

COUNTRY REPORT: AUSTRIA

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Version 1.0

Date: 14. September 2010


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QAiST is supported by:

Intelligent Energy  **Europe**

Project IEE/08/593/SI2.529236

A brief description of the most important elements in Austrian regulations and certification/subsidy schemes related to solar thermal products is given below. The description is valid for September 2010.

Background/status

In 2009, 364.887 square meters of flat-plate collectors, evacuated tube collectors and unglazed collectors were installed in Austria (2008: 362.923 square meters). The leading provinces regarding the size of the collector areas installed in 2009 were: Upper Austria with 26%; followed by Lower Austria with 23% and Styria with 18%. Most collectors were installed in single family houses (SFH) to supply domestic hot water production and heating.¹

Sales of solar collectors in Austria in 2009

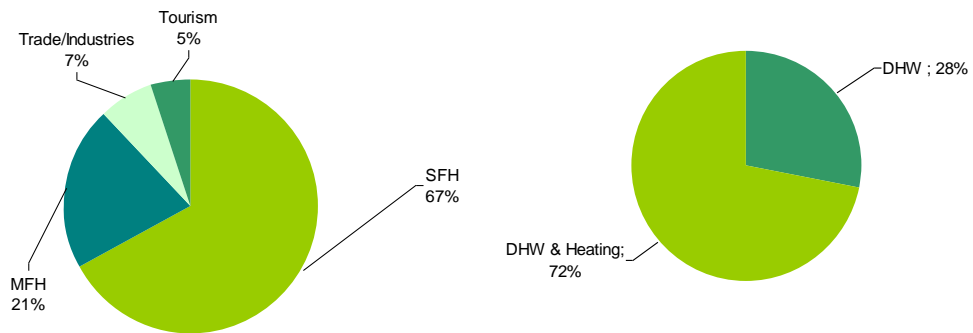


Figure 1: Sales 2009 for separate housing segments and fields of use (Source: Biermayr et al, 2010)

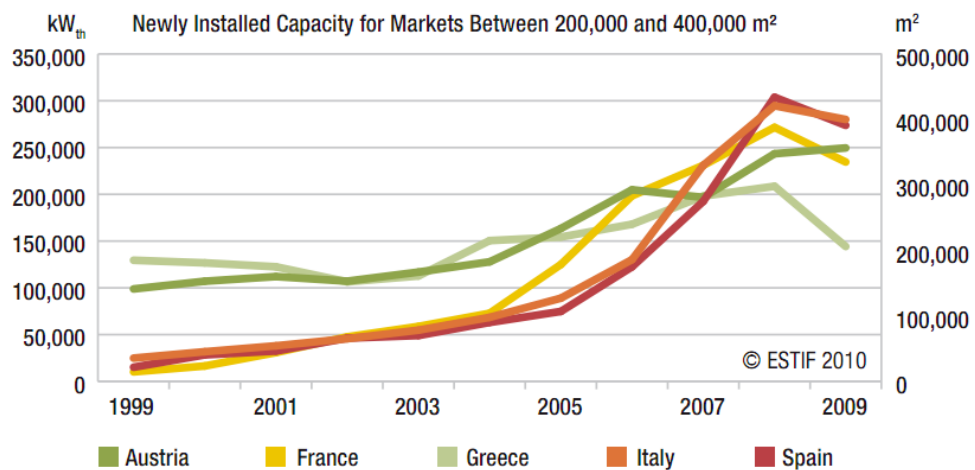


Figure 2: Comparison of national markets showing the steady growth of the Austrian market. (Source: ESTIF)

¹ Biermayr et al, Innovative Energietechnologien in Österreich, Marktentwicklung 2009, 15/2010

Regulatory Framework

Building Regulation (general)

Building regulations are in the responsibility of the provinces. There are no barriers for the use of solar thermal energy, with exceptions on historical buildings or some regions/cities with intense tourism.

Safety control

Requirements for solar thermal systems according safety and recommendations for design are stated in ÖNORM M 7731. However, this standard is just in a review process, since some of the topics are meanwhile covered by EN 12977. As long as this European draft is not available as standard, the ÖNORM M 7731 is valid.

Public Incentives (subsidies, ordinances or other)

Relevant incentives:

Solar thermal installations are subsidized in all nine provinces in Austria under certain conditions. Since recently, all provinces allocate public housing funds to single and multi family housing owners only, if solar thermal is used. The same applies to restored buildings in seven provinces (all but Styria and Upper Austria). 5 provinces (all but Carinthia, Upper Austria, Styria and Burgenland) fund the exchange of boilers only if solar thermal collectors are installed. Additional subsidizing comes from some hundred municipalities, which give some additional money; the requirement for this is mainly the same like the subsidy from provincial side. The different schemes in the nine provinces provide in average 22% of the total installation costs for hot water system, 21% if heating is included. Although the circumstance of 9 different subsidy schemes might make the market a bit complicated it also drives the market, since there exists kind of competition between the responsible bodies on who is providing a better subsidy. The effective Austrian subsidy system and mainly its continuity seem to be one of the main success factors for the high dissemination of solar thermal collectors in Austria. (More than 4.3 Mio m² collector area for 8,2 Mio people).

