



Thermomax is the first company to hold a Solar Keymark for a solar collector

The first Solar Keymark has been issued

Brussels, 20 October 2003. Breakthrough towards EU-wide certification for solar thermal products. The first Solar Keymark has been issued to the company Thermomax, based in Northern Ireland, UK. This is a milestone towards a EU-wide system of quality certification for solar thermal collectors and systems.

The Keymark is a quality mark developed by the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN-CENELEC). The Keymark shows that a product complies with the relevant EN standards. The Solar Keymark shows compliance with the standards EN 12975 (solar thermal collectors) or EN 12976 (factory made solar thermal systems), but even more: factory inspection and regular checks on serial production guarantee that the products sold are equivalent to those tested. The Solar Keymark has been developed by the European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF), with the support of the European Commission and was introduced by CEN earlier this year.

Thermomax, a member of ESTIF, has received the Solar Keymark for its new evacuated tube collector Solarmax 20/30-TDS300. Kathy McVeigh, Commercial Manager at Thermomax, said she expects "important benefits for our global marketing activities. We will have the Keymark on more collectors, as it indicates the quality, reliability and effectiveness of our range of products. It will assist users in selecting quality collectors and systems".

The Solar Keymark certificate has been issued by the German certification body DIN CERTCO, based on tests performed by the Swiss test institute SPF-Solartechnik. Although it was the first time for everybody, "the process was very smooth: from factory inspection, through testing and finally obtaining the Keymark license, it took less than three months" declared Thermomax.

Sören Scholz, Product Manager at DIN CERTCO, said: "Nine further collectors from six different companies are currently being tested for a Solar Keymark. This shows its high market potential". DIN CERTCO is so far the only certification body empowered by CEN to issue the Solar Keymark. SP, the Swedish National Testing and Research Institute, has applied for empowerment.

A milestone for EU market integration

What is the Keymark

What is the Solar Keymark

Thermomax expects important marketing benefits

The certification process was very smooth

9 further Solar Keymark collectors in the pipeline

Peter Kovacs, Solar Energy Manager at SP, said: “We expect a significant demand for Solar Keymark certification, as the solar thermal market grows at record levels and gets more international. By becoming a Solar Keymark certifier, SP expects to increase its international activities”.

The introduction of the Solar Keymark is an important chance for the development of a large European solar thermal market. Users, market players and public authorities can easily recognise products complying with the European standards. Raffaele Piria, Secretary General of ESTIF, said: “We will work to make sure that products with a Solar Keymark are automatically eligible for any financial incentive scheme all over Europe. This will reduce certification costs and stimulate trade. The users and the environment will thus benefit from more solar energy.”

ESTIF invites all involved actors to consider the opportunities offered by the Solar Keymark. Manufacturers can gain easier and cheaper access to the markets of different European countries. Certification bodies can get access to this new certification market. Testing institutes can get accredited and start collaboration with the empowered certification bodies. Distributors, installers and final users can easily recognise the products complying with the EN standards.

Most important, the national and regional authorities all over Europe are invited to automatically recognise the products bearing a Solar Keymark as eligible for any foreseen support program.

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More information: www.estif.org/solarkeymark

Additional Notes:

ESTIF, the European Solar Thermal Industry Federation, represents manufacturers, national associations and service providers active in the solar thermal sector.

ESTIF's mission is to achieve high priority and acceptance for Solar Thermal as a key element for sustainable heating and cooling in Europe and with immediate effect to work for the implementation of all steps necessary to realise the high potential of Solar Thermal.

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More certification bodies will offer the Solar Keymark

ESTIF will continue to promote the Solar Keymark

Opportunities for all market actors

Authorities all over Europe should recognise the Solar Keymark