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“Messe München – the rooftop of the future” An outstanding solar model project

- Minister-President Dr. Markus Söder visits photovoltaic rooftop system and learns about sustainability strategy
- The ambitious goal: to become carbon neutral by 2030
- Messe München uses renewable energies, heat from geothermal energy and supports electric mobility with 100 charging stations
- The smarter E Europe – Europe’s largest platform for the energy industry at Messe München is a winner: Its contract is being extended through 2028

Messe München set a bold precedent 25 years ago, building what was then the world’s largest photovoltaic rooftop system. It served as a model for many projects and remains an internationally respected showpiece to this day. Minister-President Dr. Markus Söder visited the photovoltaic plant on Monday, June 12, 2023, and learned about the current activities and sustainability strategy at Messe München: Because Messe München intends to be climate neutral by 2030.

The photovoltaic plant at Messe München symbolizes the beginning of the green transformation at Messe München. And it has steadily progressed since construction of the new exhibition center at Munich-Riem began in 1998: it includes geothermal energy, a combined heat and power plant, and charging stations for electric vehicles. The next major goal: to become carbon neutral by 2030. To that end, the sustainability strategy at Messe München is based on five pillars: an ecological energy mix, waste avoidance, modern mobility, logistics and catering. For example, Messe München is developing a guide for exhibitors on how to make their trade fair appearance carbon neutral.

As part of its sustainability strategy, Messe München has launched a feasibility study to determine the most effective, economically viable and, above all, carbon neutral energy mix for the future. This also includes a possible expansion of the solar rooftop. The first step is to determine the optimal increase in photovoltaic area and optimal size of a battery storage system; the second step is to integrate heating and cooling into the system. Messe München expects initial results of the feasibility study to be available by the end of 2023.

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The three photovoltaic systems – on two wings of the trade fair, each with six halls, and the West parking garage – were connected to the grid between 1998 and 2004 and generate a total of around 2.6 million kilowatt hours of green electricity per year. This has prevented an average of around 1,460 tons of carbon dioxide per year.

Minister-President Dr. Markus Söder: *“Bavaria is a sunshine state! We are continuing to develop electricity from solar energy on a massive scale. Messe München has been a pioneer for many years with regard to sustainability. With 38,000 square meters of solar cells, 26 million kWh of electricity have already been produced and 10,000 tons of CO₂ saved here. We have a total of 800,000 PV systems in Bavaria. We want to develop all forms of renewable energy for the energy transition. Bavaria is in the top spot among all the German states when it comes to expansion and pace.”*

As the main shareholders of Messe München, the Free State of Bavaria and the City of Munich supported this effort.

Messe München’s co-CEOs, Dr. Reinhard Pfeiffer and Stefan Rummel, explained: *“The construction of the photovoltaic system 25 years ago laid the foundation for sustainable trade fairs. Over the years, numerous activities have been added as we approach climate neutrality in 2030, the main goal of our sustainability strategy. For example, 100 percent of our electricity is generated from renewable sources, district heating at the fairgrounds is partly supplied by geothermal energy, we have a combined heat and power plant and 100 charging stations for electric vehicles. Moreover, Messe München has the greenest exhibition grounds in the world.”* Messe München includes 220,000 square meters of green spaces, some 2,500 trees, planted exterior hall walls and 35,000 square meters of green rooftops.

The smarter E Europe: Europe’s largest platform for the energy industry extends its contract through 2028

Messe München doesn’t just practice sustainability; it has long served as an internationally respected platform for environmental and future technologies. Minister-President Söder, the co-CEOs of Messe München and Markus Elsässer, Managing Director of Solar Promotion GmbH, which organizes **The smarter E Europe** together with Freiburg Wirtschaft Touristik und Messe GmbH & Co KG, have announced a new achievement: **The smarter E Europe** will remain committed to Munich as a trade fair location and, as Europe’s largest energy industry platform, has extended its contract as a host venue through 2028. *“After working together for 15 years, we are pleased to announce that our partnership with Messe München will continue and that **The smarter E Europe** will continue to call the Bavarian capital its*

home. Together, we will pursue our strong commitment to the world of renewable, decentralized and digital energy and continue to send out powerful impulses from Munich,” said Markus Elsässer. The contract extension was symbolically sealed together with the Minister-President and Messe München’s co-CEOs.

As part of the largest platform for the energy industry in Europe **The smarter E Europe**, the world’s leading trade fair for the solar industry, **Intersolar Europe**, has had a permanent place at the exhibition grounds for 15 years.

The global industry will meet again in Riem from June 14-16. This year, the overarching event **The smarter E Europe** will take place on a record area of 17 exhibition halls (including ICM) and feature over 2,450 exhibitors. A total of more than 85,000 visitors from 160 countries are expected to attend. The innovation platform provides a comprehensive picture of what is needed for the world of new energy and transport and how a 24-hour renewable energy supply can be achieved. In addition to **Intersolar Europe**, **The smarter E Europe** presents the complete range of innovative solutions for the sustainable energy industry of the future with **ees Europe**, **Power2Drive Europe** and **EM-Power Europe**.

Foundation for a sustainable future

“Business success and sustainable action can no longer be considered independently from one another – and have not been for some time,” Dr. Reinhard Pfeiffer and Stefan Rummel emphasized. *“A coherent sustainability strategy is now a crucial competitive factor. We are proud that Messe München laid such an important foundation early on with the sustainable exhibition center, which we are now pursuing with activities and projects in the areas of energy, waste, biodiversity, and social issues and governance.”*

At the beginning of 2020, for example, Messe München switched entirely to electricity generated from renewable sources. Even during the years prior to 2020, more than half the electricity requirement was met using renewable energy. As a result of the complete switch to green energy, it achieves annual savings of around 6,400 tons of CO₂ in normal operation. Since 2012, the base load of the heating requirement at Messe München has been covered by district heating, which is also supplied by a geothermal plant operated by Stadtwerke München. A combined heat and power plant with a thermal output of 1.6 megawatts generates both thermal energy for the ICM, the West Entrance, and the exhibition center, as well as electricity for supplying the site.

Messe München has provided EV charging stations for exhibitors and visitors since 2018: There are now 100 charging stations in front of the main entrance (with one

rapid charge station), in the parking garages and on the exhibition grounds. The trade fair venue itself also uses electric vehicles.

Scientists have used data from the photovoltaic system on the B Halls for 25 years

Messe München took a groundbreaking path in 1998 when it constructed its new building in Riem with what was then the world's largest photovoltaic rooftop system on the B Hall roofs. The oldest of the three systems, it is now owned and operated by Messe München. This plant consistently supplies green electricity even 25 years after its commissioning. Last year, the plant even achieved its third-best output in 25 years. The photovoltaic system has produced a total of 26 million kilowatt hours since 1998. This could power an EV traveling a distance from Munich to the sun. The photovoltaic system at Messe München has saved a total of more than 10,000 metric tons of CO₂, an amount that could otherwise be avoided by planting 800,000 trees.

The success story of the Messe München photovoltaic system can also be attributed to the scientific monitoring and documentation carried out since its beginning. The plant's power production during any given weather can be precisely traced over the past 25 years. This represents a wealth of scientific data that is frequently sought out by scientists and put to profitable use in research.

More information on the [sustainability activities](#) of Messe München can be found here.