In order to support the market penetration of large solar systems, a publicly financed programme for “Large Solar Thermal Systems” has been introduced in mid 2010. It supports the planning and the erection of solar thermal systems with a collector area between 100 and 2000m² in four thematic areas: solar process heat in production companies, integration of solar thermal energy in district heat supply (micro net, district heating

networks), solar thermal systems with high solar fraction for trade and service companies, solar cooling with solar hot water production and heating in times without cooling demand.

Requirements for support schemes:

From a European marketing aspect it is essential, that currently the only requirement for subsidies is the test according to EN 12975; which means that no local barriers concerning additional requirements exist. It is the intention of the main drivers in Austria (Solar association, research institutes) to finally have the European Solar Keymark as the requirement; which means that additional to performance testing also quality testing is needed.

Federal subsidies for industries are controlled and organized by KPC (Kommunalkredit Public Consulting). For funding solar thermal systems any kind of test report according to ÖNORM-, DIN or ISO (includes EN 12975) is required, in detail the application form asks for the number of the test report of the collector. For solar thermal systems larger than 100 m² a forecast of the energy results has to be delivered but no further requirements are linked to it. Furthermore specification of costs, several quotations and all permits needed for the erection and operation of the solar thermal system are required.²

Private persons get subsidies from regional bodies (region and/or municipality). The relevant requirements vary among the different provinces. Nearly all specify a minimum of 4 to 5m² collector area for domestic hot water production; some require the installation of a heat meter (Burgenland, Upper Austria, Styria, Vorarlberg, Tyrol); Upper Austria reduces the subsidies, if the collector is not Solar Keymark certified.³

Testing

AIT (www.ait.ac.at) and ASiC (www.asic.at) are the accredited testing institutes which perform tests according EN 12975-2 and EN ISO/IEC 17025.

² <http://www.publicconsulting.at/de/portal/umweltfrderungen/bundesfrderungen/betrieblicheumweltfrderungiminland/erneuerbareenergietraeger/solaranlagen/>

³ <http://www.solarwaerme.at/EFH/Foerderungen/>

Certification

Product certification: No national certification scheme for solar thermal products. No Austrian certification body is awarding Solar Keymark certificates. Solar Keymarks certificates are awarded by DIN CERTCO in Germany in cooperation with the test institutes.

Installer certification: There exists a voluntary certification scheme for installers and planners of solar thermal systems by AIT.⁴

Industry certification: The solar companies can apply for the “Austria Solar Gütesiegel”⁵, a label for solar thermal companies; the requirements for getting this label are mainly: tested products (Solar Keymark), high quality documentation, and customer friendly product information, 10 years of guarantee on collectors and 5 years on storage tanks. 23 Austrian companies are certified according to the “Austria Solar Gütesiegel”.

Environmental certification: on a voluntary basis an environmental label called “Umweltzeichen” according to the schemes “Z15 Sonnenkollektoren und Solaranlagen”⁶ can be gained. Besides environmental criteria tests according to EN12975 or EN12976 respectively are required.

Insurance

Special insurance products for solar thermal and PV system are available on the Austrian insurance market. None of them have any special requirements on the collector or other parts of the solar thermal system.

Other relevant information

In May 2010, a strategic research agenda for solar thermal research in Austria has been presented.⁷ The document is based on the European research agenda and gives a roadmap with detailed research priorities for future solar thermal research in Austria. The research agenda was prepared by the Austrian Solar Thermal Technology Platform (ASTTP).

⁴ <http://www.ait.ac.at/research-services/research-services-energy/training-education>

⁵ <http://www.solarwaerme.at/EFH/Guetesiegel/>

⁶ <http://www.umweltzeichen.at>, VKI & BMLFUW

⁷ Weiss, W., et al., Forschungsagenda Solarthermie, Berichte aus Energie und Umweltforschung 14/2010, BMVIT

The Austrian “Klima- und Energiefonds (KLIEN)” is funding research on solar thermal technologies in the programme „Neue Energien 2020”. In 2010, the 4th call has been launched. Within this programme research on both solar thermal collectors and systems is funded.

Trade Barriers

There are currently no relevant trade barriers.

Actions needed

In order to considerably extend the market penetration of solar thermal systems new fields of application need to be developed. This requires both, funding in terms of research and incentives for installations. The new funding scheme for “Larger Solar Thermal Systems” is a first step toward this direction.