

Press Release

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European Solar Thermal Technology Platform Commences Work

50% of heating and cooling demand could be covered by Solar Heat by 2030

More than 100 experts from all over Europe debated the potential of solar thermal during the kick-off meeting of the European Solar Thermal Technology Platform (ESTTP) on December 6. The meeting served as a starting point for the work of the platform which is convinced that 50 percent of heating and cooling demand can be covered by Solar Heat by 2030. The Platform intends to elaborate detailed research strategies within the next two years to achieve the vision's aims. ESTTP is supported by the European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF) and the European Renewable Energy Centres Agency (EUREC Agency). It was founded on May 30 in the presence of EU-Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs.

By using technology platforms the European Commission intends to further the long term technological leadership of the European industry, in key future technologies. Gerhard Stryi-Hipp, the chairman of the ESTTP states: "The platform is a very useful instrument for solar thermal technology, especially since the potential for its further development has been vastly underestimated in the past. By combining scientific research and industrial developments in our work, we will be able to demonstrate which technologies and products have the capacity to cover a major proportion of Europe's heating and cooling demand".

The solar thermal platform is strongly supported by several EU member states. Joachim Nick-Leptin, Head of Division at the German Ministry for Environment, explained that Germany foresees a huge potential in solar heating and cooling. Due to its positive assessment of the technology, Germany has increased its research funding for solar thermal. The ESTTP plans to establish many National Mirror Groups across Europe. These National Mirror Groups will discuss and promote the development of solar heat technologies at national level.

Three Focus Groups will carry out the work within the ESTTP. These groups concentrate on solar heat applications for buildings, industrial processes and the development of solar thermal markets. Within the three Focus Groups, special Work Groups will deal with specific technological aspects of each of these areas. In mid 2007, the first drafts describing the potential of solar thermal technology will be elaborated.

Participants interested in the Work Groups can apply for membership until mid January 2007. Further information on the platform and a first version for the Solar Thermal Vision 2030 can be found on the website www.esttp.org.

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