generation and transmission infrastructure.

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ESTELA also sees itself as an initiator for research and innovation as well as an information platform. Research and innovation are intended to contribute to the reduction of solar power cost and improvement of the solar power station manageability. ESTELA aims to improve the flow of information within the industry by means of congresses and workshops, create synergies and better promote the opportunities presented by this technology.

About the technology

Solar thermal power plants use concentrated solar radiation which is converted into high temperature heat. This heat is used to generate electricity using a variety of technologies. Solar thermal power plants generate cost-effective electricity in plants up to 250 megawatts. With the integration of thermal storage and/or through co-firing with e.g. biomass, this power can then be supplied on demand, thus enabling solar power plants to generate electricity even after sunset or whenever required by the electrical system. The potential for solar thermal electricity generation that is technically achievable is several times greater than the worldwide electricity consumption. In the long term, solar thermal power plants therefore have the potential to replace fossil fuel power plants.

European companies are world leaders and their expanded business is reaching industrial and developing countries. One of the founding members, Acciona, has inaugurated in February 22, a 64MW plant in Nevada, US. In Spain, Abengoa is operating since June 2007 a 10MW plant and ACS will put into operation a 50MW plant probably this summer. In total, in Spain about 317MW in 7 plants are under construction and 280MW in the US. Other projects are undergoing in Algeria and Morocco.

About the European Solar Days

The first European Solar Days will be celebrated on May 16-17 with more than 4000 events in over 10 European countries. As an awareness raising campaign, the European Solar Days aim to promote the use of the sun as an energy source for all solar applications, Solar Thermal, Solar Thermal Power and Photovoltaic, throughout Europe.
A special all day event will be held on Friday 16 May in the Parc Du Cinquantenaire, with a by invitation only press conference at 12 pm. For more information please go to www.solardays.eu

For further information:

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