



PRESS RELEASE
Bitterfeld-Wolfen, 4 February 2010

Storm of protest over drastic cuts for solar subsidies

On Thursday, around 600 employees working for the solar companies Q-Cells, Solibro, Sovello, Calyxo and CSG Solar in Solar Valley Thalheim (Saxony-Anhalt) took part in Germany's day of action to protest against the proposed cuts to subsidies for solar energy. Under the slogan "Curtailling solar energy means curtailing our future," the workers voiced their disapproval of the plans tabled by Germany's Christian Democrat environment minister Norbert Röttgen. With the feed-in tariff for solar electricity already reduced as planned at the beginning of 2010, Röttgen had intended to substantially reduce it again in April – jeopardising thousands of jobs in Germany's photovoltaic industry.

"The government mustn't make the mistake of harming a leading German industry with growing global strategic significance. The impending cuts would cause a wave of bankruptcies in Germany and result in the photovoltaic industry being pushed into Asia," stressed Anton Milner, CEO of Q-Cells SE. "More than 70% of consumers are willing to help shoulder the costs to boost the proportion of solar power in Germany. However, the planned cuts would merely result in the prices for green and grey domestic electricity converging a year earlier than currently anticipated. I doubt whether this minor advantage would offset the enormous damage caused."

Local political representatives Uwe Schulze, chairman of Anhalt-Bitterfeld district council, and Petra Wust, the mayor of Bitterfeld-Wolfen, emphasised the importance of solar firms for regional employment. Christian Democrat MP Ulrich Petzold also expressed his sympathy for workers in Thalheim, declaring: "I saw with my own eyes what happened to this region after 1990 – and I don't want to go through it again. At least 1 April is no longer under discussion for the next cut. Instead, exactly when the amendment to the EEG German Renewable Energy Act will come into force is now being debated."

Speaking on behalf of employee representatives of the companies operating at Solar Valley Thalheim, Q-Cells work council chairman Uwe Schmorl appealed to regional and national decision-makers to be more circumspect about reducing subsidies for solar electricity: "Over the past few years, here in Thalheim we have successfully built up a new research-intensive industry. Excessive cuts would kill the

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burgeoning solar sector – so let’s work together to use the opportunities that green electricity from Germany offers all over the world.”

More than 35 solar companies employing all in all around 20,000 people in Germany demonstrated today against Norbert Röttgen’s planned radical cuts in a national campaign. By symbolically closing their factories and in other activities at more than a dozen centres of the solar industry, they warned against massive redundancies and impending company closures.

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