

# THE Quality Label for Solar Thermal Products in Europe

**Boost your solar thermal business**

[www.solarkeymark.org](http://www.solarkeymark.org)



**The Solar Keymark**  
CEN Keymark Scheme

## The Solar Keymark, the main quality label for solar thermal

The Solar Keymark is a voluntary third-party certification mark for solar thermal products, demonstrating to end-users that a product conforms to the relevant European standards and fulfills additional requirements. The Solar Keymark is used in Europe and increasingly recognized worldwide.

**The Solar Keymark is a CEN/CENELEC European mark scheme, solely dedicated to:**

- Solar thermal collectors (based on European standard series EN 12975)
- Factory made solar thermal systems (based on European standard series EN12976)

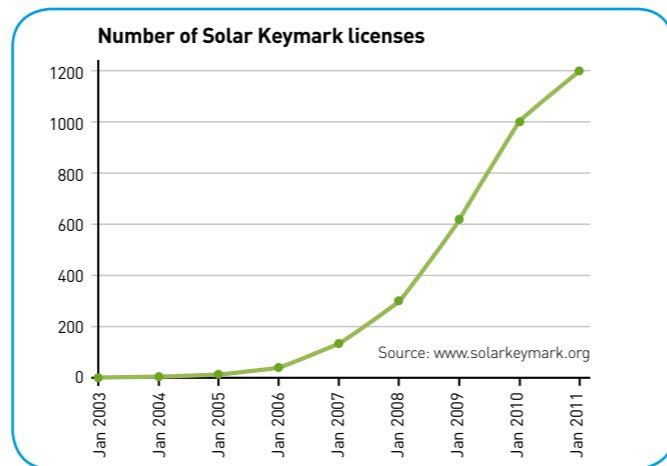
### Experience with Solar Keymark so far and impact on sales

“All our solar collectors are equipped with the Solar Keymark. The Solar Keymark facilitates the access to new markets and the introduction of new products at European level. More and more customers recognize the Solar Keymark and this is something which we actively market not only in Europe but across the world. We only see advantages with the Solar Keymark: testing, inspection and certification are required and very well structured.” *Andreas Wagner, Wagner & Co.*

The Solar Keymark was developed by the European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF) and CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) in close co-operation with leading European test labs and with the support of the European Commission. It is the main quality label for solar thermal products and is widely spread across the European market and beyond.

On 1 January 2011, over 1200 Solar keymark licences were granted.

**Note: The difference between the Solar Keymark and the CE-mark**  
The Solar Keymark is a quality label and the CE-mark just attests that the product fulfills minimum legal requirements according to specific European directives.



## Benefits of the Solar Keymark

The Solar Keymark was created to certify solar thermal products of high quality at European level. The aim is to reduce trade barriers and promote the use of high quality solar thermal products in the European market and beyond.

**The Solar Keymark provides:**

### for manufacturers

- simpler testing procedure
- one test valid for all European countries
- freedom of choice amongst the accredited test labs
- easier introduction of new products in different European countries
- simplified procedures for replacing components in certified products

### for consumers

- high quality products
- guarantee that the product sold is identical to the tested product
- confirmation that products are FULLY tested according to the relevant standards
- eligibility for subsidies

### 8 reasons why you - as a manufacturer - need the Solar Keymark:

- 1 Reduced testing and administration costs
- 2 Certified product
- 3 Enhanced customer confidence
- 4 New opportunities to increase your turnover
- 5 Better image for your company
- 6 Enduring quality image of the solar thermal industry
- 7 "Passport" to European solar thermal markets
- 8 Access to subsidy schemes

### Evolution of the Solar Keymark

“The Solar Keymark shows to the end-consumer that the product is reliable and independently-tested. More and more governments have identified the Solar Keymark as an effective tool to ensure protection of the end-user against low quality goods with a poor performance and reliability, promoting in this way a better use of public funds. That's why it should be required by all European countries and linked to incentives.”

