

From Domestic to Industrial Use – A Wide Range of Opportunities for Solar Thermal

Munich, 25 May 2009. Solar thermal technologies are already used in a variety of heating and cooling applications. Technological developments and policy incentives are likely to increase the use of solar thermal for domestic as well as for commercial and industrial purposes. estec2009, the 4th European Solar Thermal Energy Conference, provides an overview of the state of the art in solar thermal technology and applications and about future developments.

Already today, existing solar thermal technologies are highly reliable, providing clean solar thermal energy for **hot water preparation and space heating**. So far solar thermal is most widely used in the residential sector. Even a simple solar thermal system can cover 40-60% of the domestic hot water demand. With some more initial investment, nearly 100% of the hot water demand and a substantial share of the space heating can be supplied with solar energy.

A specific session of the 4th European Solar Thermal Energy Conference (estec2009) will be dedicated to **solar cooling** technologies. Although they are not yet as widespread as heating systems, they have shown strong growth and have an enormous potential. So called Solar Combi+ systems provide hot water, space heating and cooling. They are at the edge of wide market introduction and substantial cost reductions are expected in the next few years, through technological development and economies of scale.

Conference participants will also learn about the state of the art of solar thermal technologies for industrial purposes. Indeed, solar thermal can also provide the heat needed in many **industrial processes**. Albeit still a small niche market, these technologies have a high potential and their development is one of the very next challenges for the market. Ordinary solar collectors typically provide temperatures around 60-100°C, that are suitable for many applications like food processing, water desalination, industrial washing processes etc. The effectiveness of medium-temperature collectors – producing heat at 100-250°C – has been proven already but standardization efforts are needed in order to further reduce their costs.

At the other end of the temperature spectrum solar thermal technology is also an ideal solution for **swimming pool heating**. Inexpensive unglazed collectors enable a longer bathing season without additional energy consumption. With glazed collectors one can achieve high solar fraction also beyond the summer months and use solar energy both for space heating and sanitary hot water.

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