

Mr. Murray Cameron' speech for Solar PV EII launch

(June 3, 2010 – Madrid, Spain)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great privilege for me to be able to join you here today and to share with you the views of your solar electricity industry with respect to the implementation of the SET plan over the next few years.

I'm addressing you this morning both as a member of the board of the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA), which is the world's largest association representing the solar electricity industry, as well as the Chief Operating Officer of Phoenix Solar. We are a system integrator based in Munich Germany, so I just wanted to express the fact I also get my hands dirty. I don't just do with policy issues the whole time. This conference is the culmination of almost three years of hard work by many stakeholders. Stakeholders within the solar electricity industry in Europe, stakeholders within policy institutions, etc.

And our industry has really made a tremendous commitment to support the uptake, the development of the SET Plan for the PV part of the Solar Energy Industry Initiative. We raised a substantial amount of additional funding from our members over the last 18 months, 2 years, in order that we can make a very professional contribution to the particular plan that will be presented later on this morning in much more detail by my colleague on the board of the industry association, Virgilio Navarro. He will present our vision of a Europe in which solar electricity can make a major impact on everyday lives across the member states on the timescale of 2020.

We, within the industry association, have estimated that an additional 1.2 billion Euro of R+D research is needed to be undertaken in the next three years in order that Europe can maintain its competitiveness in the solar electricity industry. Industry will be willing to make a substantial contribution to that particular funding, and we're talking about a contribution of approximately 60%. So, what impact can solar electricity make on the three big initiatives that the European Union is concerned about in the energy space? Namely security of supply, namely competitiveness and innovation, and namely climate change mitigation.

Security of supply

In terms of security of supply we believe that solar electricity can make a 12% contribution to the European Union's electricity demand in 2020, and that's on a timescale of just one decade. We call that our paradigm shift scenario. That's not business as usual. That means working very closely with a broad range of actors to implement solar in a much bigger way,

both in terms of integration in buildings, domestic installations, commercial installations, on the ground installations, in very innovative ways. But it also means working together with great operators to achieve smart grids. This is not reconciliation. This can be done on the timescale that we're talking about, 12% contribution.

Competitiveness

The solar electricity industry in Europe over the last few years has been extremely competitive. We have led the way. If you look around the world you will see that a lot of new solar electricity production plants that are going in place, the plant manufacturers are based in Europe. And European industry has also been flourishing, but there are some dark clouds up there because our competitors have not been sleeping. They realise that solar will make a major global contribution to energy demand over the next few decades and they want to be part of that.

President Obama last week made a major speech on energy policy. Where did he go? He went to California. Where did he go in California? Well, he decided to make that speech at a new solar facility, a solar electricity manufacturing facility, that is being built using a major loan guarantee from the US government, in fact the first loan guarantee that is coming out of the new economic package that was launched by the US government last year. This demonstrates the commitment that the US is now making to solar electricity. If you look to Asia we see massive youth production facilities in countries like China but we also see research, high level research facilities being set up in hotspots like Singapore, like Thailand and elsewhere. We need fast implementation of the SET Plan in order to maintain competitiveness here in Europe.

Climate change mitigation

I had the privilege of attending the Copenhagen conference in December where we were really trying to help delegates understand the role that solar can play. Climate change is a time bomb, ladies and gentlemen, we all realise that. Fast implementation of key energy technologies, low carbon technologies, is important. Solar can be deployed extremely quickly. It's by far the clean energy technology that can be deployed the fastest. A 20 megawatt solar electricity system can be implemented from groundbreaking to great connection in 10 weeks ladies and gentlemen. I know, I've just built one of those and we connected it recently. That can be done almost anywhere around the world, and that's the contribution that solar can make to climate change.

What's important now, as has been emphasised by several of the speakers this morning, what's important now for the SET Plan is the fast implementation. I would like to ensure that I can maintain the momentum of our industry and the commitment of our industry to co-finance what needs to be co-financed within the SET Plan implementation. That means funding has to be available and that means we have to have some certainty that we as an

industry should continue to support this initiative very strongly because some co-funding will be there on relatively short timescales. I want to maintain a strong solar electricity industry in Europe. In order to do that we need that very fast implementation. You may say that 12% contribution of solar by 2020 into the European Union's electricity grid is a little bit ambitious.

Well let's reflect on some of the comments that they made in the past. In 1993 there was an advert published in several German newspapers by the German association of utilities. And that's 17 years ago when the issue was "*don't move away completely from nuclear power*". And one of the arguments that was presented in that ad 17 years ago was that we have to maintain nuclear power because renewables cannot make a very significant contribution to the electricity grid in Germany. And it was claimed that the maximum contribution that renewables could make (solar, wind, water together) would be 4%. 4% ladies and gentlemen! In 2009 the contribution that renewable had made to the German grid is 16%. I have that paper clipping on my wall in my office and sometimes it's useful to look back. So I believe that our goals are not overly ambitious.

We are here to create jobs. Let me finish by pointing out that there are more jobs in solar electricity today in Germany than in the nuclear power industry. There are more jobs today in solar electricity in Germany than in the coal industry, and I think that says a lot. We want to create jobs not just in Europe but around the world. An open market for European companies in Europe and outside Europe.

Thank you very much.