



## **Press release**

*For Immediate Release  
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### **Photovoltaic Industry: towards maturity**

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Milan, 6<sup>th</sup> September - The 4<sup>th</sup> European Photovoltaic Industry Forum, organized by EPIA, held in the frame of the 22<sup>nd</sup> EU PVSEC<sup>1</sup> in Milan gathered over 800 participants from over 90 countries. The main concern debated on this new edition was how the industry can reach maturity. Reaching competitiveness by both technological developments and mass production in a sustainable manner is the key challenge which the sector is facing today. Maturity and sustainability are the common goals pursued by both the research and the industry community in the photovoltaic (PV) sector.

#### **Main highlights of the 4<sup>th</sup> European PV Industry Forum:**

##### **- PV Market development session:**

Hans-Josef Fell, member of the German Parliament, recalled that support to photovoltaic will be guaranteed only if the industry can ensure a continued reduction of prices. It was also stressed that the current debate taking place in Brussels on the establishment of European Trading Schemes might impact strongly the current political support to renewables and in particular PV, as the main concern by European decision makers is to delivery abundant electricity in the most affordable price.

Dr. Winfried Hoffmann, EPIA President, highlighted how the current market and cost development in projections by the industry show that solar electricity will become competitive with conventional energy within the next 7 years in Southern European countries and by 2020 in countries like Germany, which are less granted with sunshine.

##### **- Industrial Investments:**

Support via the financial sector or public authorities facilitate the rapid development of new capacities. By increasing production facilities, the industry is working to realize economies of scale, one of the most effective way to reduce costs along the value-chain. Erik Thorsen, President of the Norwegian-based company REC showed how his company, by covering all the steps of the value-chain, has become the most integrated solar company in the sector. By following this strategy REC has set as priority to reach the objective of 1,5 €/watt of systems cost by 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference and Exhibition

- **Research and Development session**

Two main technologies exist today on the market, crystalline and thin-film. Crystalline silicon technology currently represents over 90% of the market while thin-film is expected to reach 20% by 2010. Panellists of the 4<sup>th</sup> European PV Industry Forum explained how for both technologies the holly-grail pursued is cost reduction and how short to long-term research can contribute to reach this goal.

The photovoltaic market is emerging but still its weight compared to other energy sources remains still marginal. However on the long term its potential is huge. In order to face long-term environmental challenges, EPIA and the German Solar Association (BSW) have initiated the creation of the PV Cycle association. Its aim is to establish a voluntary take-back system and organise the recovery of end of life modules.

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**About the European Photovoltaic Industry Association:**

With 125 Members drawn from across the entire solar electricity sector, the European Photovoltaic Industry Association represents over 95% of the European photovoltaic industry. EPIA members cover the whole value-chain of the photovoltaic industry from silicon producers, cells and module manufacturers to system providers. EPIA's mission is to deliver a distinct and valuable service driven from the strength of a single voice.

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