



Largest Solar Installation in Baltic States is Now Operational

February 13, 2019 by Emily Holbrook



(Photo: The largest photovoltaic installation in the Baltics on top of the RETAL factory in Lentvaris, Lithuania. Credit: Tomas Lukšys)

The largest solar panel rooftop installation in the Baltic States was recently opened on the rooftop of the RETAL factory in Lentvaris — around 10 kilometers from the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius. The installation will generate 1.4 megawatts of power.

The solar project was installed by I+D Energias Lithuania, a Lithuanian/Spanish partner of Sun Investment Group (SIG), one of the biggest solar energy investment companies in Eastern Europe.

According to RETAL, a manufacturer of sustainable PET and rPET packaging, the newly-installed facility positions it amongst the first multinationals operating in the Baltic States to adopt renewable energy as their main source of electricity, and further bolsters Lithuania's green energy credentials.

Renewables Across Europe

At present, Lithuania is one of the few European Union member states to have already met its 2020 renewable energy targets which dictate that each bloc member must source 20% of all its energy from renewable sources. Currently, Lithuania is eighth from 26 member states in terms of renewable energy use and is the largest investor amongst the three Baltic States into renewable energy ahead of Estonia.

According to Marius Skuodis, Lithuania's Vice Minister of the Economy, the opening of the RETAL plant will help Lithuania attract energy-heavy industries, such as data centers and EV battery manufacturers, because it demonstrates that the country is able to produce its own energy. This means that manufacturing costs can be significantly reduced alongside the dependence on external sources for energy.

Andrius Terskovas, the Chief Business Development Officer at I+D Energias Lithuania added that he believes the RETAL installation will go beyond benefiting just Lithuania, and urge neighboring Poland, Latvia, and Estonia to follow-suit in order to strengthen their green credentials to attract renewable energy-driven investors.

After a dip in 2016, the European solar power market recovered remarkably in 2017 to add 8.6GW of solar capacity, according to Frost & Sullivan, a market research company.

The growth was largely driven by technological progress, cost reductions and the development of novel business models such as on-site direct wire mini power purchase agreements (PPAs). According to the report, "European Solar Power Market, Forecast to 2025," this business model is particularly popular among large-scale solar project developers to overcome regulatory barriers, while fully-automated energy management across all sectors and segments on a local level and peer-to-peer models will facilitate new methods of financing. The implementation of such business models will enable PV system installers to offer solar energy-as-a-service.

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