*Harald Drück, Chairman of the Solar Keymark Network*

## How to obtain the Solar Keymark?

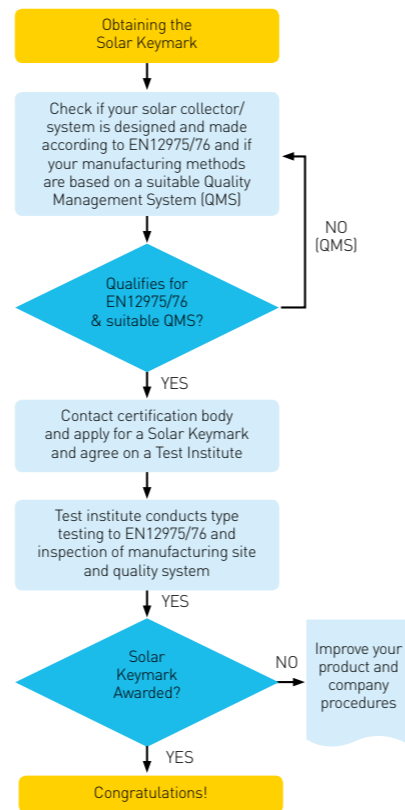
A Solar Keymark can only be issued by an empowered "certification body" after the product has been tested by an accredited "test lab".

The certification body is the organisation responsible for awarding Solar Keymark certificates and the test lab is the organisation responsible for all the testing.

To obtain Solar Keymark certification it is essential that the product tested is a sample taken randomly from the current production or stock by an independent inspector. Furthermore, the production and Quality Management System as implemented at the factory will be checked by an independent inspector on site. The certification bodies are empowered by the CEN Certification Board (CCB).

To initiate the Solar Keymark certification process, the best way is to contact one or more certification bodies. The certification body will then advise the customer on the procedure to follow - the first step is usually to fill in an application form. Some certification bodies only work with specific test labs.

On the Solar Keymark website [www.solarkeymark.org](http://www.solarkeymark.org), you will find latest updates and news about the Solar Keymark as well as the current list of empowered certification bodies and accredited test labs.



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### Key requirements:

- The initial product test takes place at an accredited test lab
- A sample of products is selected by an inspector out of production or stock
- The factory needs to have a production control system (similar to ISO 9000 series)- this factory production control system is checked regularly by an inspector
- The product is physically inspected every two years

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### Maintaining the Solar Keymark requirements:

- **Annual check** of manufacturing: Quality Management System documentation
- **Every two years**, physical inspection of the Solar Keymark certified products selected from production or stock by an inspector
- Pay the annual certification fee
- Report product changes to certification body

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### How to maximize the impact of Solar Keymark certification?

- Start marketing  
For the buyer and the consumer, the Solar Keymark is a proof of:
  - reliable quality and performance
  - extensive information related to product documentation
- Start exporting your products across Europe and avoid trade barriers  
The Solar Keymark applies almost everywhere in Europe : there is no need to perform again the same tests in different countries.



## Where are the certification bodies and test labs located?

### Currently, there are:

#### Eight empowered certification bodies

- AENOR (Spain)
- CERTIF (Portugal)
- DIN CERTCO (Germany)
- ELOT (Greece)
- ICIM (Italy)
- Kiwa Gastec Certification (the Netherlands)
- SP (Sweden)
- TSU Piestany (Slovakia)

**19 accredited test labs for solar thermal products**, in Austria, China, Spain, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland

