

Press Release



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VDMA Photovoltaic-Equipment:

Asia ensures strong sales growth

- **Investments by the solar industry in the thin film technology contribute disproportionately to success**
- **Record export rate of 97 percent**
- **Incoming orders declined in the second quarter after a strong start of the year**

Frankfurt, 14 September 2017 - The Asian solar industry invested extremely in production equipment of crystalline cells as well as of thin film technology in the first quarter 2017. The manufacturers of components, machines and equipment for the photovoltaic industry in Germany also benefited from this. In the second quarter 2017 turn over increased by 51 percent compared to the first quarter 2017. The order books of the solar equipment manufacturers are well filled, in the second quarter 2017 a ratio of orders to delivered systems ("book-to-bill") of 1,3 was reached.

"The high investment activity of the solar cell manufacturers in the expansion of existing and new production capacities continues. The production is busy, but low prices have a negative impact on sales. New orders came increasingly from PERC and Black Silicon equipment of the crystalline Silicon as well as from the thin film technology sector. The full order books are a clear sign that there is a global unbraked confidence in technology and machines made in Germany. This secures jobs in the solar industry in Germany", Dr. Peter Fath, Managing Director of RCT Solutions GmbH and Chairman of VDMA Photovoltaic Equipment explained.

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Asia is the largest business

The export ratio of German photovoltaic equipment suppliers reached the record level of 97 percent between April and July. The core business continued to be in east Asia, the share of total turnover originating from there amounted to 72 percent in the second quarter of 2017. Asia's sales were as follows: the largest share was made with China (53 percent), followed by Taiwan (4 percent) as well as Japan, Korea and India 1 percent each. The rest of Asia which includes Malaysia and Vietnam recorded 12 percent. America remained second behind Asia with a sales volume of 12 percent while Europe accounted 11 percent of sales. Germany achieved only 5 percent of sales. The strongest sales segment in the second quarter 2017 for German PV manufacturers was again the production equipment for cells (59 percent), followed by Production solutions for thin-film PV (24 percent). Although the production of modules on thin-film technology, including the CIGS (Copper-Indium-Gallium-Selenide) technology and CdTe technology (cadmium telluride), is less than 10 percent on the world market, the high share shows that especially in this segment many production solutions are purchased from Germany. Machinery for polysilicon, Ingot and wafer production accounted for 10 percent and equipment for the crystalline backend - module production – 7 percent of sales.

Order intake declined after a very good first quarter

Order intake declined by 54 percent in the second quarter of 2017 compared to the very good first quarter. The regional allocation again had an Asian focus with 76 percent of all orders, followed by America with 13 percent, Europe with 9 percent and Germany with 2 percent. "The extremely high order intake in the first quarter leaves thick order books that will be processed in the coming months. The high proportion, especially for equipment for thin-film modules, indicates that German production equipment is in demand", emphasized Dr. Jutta Trube, Managing Director of VDMA Photovoltaic Equipment.

The order book of the photovoltaic manufacturers reached 6.4 months of production in the second quarter of this year, slightly above the value of the entire machinery industry (5.9 months in April 2017).

About Photovoltaic Equipment

Currently, approximately 100 VDMA member companies are active in the photovoltaic sector. The topic started in 2007 as a co-operation between the following VDMA divisions: Electronics Production (Productronics), Glass Technology, Energy, Organic Electronics, Robotics and Automation, Laser and Photonics, Surface Treatment, Vacuum Technology and Displays. With the foundation of the enlarged platform Photovoltaic Equipment on March 30, 2010, activities for members have been extended and the visibility of the industry has been increased.

About VDMA

VDMA represents nearly 3,200 mostly medium-sized companies in the mechanical and plant engineering sector. With over one million employees and sales amounting to approximately 220 billion euros (2016), the sector is the largest industrial employer in Germany and one of the leading German industrial sectors.