PRESS RELEASE
Brussels, 18 May 2006
Photovoltaic energy can contribute to reducing climate change

A report on selected environmental indicators of photovoltaic electricity in OECD cities is jointly published today by IEA-PVPS (International Energy Agency Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme), the European Photovoltaic Technology Platform and the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA). While many technologies make claims on the moral high-grounds of sustainability and environment, numbers to back the claims are not quite so common. The PV industry and the technology's supporters in general do not enjoy the luxury of being able to ignore the challenges that are sometimes leveled at their technology – indeed, the amount of public funding supporting PV worldwide demands that a strong position be taken on these issues.
The report confirms that solar electricity can contribute to reduce CO_2 emissions and is energy efficient. It provides answers to what the contribution of photovoltaics (PV) can be to the evolution of selected indicators concerning renewable, clean energy production and environmental protection.
Based on a worldwide survey of existing studies concerning the energy input of PV systems, used to calculate the so-called "energy pay-back time" (defined as the time in years needed for a PV-system to "reimburse" its initial energy content) and the derived "energy return factor" (the number of times a PV system will reimburse its energy content during its commercial life cycle), and on commonly recognised and readily available data concerning emission indicators such as CO_2 emission in the electricity mixes of 26 OECD countries, this report provides clear and objective figures for comparison.
In the best insulation conditions (e.g. Spain) and with the most efficient technologies, only one year and a half is necessary to compensate for the energy consumed in the production process, this is small when compared with the potential life time of a photovoltaic module which varies between 20 and 30 years. Concerning CO_2 emissions, each 10 m^2 of solar electricity panels installed can avoid up to 40 tons of CO_2 emissions.
The report can be downloaded here: http://www.eupvplatform.org

---

Note to the editor:

European Photovoltaic Industry Association
With over 80 members drawn from across the entire solar electricity sector, the European Photovoltaic Industry Association **represents over 95% of the European photovoltaic industry.** EPIA represents the whole value-chain of the photovoltaic industry from silicon producers, cells and module manufacturers to system providers. The Association's mission is to deliver to its Members a distinct and valuable service driven from the strength of a single European photovoltaic (PV) voice. www.epia.org

European Photovoltaic Technology Platform
The Photovoltaic Technology Platform is an initiative which aims at mobilising all the actors **sharing a long-term European vision** for photovoltaic; realising the **European Strategic Research Agenda** for PV for the next decade(s) and give recommendations for implementation; ensuring that Europe maintains **industrial leadership.** www.eupvplatform.org

IEA-PVPS Task 10
The Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme is a collaborative R&D Agreement, established within the International Energy Agency, and conducting projects on the application of solar photovoltaic electricity. The objective of Task 10 is to enhance the opportunities for wide-scale, solution-oriented application of photovoltaics (PV) in the urban environment as part of an integrated approach that maximizes building energy efficiency and solar thermal and Photovoltaics usage. www.iea-pvps.org

Contact:

EPIA (General information)
Marie Latour
Email: epia@epia.org
Tel : +32 2 400 10 13

IEA-PVPS Task 10 (Technical information)
Bruno Gaiddon, Hespul (French expert)
Email: bruno.gaiddon@hespul.org
Tel : +33 (0)4 37 47 80 90