

**A solar race continues
1 February 2007**

Czech engineering company Korowatt opened in Busanovice, southern Bohemia, the largest solar power plant in the Czech Republic, as it was reported on January 29, 2007. The construction of the power plant cost 85 mln Czech crowns (US\$3.9 mln/3.0 mln euro), of which 30 mln crowns (US\$1.4 mln/1.1 mln euro) were provided by the Czech Industry and Trade Ministry from EU Structural Funds. A loan guarantee was provided by IFC, member of the World Bank Group, to the financing bank in the framework of IFC-CEEF program.

Solar power as well as other renewable sources have support from the Czech legislation, guaranteeing feed-in electricity tariffs from 15 years from project commissioning and off-take obligation for the grid operator. For solar power the feed-in tariff is 13.62 Czech crowns/kWh (US\$0.62/kWh / 0.48 euro/kWh)

The plant has already been connected to the distribution network and started commercial operation on February 1, 2007. The 2660 silicon photovoltaic modules, spread out on 6,170 sq m, can ensure electricity supply for 172 households.

The maximum planned capacity of the power plant, the biggest in eastern Europe according to the company, will be 693 kW, and its annual electricity output 620,000 kWh. The power station should produce 620,000 kWh of electric power per year. It is a quantity, which is produced by Czech Temelin Nuclear Power Station for about 25 minutes. But the solar power station is environment- friendly. A solar panel with an area of 1 sq mt produces power, which corresponds to power produced from 250 kg of coal per year. It saves in total 750 t of carbon dioxide per year, which would be discharged to the air by the operation of a coal power station. By the end of 2007 capacity of the plant will be ramped up to 1.2 MW.

So far, the plant in Hradek nad Nisou, northern Bohemia, with a 60 kW capacity, has been the largest solar facility among the country's photovoltaic arrays, the others are located in Brno, Ostrava, Prague, Liberec and Plzen.

The output of the solar power plants in the country still lags behind the production of other European Union (EU) member-countries. Czech solar capacity is about 1,7 MW now, compared to some 800 MW in Germany in 2004. Japan, Germany and USA are among the leaders in solar energy production.

The largest electricity sources in the Czech Republic and the largest power station and the largest solar power station in the world (measured by output):

Prunerov (coal-fired) 1,490 megawatts
Temelin (nuclear) 2,000 megawatts
Busanovice (solar) 0.6 megawatts
Podmileska vysina (wind) 7.5 megawatts
Orlik (hydroelectric) 364 megawatts

Kasiwazaki-Kariwa (Japan, nuclear) 8,212 megawatts
Wuerzburg (Germany, solar) 12 megawatts