



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
TRADE, INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

The Minister of Trade and Industry

Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister
Dr. Robert Habeck

Your ref

Our ref

Date

23/7388-

30 November 2023

Dear Robert

Firstly, thank you for a very productive meeting and an excellent announcement of Norway as partner country for Hannover Messe 2024 during my visit to Berlin 9 November. We managed to take new steps in our German-Norwegian partnership. I am sending you this letter to raise my great concern for the challenging market situation the European solar industry is facing.

Both The EU and Norway have made clear commitments to produce more solar energy. Germany has this year set ambitious goals for solar build-up and is a leading country within solar power output and research. Considering the geopolitical developments over the last few years, the EU also seeks 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 risking 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 and 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 actions 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 this will be discussed at the Ministerial Meeting of The European Solar PV Industry Alliance (ESIA). 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.

Renewable energy and green industry are at the centre of our German-Norwegian industrial partnership. As I see it, solar PV is a natural part of our cooperation, and I therefore propose that we put this on the agenda for the next time we meet bilaterally, and I also propose to see this in connection with the Hannover Messe 2024.

Yours sincerely

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

Jan Christian Vestre