

European Parliament pro-renewables amendment to FP7

Dear Commissioner Potočník,

Last week, the European Parliament passed a very significant amendment to FP7 in favour of renewable energy. It voted for approximately two thirds of the funding for non-Euratom energy research in the Seventh Framework Programme to target renewable energy technologies (the three headings in the proposal) and energy efficiency and savings.

The photovoltaic energy industry is progressively pursuing targets for cost reduction. It has been estimated that R&D will account for half of the cost reductions expected of the technology by the end of the Seventh Framework Programme. Already in the last two decades, technological advances have doubled the efficiency of photovoltaic modules. The industry's aim, soon to be articulated in the Photovoltaic Technology Platform's Strategic Research Agenda (publication expected early July), is for a direct production cost of 1.0 €/Wp by 2013 for crystalline silicon modules, by which time photovoltaic electricity prices are expected to be competitive with consumer electricity prices across Italy.

The European Photovoltaic Technology Platform is actively engaged in developing a blueprint to sustain Europe's position as a centre for high-performance PV technology, with recommendations for research and industrial policy for the short-, medium- and long-term.

We can look back on the impact of European funding for R&D projects in many different photovoltaic technologies. The FP5 'Topsicle' project broke the world record for the efficiency of a multi-crystalline silicon cell manufactured using a full in-line industrial process. Another FP5 project, 'Metaflex', achieved a world record efficiency for thin-film technology of 14.1% on a flexible polyimide substrate. An FP6 project aiming to develop cells that utilise the energy of light at a wide range of wavelengths (suitable for use with optical systems that

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focus sunlight onto a small area), achieved a world-record efficiency of 35.2% at 600 suns. These are important successes that testify to Europe's competitive advantage in this technology.

Looking ahead, the Members of the EU PV Technology Platform, Working Group 'Policy & Instruments', are keen to see the amendment carried forward into the Commission's revised proposal.

Yours sincerely,

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