

Welcome to Solar Weekly Insight, presenting the most important developments in the global solar industry, ranging from significant industry trends, policies, research, and new technologies to markets and pricing.

This week's edition focuses on a big energy turnaround with E.ON's announced shift from conventional energy production to renewables, possibly illustrating a paradigm shift for the whole energy sector, and PV inverter makers SMA and Solarmax hit by the effects of the decreasing European PV market.

Furthermore we point to good news from the European PV industry, and bad news on fallen solar companies in 2014.

Paradigm shift: E.ON to focus on renewables

This week the E.ON (Dusseldorf, Germany) Supervisory Board approved a new strategy decided on by the Board of Management.



On November 30th, 2014 E.ON announced to focus on renewables, distribution networks, and customer solutions.

The utility's conventional energy generation business, global energy trading, and exploration and production businesses will be combined in a new, independent company to be carved out and to be listed on the stock market in 2016. [More](#)

Picture left: In March 2014 E.ON introduced solar PV systems for solar power self-consumption to the market

SMA expects a loss of up to EUR 115 million

Also this week the Managing Board of SMA Solar Technology AG has adjusted its sales and earnings forecast for 2014 referring to the further accelerated decline in solar PV demand in the European distribution business and PV project delays in Great Britain.



For the current fiscal year, the SMA Managing Board expects sales of between EUR 775 million and EUR 790 million (previously: EUR 850 million to EUR 950 million) and a loss of up to EUR 115 million excluding provisions for the planned staff reduction (previously: loss of up to EUR 45 million excluding provisions for the staff reduction). [More](#)

Picture left: SMA CEO Pierre-Pascal Urbon: "Our previous forecast was based on the assumption of a strong sales upturn toward the end of the year"

Inverter maker Solarmax files for insolvency

Sputnik Engineering AG, parent company of the Swiss PV inverter producer Solarmax, filed for insolvency on November 28th, 2014.



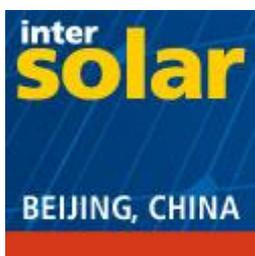
Sputnik Engineering AG HQ in Biel-Bienne (Switzerland)

Solarmax is latest victim of the decline of the European solar inverter Market, comments Cormac Gilligan, PV Inverters analyst at IHS Technology (London, UK), referring to the significant slowdown in core European PV markets, and intense price pressure driven by a highly competitive and overcrowded landscape for suppliers. [More](#)

Intersolar webinar on “China: Sunny prospects for distributed PV?”

Last year China impressed with 13 GW of installed solar PV power generation. China’s 2014 target of 13 GW will certainly ensure that China will keep its pole position. China is pinning high hopes on the future growth for distributed PV. This year, it aims to add 8 gigawatt of solar energy for the so-called distributed solar PV power generation projects.

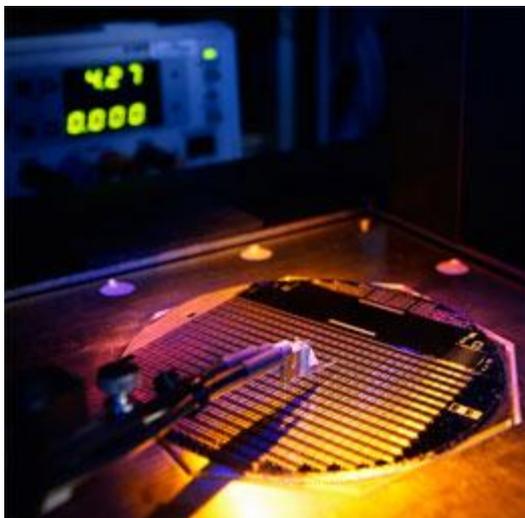
Beijing’s new policy announced by the China National Energy Administration on September 4th, tackles the three main hurdles China’s distributed PV market must overcome - financing, grid connection and fiscal incentives.



These items will be discussed in **Intersolar China’s online seminar on Thursday, December 11th, 2014** at 10am Central European Time (CET); 5pm Beijing Time (CST).

The webinar is free of charge and the number of participants is limited. [More: Register now](#)

Good News: Solar cell efficiency at 46% confirms competitiveness of European PV industry



A new solar PV world record has been established: The multi-junction solar photovoltaic (PV) cell converts 46% of the solar light into electrical energy and was developed by Soitec, CEA-Leti, and Fraunhofer ISE. [More](#)

The cooperation’s second world record within one year clearly demonstrates the strong competitiveness of the European photovoltaic research and industry.

Picture left: New record solar PV cell on a 100 mm wafer yielding approximately 500 concentrator solar cell devices

Bad news: GTM publishes list of fallen solar companies in 2014

On December 1st, 2014 Greentech Media published an updated list of (mostly U.S. and EU) solar companies that have closed, gone bankrupt, become insolvent, ended up in assignment for benefit of creditors, or have been acquired in less than positive circumstances.

The list of the solar firms that have fought the good fight but have moved on amongst others includes HelioVolt (CIGS thin-film PV), Masdar PV (a-Si), SolarMax (PV inverters), Areva's solar business (CSP), and Sopogy (small-scale CSP). [More](#)



“Although there is a macabre element to this list, it's actually positive news for the industry,” comments senior analyst Eric Wesoff.

“The solar companies left standing in 2015 are the firms with effective business plans and value to add to the marketplace. The survivors made it through the bottleneck of the early 21st century solar market.”

Picture left: HelioVolt's CIGS thin-film PV production was closed in 2014

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