

# Intersolar Europe 2013: End of the great depression?

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[Intersolar Europe 2013](#), which ended Friday in Munich, was certainly a show much different from its previous editions this year in Munich. The music played much louder in the halls hosting inverters, solar heating systems, and storage systems than – like in the years before – at the booths of panel producers.

Not surprisingly, research company [EuPD Research](#) predicted in a presentation the coming end of the FiT driven era, and also stated that through anti-dumping tariffs and ever lower FiT rates Germany and Italy will see severe shrinking PV markets in the future. However, EUPD Research also expected a high potential for residential PV with storage in Germany, and proclaimed the beginning of the fourth cycle in PV evolution called integrated energy solutions, after the solar pioneers, national support

schemes, and the third cycle being PV electricity generation in an open market.

While there were no real innovations in the field of traditional solar modules, [Sun Invention](#) was the company getting high attention with a completely new concept. Their solar modules are equipped with a micro inverter and a plug so that they can be plugged directly into a socket mounted on the balcony or house façade. This ‘balcony power plant’ concept is so new that no existent regulations apply for the concept of feeding energy into the socket; and subsequently not all doubts about the safety of the systems could be dispelled by the passionate acting CEO during the press event. The company partners with German module manufacturer [Algatec Solar AG](#).

Monitoring systems to maximize energy output were one trend seen at Intersolar. This goes down to module level, as [Upsolar](#) showed it with their smart modules, which enable MPP-tracking at module level, a market which has to-date not yet reached Europe on large scale but is already big in the United States, according to [Stephane Dufrenne, CTO of Upsolar Group](#). [Skytron](#) presented an updated version of its PV Guard monitoring system for large scale PV plants with a new service log feature.

And there were solar energy storage solutions at the show, all sorts and sizes, ranging from small home applications to large scale district storage visions such as shown by [AEG Power Solutions](#). Interestingly, despite still high battery costs, companies like battery home solution provider [BAE](#) already reports good sales numbers. One future task here will be to guide customers through the jungle of new storage solutions.

Austrian inverter specialist [Fronius](#) has introduced its hybrid inverter at Intersolar Europe 2013. The product with integrated energy storage comes without display but instead has webserver, WIFI and Ethernet interfaces and will be available in the course of next year. This is only one example of the various smart home solutions offered at the show this year, which focus on an integrated energy management. Most of the inverter companies presented integrated storage solutions, like [Kostal](#) with its PIKO BA system or [SMA](#), which partners with several companies like [Miele](#) and [Vallant](#) for an integrated energy management.

Regarding PV production, despite all discussions about overcapacities, Japanese [TEL Solar](#), the former solar segment of Oerlikon, sees huge potential for their manufacturing line for the production of thin film silicon PV modules. Local content requirements as they exist in the Middle East, India, North Africa and parts of South America are beneficial for the establishment of thin-film production lines in such regions, according to Dr. Reinhard Benz, Director Sales & Product Marketing at TEL Solar. He also expects completely new customer segments to arise in southern regions with low PV penetration, such as construction companies or manufacturers of electrical components which might conquer their home markets through local manufactured modules.

Innovation in PV production came from [Linde](#), which in cooperation with [LiSEC](#) introduced S-COAT, a new in-line anti-reflection (AR) coating technology for solar glass which sprays a stable, non-flammable and water-based cocktail onto the glass, which then is made durable in a curing oven. The process promises a 3% increase in light transmittance and responds to the growing demand in AR coating of PV panels. According to the developers, the technology also costs only a fraction of the existing vacuum-based technologies.

In the mounting systems and fittings segment, [Schletter](#) amongst other new products showed the new plug Wallbox Mono, which enables a smart charging through excess energy of the PV system.

With the takeover of GP Solar from Centrotherm only weeks ago, [ISRA](#) also has gained access to customers in Asia, since the mother company has concentrated on the key players in Germany in the past supplying them with

the latest technology of inspection systems. ISRA presented an innovation in fingerprint inspection that enables to inspect front grid contacts down to a size of  $<40\mu\text{m}$ .

Overall, the atmosphere was much better during the three show days than many of the players had expected. Show contacts were more productive was a statement heard many times. It seems that the industry has finally reacted to the changing circumstances, and the new business models offer the opportunity to regain strength. The show organizers, however, will probably need to reorganize the show concept. Too many gaps have opened up this year in particular in the halls that host cell and module manufacturers – these exhibitors will most likely not come back- and in some halls only half of the exhibition space was used. The future show concept can be seen next year at Intersolar Europe from 4-6 June 2014.

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[http://www.solarnovus.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6684:intersolar-eurooe-2013-end-of-the-great-depression&catid=75:editors-blogs&Itemid=352](http://www.solarnovus.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6684:intersolar-eurooe-2013-end-of-the-great-depression&catid=75:editors-blogs&Itemid=352)