

# Press Release

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November 29, 2013  
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## **Solar Pioneer and Founder of Fraunhofer ISE Celebrates Birthday**

### **Professor Adolf Goetzberger Turns 85**

"It's been an exciting journey so far. I'm still amazed sometimes at how far we've already come with solar energy and I'm happy to still be around to enjoy the fruits of my labor." This quotation from Prof. Dr. Adolf Goetzberger on being named European Inventor of the Year four years ago still holds true. On November 29, 2013, the founder of the Fraunhofer ISE is celebrating his 85th birthday with family, colleagues from the institute and companions alike.

Although the European photovoltaics industry is currently experiencing a crisis, solar energy usage in the rest of the world has gained momentum. Adolf Goetzberger has played a crucial role in this development. In the late 1970s, he began to work tirelessly towards achieving his vision of establishing solar energy as a convincing alternative to fossil fuels. 1981 saw him found the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE in Freiburg under difficult conditions. With 1,300 employees, the institute is now the largest solar research institute in Europe.

"Adolf Goetzberger can look back on a lifetime of exceptional achievement," says Prof. Dr. Eicke R. Weber, the current Director of Fraunhofer ISE. "With his vision, he made an outstanding contribution to establishing solar energy as a fundamental building block of a sustainable energy supply, long before the energy transition made its way onto the political agenda."

Adolf Goetzberger dedicated the first 25 years of his professional life to semiconductor technology and electronic devices. During the pioneering period of microelectronics, he worked at the most renowned research centers in the US:

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five years in Palo Alto, California with Nobel Prize winner and co-inventor of the transistor, William Shockley, and another five years at Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, New Jersey. In 1968, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft brought him back to Germany. Before founding Fraunhofer ISE, Adolf Goetzberger was Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Solid State Physics IAF in Freiburg. In 1971, the University of Freiburg appointed him Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Physics. During his active working life, he supervised many degree candidates and doctoral students.

By the time Prof. Goetzberger retired in 1993, bowing out of his role as Director of the Fraunhofer ISE, the institute had grown from just under 20 employees into the world's second largest solar research institute, after the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in the USA. The institute has continued to thrive under his successors Prof. Joachim Luther, from 1993 to 2006, and Prof. Eicke R. Weber, since 2006. With around 1,300 employees at present, the institute is not only the second largest solar research institute in the world, but also the second largest institute within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

In addition to his work at Fraunhofer ISE, Prof. Goetzberger has rendered outstanding services to important solar energy organizations. From 1991 to 1993, he was President of the International Solar Energy Society ISES, and between 1993 and 1997, President of the German Solar Energy Society DGS. He also played a considerable role in shaping and supporting conferences and symposiums – such as the symposiums in Bad Staffelstein on photovoltaic solar energy and solar thermal energy. In 2009, the organizers of the OTTI Symposium on solar thermal energy awarded the Spirit of Energy prize to Prof. Dr. Adolf Goetzberger, the OTTI's honorary president, for his unwavering commitment – he shared the prize with the ISE's Deputy Director at the time, Prof. Dr. Volker Wittwer. Goetzberger still calls for the tighter integration of solar heat into the energy policy today.

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Adolf Goetzberger is a Fellow of the IEEE (Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers). His commitment also involves supporting international photovoltaics conferences held by the European Commission, for whom he acted as chairman in Seville in 1998. He remained there as part of the Scientific Committee for many years, and is still a member of the Becquerel Prize jury today.

Prof. Goetzberger's dedication extends far beyond science. Providing objective information to political and economic institutes has always been his mission. As a member of the EU high-level advisory council in 2004, he helped devise the PV-TRAC vision report for 2030. He is a member of the scientific advisory board of the Instituto de Energía Solar at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, as well as the Spanish Institute for Concentration Photovoltaics Systems ISFOC.

Adolf Goetzberger provides creative input, suggests projects and writes publications and patents with as much unrelenting energy as ever. He still works as an advisor to the Fraunhofer ISE and regularly takes part in important international conferences. Fraunhofer ISE wholeheartedly wishes its founder a happy 85th birthday and a continued enjoyment of the fruits of his labor.

## **Prizes and awards**

Adolf Goetzberger's outstanding services to the future of solar energy supply have been honored in many different ways:

In 1983, Adolf Goetzberger became the first German to receive the J.J. Ebers Award from the American IEEE Electron Devices Society for his exceptional technological achievements in the field of electronic components. In 1989, he received the Medal of Merit from the state of Baden-Württemberg and in 1992 he was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit 1st class. In August 1993, he received the Achievement through Action Award from the ISES. 1995 saw Adolf Goetzberger receive an honorary degree from

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Uppsala University as well as the Farrington Daniels Award from the ISES. He was awarded the Karl Böer Medal of Merit in 1997. During the same year, he also received the Becquerel Prize and the William R. Cherry Award. In September 2006, SolarWorld AG awarded him the Einstein Award 2006 for his life's work, his extensive scientific achievements as well as for founding the Fraunhofer ISE. EUROSOLAR honored his achievements in December 2006 with the European Solar Prize. In 2009, the European Patent Office accorded Adolf Goetzberger the title "European Inventor of the Year" for his life's work, celebrating his contribution to the commercial use of solar energy, which paved the way to establishing solar cells as a convincing alternative to fossil fuels.

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