

Initial country report: AUSTRIA

Introduction

The situation in Austria with respect to requirements in regulations and subsidy schemes is briefly described and then followed by a list of actions proposed to make “European co-ordination” of these requirements.

Background/status

Solar thermal installations are subsidized in all 9 Provinces in Austria. 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. From a European marketing aspect it is essential, that currently the only requirement for subsidy is the performance test according to EN 12975; which means that no local barriers concerning additional requirements are existing. It is the intention of the main drivers in Austria (Solar association, Solar Research) to finally have the European Solar Keymark as only requirement; which means that additional to performance testing also quality testing is needed.

Regulations

Building Regulation (general)

- Building regulations are in the responsibility of the provinces. There are no barriers according to Solar energy, which exceptions on historical buildings.

Requirements for Solar 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 prEN 12977. As long as this European draft is not available as standard, the ÖNORM M 7731 is valid.

Subsidies

- Subsidy schemes: Different schemes in the 9 provinces, in average 20% of the total installation costs are subsidized for hot water system, 30% if heating is included.
- Requirements for subsidy schemes: for industry the subsidy is donated by the ministry of Environment (via the Kommunalkredit-bank) for which an EN 12975 test is required. For private consumers, the subsidy is granted by the regional government, some have and some have no requirements (f.e. EN12975, guaranteed yields).

Testing

- Arsenal research is the only accredited test institute which performs tests according EN 12975.

Certification

- Product certification: No national certification scheme for solar thermal products.
- Installer certification: There exists a voluntary certification scheme for installers and planners of solar thermal systems, made by arsenal research.
- Industry Certification: The solar companies can apply for the “Austria Solar Gütezeichen”, a label for Solar companies; the requirements for getting this label are mainly: tested products (collector according Solar Keymark), high quality product, high educated personnel, customer friendly product information, etc...
- No Austrian certification body is empowered for Solar Keymark, the Certification is made by DIN CERTCO in Germany.

Insurance

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Others

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Actions needed

The actions needed for implementing - with respect to solar thermal systems - the European directives on energy performance of buildings and energy labelling of hot water tanks are listed below:

Regulation

- Implementation of the coming European standard¹ for calculation the influence of solar thermal systems on the energy performance of the buildings in the procedures used for calculating the energy performance of buildings in the national building regulation.

Subsidies

- The effective Austrian subsidy system and mainly its continuity seem to be one of the main success factors for the high instalment rates in Austria. (More than 3.0 Mio m² for 8 Mio people)

Testing

- Is mainly done at arsenal research, which is the only accredited test institute according to EN 12975

Certification

- As there is no national certification scheme for solar thermal components and systems, it is proposed to promote the Solar Keymark by:
 - arsenal research test institute promotes “Solar Keymark” and arranges the whole Keymark process for the industry by assisting the Austrian manufacturers in the communication

¹ A European standard procedure for calculation of the influence of solar thermal systems on the energy performance of buildings is being prepared by CEN. It is intended to implement this procedure in Austria.

- process with certification bodies in other countries; the Certification is predominantly done with the German DIN CERTCO; although Austrian ON CERT would be possible as well.
- The certification scheme for the solar industry “Austria Solar-Gütesiegel” refers to Solar Keymarked products.

Insurance

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Others

The main topic to address in Austria is the market of multifamily houses and industry. So far, thermal systems are predominately installed at private houses. Up to now, about 15% of all single family houses have a solar system on its roof. Large and complex systems are not well introduced so far, bad experiences with large systems (especially in Vienna) have nearly stopped this development for years. Guaranteed yields and Certification (installers, products, and planners) could overcome this problem. arsenal research, together with the other main actor in research AEE-INTEC as well as the Solar Association Austria Solar has therefore launched a Installer and planner training, focussing on large and complex solar systems. (about 250 participants since 2004)

Projects together with new European neighbours (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic) intends in establishing a market of solar thermal in these countries based on the Austrian experiences. Joint Workshops, Networking in research and industry, excursions as well as general information on solar energy are part of these initiatives. (Solar NET).

Proposed items:

Common European standard of solar thermal industry based on the experiences with the Austrian industry label (“Austria Solar Gütezeichen”) committing the industry to sell only high quality (certified) products, fair competition and other high quality standards.