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Solar modules production world-wide almost doubled in 2008

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre has today published its eighth *Annual Photovoltaics Status Report*. Photovoltaics (PV) production in the world increased to about 7.3 GW in 2008. An 80% rise on the previous year. Europe's production of solar cells rose from 1.1 GW to 1.9 GW, while the installed capacity increased threefold to 4.8 GW, mainly led by Spain, where figures multiplied almost five times from 560MW in 2007 to 2.5–2.7 GW. The cumulative installed PV electricity generation capacity in the world was around 15 GW, with Europe accounting for more than 60% of this (9.5 GW). PV production is the manufacturing of solar modules, whereas PV generation is the amount of electricity delivered by installed PV modules. "Capacity" is the certified measured peak capacity.

The research, conducted by the JRC Institute for Energy (IE), gives an overview of current activities in research, manufacturing and market implementation in this sector. The report shows that European PV production has grown on average by 50% per annum since 1999 and its market share has increased to 26% in 2008. In terms of electricity generation, photovoltaics contributed in 2008 to about 0.35 % of Europe's final electricity consumption.

Global investment in renewable energies and energy efficiency was hit by the financial crisis in late 2008 and early 2009, but is now showing signs of a strong recovery. The report notes a significant slowdown in investment in the second half of 2008 (-10% in the third quarter; -23% in the fourth), that continued in the first quarter of 2009 (-47% compared with the fourth quarter of 2008), but started to reverse in the second quarter (+83% compared with the first quarter of 2009).

Other key findings of the report:

- In 2008, China became the leading producer of solar cells with an annual production of about 2.4 GW, followed by Europe with 1.9 GW, Japan with 1.2 GW and Taiwan with 0.8 GW. If this trend continues, China might have about 32% of the world-wide production capacity by 2012.
- An increasing number of producers are entering the market, therefore, the market share of the ten largest PV manufacturers decreased from 80% in 2004 to 50% in 2008.
- In 2008, thin-film solar modules have reached 12-14% of the market share.
- Concentrating photovoltaics (CPV) is an emerging market with approximately 17MW cumulative installed capacity in 2008.

Further information

The *eighth Annual Photovoltaics Status Report* is available at: <http://re.jrc.ec.europa.eu/refsys/>

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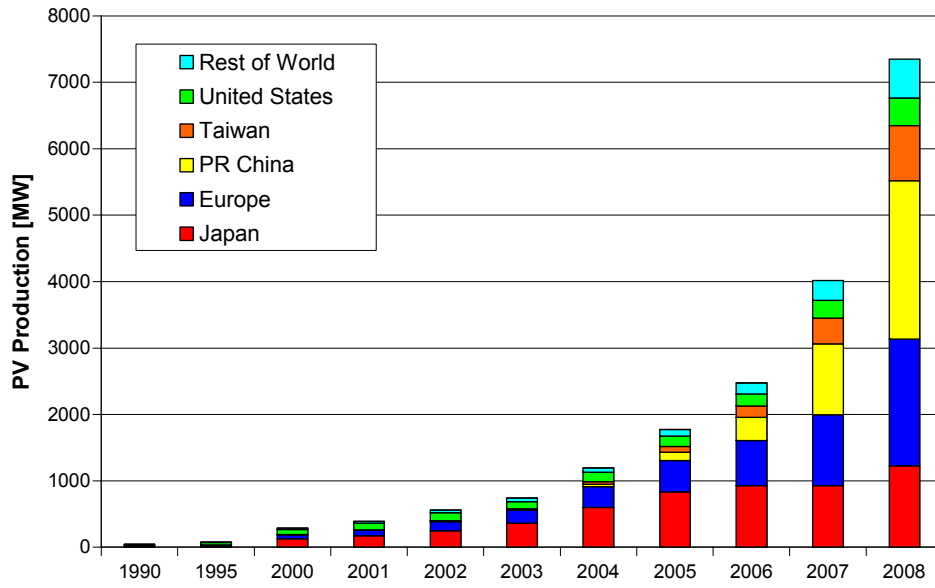


Figure 1: world photovoltaic cell/module production from 1990 to 2008 (data source: Navigant [Min 2009], PV News [Pvn 2009] and JRC analysis).