



Press release

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European PV Solar Electricity market growth perspectives by EPIA

Brussels, 23th of May 2005 – According to first market statistics the PV market worldwide jumped well above 1GW in 2004. Even if there are currently no confirmed figures of the European photovoltaic market in 2004, the growth was impressive (e.g. more than doubled last year in Germany, jumped in Spain and increased by nearly 50% in Italy), estimates the European Photovoltaic Industry Association, EPIA. “We are expecting within the years to come still a considerable market growth and all actors within the value chain must prepare the supply” said Dr. Hoffmann, president of the industry association.

The record rate of growth of the photovoltaic market sector between 1997 and 2004 was at around 40%. Demand in photovoltaic products is growing but the temporarily lack of silicon, one of the important raw materials to produce solar cells will prevent the sector from growing as quickly as in the previous years. Even if the production capacities of photovoltaic cells and modules has been doubled or in some places even tripled in the last year, the European Photovoltaic Industry expects a growth of the market of about only 20% in 2005 with a slight growth increase in 2006.

“The chemical industry has decided to start increasing production capacities at the end of 2004, in order to provide the raw material necessary to produce silicon cells; however these new capacities will not be available before 12 to 18 months” added Dr. Hoffmann. The industry association is expecting to get back to the current growth rates in 2007 when new silicon production capacities will come on stream.

EPIA estimates that half of the market growth in the next two years will still be supplied by silicon based PV modules and the other half will benefit to thin-film technology. This conjuncture is considered by the industry as an opportunity for greater technological development such as an increased thin-film module production or the reduction of the silicon wafers thickness from 300 µm towards 200 µm in order to lower the cost of cells by optimizing these of raw material.

2005 and 2006 will be a period of adjustment for the industry leading to consolidation of companies within the value chain. In 2007 we will start to come back to the impressive growth rates the photovoltaic sector has continuously been witnessing since 1997, forecasts the association.

EPIA - The European Photovoltaic Industry Association representing over 95% of the European photovoltaic industry, exists to deliver to its members a distinct and valuable service driven from the strength of a single European photovoltaic (PV) voice.

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