



More than 200 international experts pave the way for photovoltaic module recycling
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More than 200 experts in photovoltaic (PV) energy, waste management and recycling participated today in the 1st International Conference on PV module recycling organized by PV CYCLE and EPIA in collaboration with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Attendees had the opportunity to learn first-hand from different industry associations and companies what is currently being done to implement recycling mechanisms and to minimise the environmental impact of end-of-life solar panels.

"Since the early years of photovoltaics, in the 1990s, customers and industry alike have shown their dedication for protecting the environment and finding a reliable solution for the adequate disposal of modules" explained Eleni Despotou, EPIA Deputy Secretary General. "An increasing number of manufacturers are working on the development of new and more effective recycling processes. However, the quantities of PV modules available for recycling are still too low to make any private scheme 100% commercially viable. This is why initiatives such as PV CYCLE can really make a difference for the industry."

According to the forecast presented in a study commissioned by EPIA and the founding members of PV CYCLE, approximately 3,000 tonnes of PV modules will be disposed of in Germany during 2010, which represent close to 50% of all the PV waste that will be generated in Europe this year. Although this figure will remain relatively stable for the next two decades, the study shows that by 2030 about 130,000 tonnes of end-of-life PV modules will be disposed of in Europe.

"Because solar panels have a very long life span, the volumes of end-of-life PV modules will not start growing considerably for at least another 20 to 25 years from now. However, the industry has proactively begun to prepare. The take-back and recycling scheme that is being set up by PV CYCLE, which this month has become operational in Germany, will be fully operational by the time that significant quantities of modules start being disposed of. This scheme will be implemented gradually across the European Union and EFTA countries," stated Jan Clyncke, Managing Director of PV CYCLE.

Representatives from related industry sectors also shared their experiences regarding the processes their companies have successfully implemented for TV monitors, electronic appliances, as well as glass recycling. The last part of the conference was dedicated to learning about recycling and collection activities in the USA as well as to discussing issues regarding the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of photovoltaics and the mathematical model of PV recycling infrastructures.

About EPIA www.epia.org: With over 200 members active along the whole value chain, the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA) is the world's largest industry association devoted to the solar photovoltaic electricity market. For more information on how photovoltaics can become a mainstream energy supplier in Europe, please consult "SET For 2020" (www.setfor2020.eu), a study commissioned by EPIA to the strategic management consultancy A.T. Kearney.

About PV CYCLE www.pvcycle.org: PV CYCLE was founded in July 2007 to implement a voluntary take-back and recycling programme for end-of-life PV modules. The members of PV CYCLE currently represent more than 85% of the European photovoltaic market. Their goal is to provide clean and renewable energy as well as to embrace the principle of producer responsibility and thereby make the photovoltaic industry DoubleGreen.

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