

Press Release

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VDMA Photovoltaic-Equipment:

Solar industry continues to invest

- **Orders in the equipment market significantly exceed number of delivered equipment**
- **Incoming orders after three quarters 2016 higher than 2015 in total**

Frankfurt, 14 December 2016 - The international photovoltaic industry invested significantly in production equipment in the past months. This leads to a benefit for manufacturers of components, machines and equipment for the photovoltaic industry in Germany. New orders in the first three quarters 2016 exceeded the amount of order intake of the complete last year. At the same time, however, the increased capacities and the reduction of feed-in tariffs in China are dampening investments in production equipment. The order books are still well filled, the third quarter 2016 reached a ratio of orders to delivered systems ("book-to-Bill") from 1.5.

In terms of sales, however, machine and plant manufacturers in Germany posted a decline of 14 percent in the third quarter compared to the same period of the previous year. Compared to the previous quarter (April to June 2016) the sales declined by 35 percent.

Nevertheless companies in Germany, which are very active in the new market as India, Middle East and North Africa, expect fresh impetus in the coming year. "The high investment activity of the solar cell manufacturers in the expansion of existing and new production capacities slows down, especially in China. The production is busy. New orders are now coming increasingly from the Asian region outside China ", Dr. Peter

Fath, Managing Director of RCT Solutions GmbH and Chairman of VDMA Photovoltaic Equipment explains.

Asia is the largest business

The export share of German suppliers of photovoltaic equipment is a record of 89 percent. The bread and butter business remains in East Asia, the share of total turnover originating from there amounted 74 percent in the third quarter of 2016. A high proportion the United States could post: 13 percent of sales in the third quarter of 2016 were achieved across the Atlantic. Germany remains the leader within Europe with a share of sales by 11 percent, the other European countries together had 2 percent of sales. Production equipment for cells (55 percent) remained the strongest turnover segment for German PV manufacturers in the third quarter 2016, followed by equipment for the crystalline backend - module production – (20 percent), and machinery for polysilicon, Ingot and wafer production amounted to 10 percent. Production solutions for thin-film PV amounted to 15 percent of turnover in the third quarter of 2016.

Order intake developed very dynamically

Basic to the delight the development of order intake. Compared to the previous year an increase of 72 percent has been registered. Compared to the previous quarter however, order intake decreased by 32 percent. However, in the first three quarters more order intakes were posted than in the whole last year. Business with Asia remains the driver with an extreme order volume of 75 percent in the third quarter, followed by United States at 12 percent and Germany at 9 percent. Europe is beaten off only on a measly 4 percent. " The order situation was also good in the third quarter of 2016. We see a further shift in the new markets for the coming months. Enhancing technologies for crystalline applications establish itself further (PERC, PERT, etc.). Crystalline solar cell manufacturers choose increasingly also the Heterojunction technology, which promises the highest efficiencies. Many existing facilities be equipped with more efficient technologies", emphasizes Dr. Jutta Trube, Director of VDMA Photovoltaic Equipment. The order book of the photovoltaic manufacturers reached 5.3 months of production in

the third quarter of this year, thus is below the timeframe of the entire machinery industry (5.8 months in October 2016).

Currently, approximately 100 VDMA member companies are active in the photovoltaic sector. The topic started in 2007 as a cooperation between the following VDMA divisions: Electronics Production (Productronics), Glass Technology, Energy, Organic Electronics, Robotics and Automation, Laser and Photonics, Surface Treatment, Vacuum Technology and Displays. With the foundation of the expanded Photovoltaic Equipment platform on March 30, 2010, activities for members have been extended and the visibility of the industry has been increased

The German Engineering Federation (VDMA) represents more than 3,100 companies in the engineering industry, many of which are small and medium sized enterprises. With about 1.019 million employees (September 2014) in Germany and a turnover of EUR 205 billion (2013), the sector is the largest industrial employers and one of Germany's leading industrial sectors.

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