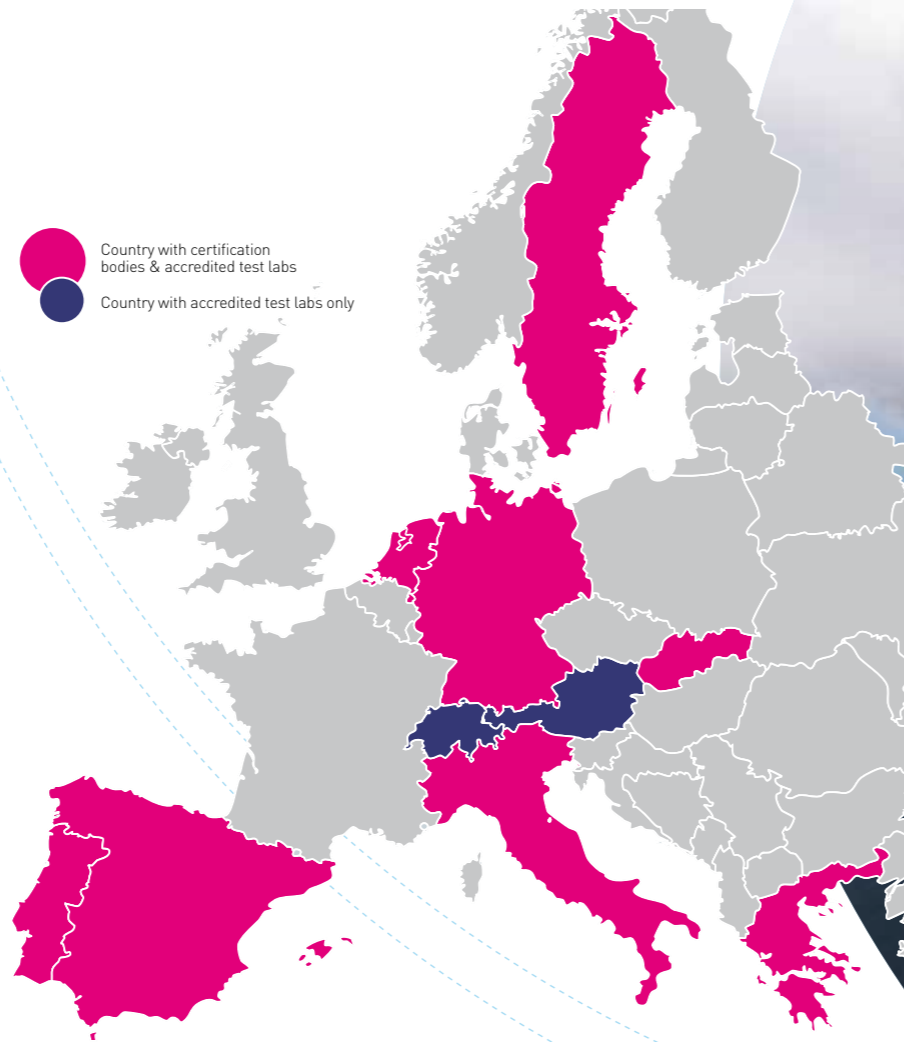
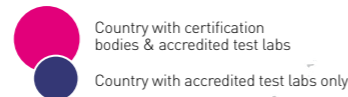
The list above is effective as of November 2010.

The latest information can be found at [www.solarkeymark.org](http://www.solarkeymark.org)

### Obtaining the Solar Keymark

“The Solar Keymark is easy to obtain. It takes around 3-4 working days to prepare for the whole process. This is facilitated also by a good communication with the Certification Body that keeps us informed about the prices and required documentation. Furthermore a good relation with the test lab is necessary in order to ensure short testing times and continuous information about the testing process and the required inspection.”

*Christian Stadler, Sonnenkraft*



## Who accepts the Solar Keymark?

All national subsidy schemes and regulations in the EU accept the Solar Keymark with a few exceptions where some additional requirements may apply.

### Indicative certification costs to obtain and retain the Solar Keymark:

#### Initial costs to obtain the Solar Keymark (cost per product):

- Testing, initial factory inspection and certification: 6 000 - 12 000 €

#### Annual costs to retain the Solar Keymark:

- Annual factory inspection, bi-annual product inspection and certification: 2 000 -3 000 €/year

Testing and certification of more products significantly reduce the cost per product.



### Savings

“The Solar Keymark reduces drastically the administrative and financial burden associated with testing, certification and related administrative procedures. In the past, prior to the introduction of the Solar Keymark, we used to test and certify each product in each country separately. This created a tremendous amount of work which was both costly and time consuming. As an international company, we can benefit from savings on testing and certification thanks to the adoption of the flexible system “testing & certification”, which deals in particular with system “families”. Indeed, if a manufacturer produces the “same” system in different sizes, these are now considered to be of the same type (within the same “family”); the different sizes of the system being sub-types.”

*Rob Meesters, Solahart*

**|www.solarkeymark.org**

**On the Solar Keymark website: [www.solarkeymark.org](http://www.solarkeymark.org), you can find:**

- A list of certified products
- A list of accredited test labs
- A list of empowered certification bodies
- Several brochures in different languages

**QAiST – Quality Assurance in Solar Heating and Cooling Technology**



The objective of the QAiST project is to improve the quality assurance framework for solar thermal products so that the European solar thermal heating and cooling industry can

sustainably contribute to the environmental targets agreed by the Member states (20% of the energy from Renewable Energy Sources by 2020) and strengthen their global technological leadership.

**European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF)**



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