



Solarex's organizers will offer highlights from the photovoltaics and solar thermal sector in their three-day exhibition and conference programme and expect to attract an increasing numbers of visitors. Photo: Solarex

Good prospects

In April, the solar trade fair Solarex will be taking place in Istanbul in its 7th edition – and the conditions are favourable. Meanwhile, Turkey is regarded as one of the world's most attractive solar markets.

From 10th to 12th April, Solarex Istanbul 2014 will open its gates at Istanbul Fair Center near the Ataturk International Airport. The focus of the event will be mainly on the PV and the solar thermal segments. "Various sources of solar energy and solar energy markets are evaluated in all aspects and the latest innovations will be displayed at the exhibition", says Ebru Pekel, Corporate Communications Manager of the trade fair organizer Ihlas Fuarcılık. Of course, there will also be an extensive conference programme accompanying the three-day trade fair, says Pekel. The topics will include, among others, the attractive market segment of commercial rooftop installations in Turkey and the problems of the financing of PV projects on the Bosphorus. "The purpose of the exhibition is to create an environment where the latest innovations and practices can be discussed in many aspects", says the Corporate Communications Manager.

Despite the current uneasiness in the political climate on the Bosphorus, the Turkish economy is quite active. The economy is booming and has a corresponding demand for energy. However, energy is scarce in Turkey – and it is expensive. According to the Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, commercial customers had to pay a tariff of

14 US\$ ct/kWh in Turkey at the end of 2013. Private households had paid two cents on top of that. Since 2006, the country's electricity prices have been rising by 11 % on an annual average. At the same time, the demand for electricity is growing by 6 % per year. The promotion and development of renewable energies has become one of the main objectives of the Turkish energy policy. Until the Republic of Turkey will mark its centenary in the year 2023, the government expects to increase the share of renewable energies in the electricity generation to at least 30 %. Currently, the share is around 3 %, hydropower excluded.

PV providing impulses

This year, the organizers are expecting that PV, in particular, will provide many positive impulses for the trade show. Chances are that they turn out to be right. "Meanwhile, Turkey is regarded as one of the most promising PV markets in Europe," says Hannes Beushausen at the management consulting firm Apricum Group. "At the moment, we estimate that the installed capacities are well below 100 MW in Turkey." However, with an annual solar irradiation of up to 2,000 kWh per square meter, Turkey offers the excellent conditions for the utilization of solar energy,

especially in the southern parts. By 2020, a capacity of four to six GW is expected to be newly installed. The main driving force behind the Turkish PV market are small and medium-sized enterprises that are faced with a strong increase of their energy requirements and want to become independent from their utilities. "Besides licensed large-scale PV plants, the segment of commercial rooftop systems for private consumption with a nominal output of up to one megawatt is considered to be a main growth area," says Beushausen. According to the expert, the biggest problem for the realization of PV projects continues to be the financing. "It is still difficult to find a bank in Turkey that is willing to finance these kinds of projects." And with the additional incentives for component parts produced inside the country, Turkey has suddenly also become attractive as a production location for solar products.

China Sunergy, a China-based solar manufacturer, has a similar opinion of the Turkish PV market. In the summer of last year, the company had set up the largest facility for the production of solar modules in the country. With its commitment to Turkey, China Sunergy wants to serve not only Turkey but also the other markets of the MENA region bordering Turkey from the Bosphorus. Furthermore, China Sunergy's facility will also serve to supply the European market.

The organizers of Solarex are therefore confident that more exhibitors and visitors will find their way to the Istanbul Fair Center this year, especially from the PV segment. They are optimistic that the visitor numbers of Solarex's previous edition will be exceeded. "This year we expect much more visitors from foreign countries", says Pekel. "But there will be many Turkish visitors as well." Solarex's 6th edition was able to attract 201 exhibitors in the last year of which 70 came from 15 different foreign countries. In total, the exhibiting companies covered 14,000 m² of exhibition space in two exhibition halls. Within three days, they were visited by 22,696 guests. Interestingly, the visitor numbers went up steadily from day to day. "The trade fair was attended by many visitors from European countries primarily including England, Germany, Italy and Austria, and also from Russia, Middle East, Far East and North Africa. And for this year Solarex Istanbul expects many professionals from the Middle East and North Africa countries", says Pekel.

"Organized for the second time in the sector by İhlas Fuarçılık, Solarex Istanbul also receives full support from relevant associations. The exhibition is supported primarily by the Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Turkish PV industry association Gensed, Energy Law Research Institute, Alosbi, UNIDO-ICHET, Aküder, Ostim, KOSGEB and numerous other institutions", explains Pekel. For this reason, the Corporate Communications Manager has no doubt that the concept will continue to attract an increasing number of visitors.

Markus Grunwald

Further information:
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