



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF  
TRADE, INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES**

*The Minister of Trade and Industry*

Commissioner Thierry Breton

Your ref

Our ref

Date

23/7388-

30 November 2023

Dear Commissioner Thierry Breton

Thank you for the invitation to participate in the Ministerial Meeting of The European Solar PV Industry Alliance (ESIA). EU and Norway are close partners on the basis on the EEA agreement and through the Green Alliance. The great concern and sense of urgency for the challenging market situation the European solar industry is facing is also something we share with you, and Norway will support prompt and forceful action.

The challenging market situation for solar PVs in Europe today is mainly a result of third countries that in the last year alone has shipped solar PV systems to European ports equalling twice the European annual demand. This has lowered prices to a level where few European producers can compete.

Both The EU and Norway have made a clear commitment to produce more solar energy in Europe and we welcome the efforts already made from the EU to secure solar PV manufacturing capacity within Europe. The Norwegian solar industry, can play an important role in building up the European solar industry, given its expertise and experience. Reaching our common goals requires that we build on the strong European actors who are already established and have experience and expertise in this field. But as the situation is today, we are running the risk of losing this opportunity. Just during the last year, we have lost strategic important companies for establishing the European solar PV value chain.

In august the company Norwegian Crystals decided to end their production of ingots in Norway. Just a couple of weeks ago the company REC Solar, which has been an essential supplier of solar grade pure silicon to the solar industry, decided to stop their production activity in Norway. This is to a large extent due to the difficult market situation in Europe.

Their process is unique worldwide as they use only kerf from the wafer process as a raw material. Unless rapid action is taken, the unique expertise Rec Solar held will slowly but steadily disappear.

One important player still operating is Norsun, and I am very pleased to see that they will take part in the Solar Ministerial Meeting. Norsun is a well-established Norwegian ingot and wafer-manufacturer, and the only producer of ingots and wafers outside of China. They started production in 2005 and has an annual manufacturing capacity of 800 MW. Norsun is planning to scale up production at their Norwegian site incrementally to 4 GW. The company also plan on building production capacity outside of Norway.

I am mentioning these three examples to illustrate what Europe has and what we may be about to lose. In my view, it is not possible to solve the challenges facing the European solar industry solely by using unilateral policy tools. Therefore, I am glad that we will discuss a common European approach at the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance. Several measures are being proposed and Norway will take active part in finding the well-targeted ones which will help the current situation on both short and long term. Europe shall compete on economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Moreover, we should take advantage of our competence in producing better, more efficient products, as well as producing renewable energy and electrifying our societies. I will also follow up discussions on this matter bilaterally with my counterparts in EU Member States with which Norway have industrial partnerships.

Finally, as Norway is chosen as partner country for Hannover Messe 2024, we will also use this opportunity to spotlight solar PV. I would like to express my hope to see you there and I hope this could be an opportunity for us to do something together to ensure visibility for the solar PV industry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Christian Vestre', written in a cursive style.

Jan Christian Vestre