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SolarMax Globe

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 SWISS QUALITY

Chasing the Sun: Sputnik's new MT series finds the maximum power point on the most differing of roof areas, pitches and directions



Chasing the Sun

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In the hallway on the fourth floor, I meet René Hechtl and Fabian Uhl. They are wearing white shirts and sun-yellow ties. For today, the two support engineers from Austria and Germany are training two Belgians and five Slovenians at the Swiss company headquarters.



In my favourite hotel in Biel, Switzerland, the Villa Lindeneegg, all the adapters for Swiss sockets have been passed out for the first time. "The Sputnik employees from Italy and French have all of them", I am told at the hotel reception.

Sputnik has expanded all over Europe in the past few years. When I first came to Biel in 2004, the company employed around 40 people in Germany and Switzerland. Now that number has risen to more than 330 in seven European countries.

Inis Krampitz

Press Relations Officer of Sputnik Engineering AG



At this year's Intersolar fair, we are presenting many brand new products. With the MT series, we are launching three string inverters which can feed their current into the grid in three phases, which constantly find the maximum power point thanks to several MPP trackers, and which – on account of this – reach an efficiency of up to 98 percent. In addition, we are presenting a complete solution for the direct feed-in into the medium-voltage grid and a new central inverter which has an output of 330 kilowatts.

Shortly, all of our innovative products will be available everywhere in Europe. For the countries where we still do not have a sales office, we founded the new branch office Sputnik Engineering International AG in April. At the same time, our new managing director Didier Jeannele has moved from Paris to Saint Priest near Lyon, where he will continue to expand our branch office there, Sputnik Engineering France S.A.R.L.

In all the branch offices of Sputnik Engineering AG, designated solar experts are at work, who advise their customers competently. Besides the development, production and sales of high quality Swiss inverters, service is close to our heart. With the SolarMax Training Center, we have developed a modular training concept that can be adapted to individual customer wishes at any time. In our SolarMax Service Center in Biel, we have invested in the newest software applications so that our customer hotline, which operates in five languages, can optimally evaluate incoming calls.

Read here for yourself, what our developers, managing directors and support engineers have done in the past few months.

I wish you interesting and enjoyable reading

Ch. von Bergen

Christoph von Bergen,
Managing Director of Sputnik Engineering AG

Chasing the Sun

Sputnik's new SolarMax MT series finds the maximum power point on the most varying of roof areas, pitches and directions



+ SWISS QUALITY

With the new SolarMax MT series (MT stands for multitracking), Sputnik Engineering bridges a gap in its product range. Currently, the Swiss manufacturer has string inverters with outputs up to 4.6 kilowatts and central inverters from 20 kilowatts upwards in its programme. The new devices have outputs of 10, 13 and 15 kilowatts and are suitable for installations in medium-sized plants as well as in large commercial projects.

The development of a new kind of multi-string concept makes it possible to install plants on roofs having different areas, directions and pitches, using only one inverter. The inverters are available with two (SolarMax 10MT) or three (SolarMax 13MT & 15MT) independent MPP trackers. Up to two module strings can be connected directly to every MPP tracker, and thus each solar

generator field constantly works in the maximum power point. Moreover, thanks to this concept, output losses can be minimised which can occur due to temporary shading.

Thanks to the real three-phase feed-in, and not three single-phase inverters in one housing, the inverter constantly feed in their current symmetrically even during partial interference of the solar generator. A very low distortion factor minimises the disturbing influences upon the public grid.

Sputnik completely removed electrolyte capacitors in the MT series and replaced them with foil capacitors. This has a positive effect upon the reliability and lifetime of the inverters. Thanks to a new inverter topology, the inverters of the SolarMax MT series attain a European efficiency rating of up to 97.5 %.

Compact and flexible

The maximum input voltage of the MT inverters is at 900 volts. Thanks to the lower currents resulting from the high input voltage, Sputnik was able to use smaller components and thus save weight, space and costs. At 39 or 42 kilograms, the new MT series devices are among the lightest in their power range. Thanks to the high input voltage, more modules can be connected in series than previously possible. This reduces the cabling effort and the conduction losses and has a positive effect upon the yield of the PV plants.

The MPP voltage range of the new SolarMax MT series is between 250 and 750 volts. This increases the flexibility for the plant constructors, who can better utilise their roof surfaces.

Sputnik presents the MT series at Intersolar Europe

Thanks to an optimised cooling design, the heat is conducted even better out of the housing. The new inverters can therefore be operated in ambient temperatures from -20 to +60 degrees Celsius. The devices work at their full nominal power at ambient temperatures up to 50 degrees Celsius.

The low weight as well as the mounting plate, included in the delivery, simplify the installation. All connections are pluggable and easily accessible. DC circuit breakers, a status signalling contact for the connection of acoustic or optical signals as well as the standard communication interfaces RS485 and Ethernet are also part of the package.

An integrated data logger stores the energy yield, the peak power and the operating duration. Daily, monthly and annual values can be easily and comfortably read on the graphic display of the inverter.

The SolarMax MT series has been certified by the VDE and bears the approval for "Certified safety". The five-year standard guarantee can be extended to ten or twelve years as an option.

Sputnik Engineering is presenting the new inverter for the first time at the Intersolar trade fair, which takes place from 9 to 11 June in Munich, Germany. The new SolarMax MT series will be available from the fourth quarter of this year all over Europe.



For the first time at Intersolar: Sputnik displays the new MT series at its stand in Munich.

Please come visit us at Intersolar and take a look at our new products at our trade fair stand!

You can find us in Hall B4, Stand Number 110.

Technical Data of the SolarMax MT Series

	10MT	13MT	15MT
AC nominal power	10 kW	13 kW	15 kW
MPP range	250 to 750 V	250 to 750 V	250 to 750 V
Max. Input Voltage	900 V	900 V	900 V
Max. Efficiency	98 %	98 %	98 %
European Efficiency	97.5 %	97.5 %	97.5 %
Dimensions in mm (L x H x W)	550 x 200 x 750	550 x 200 x 750	550 x 200 x 750
Weight	39 kg	42 kg	42 kg
Protection Class	IP54	IP54	IP54
Ambient Temperature	-20 °C...60 °C	-20 °C...60 °C	-20 °C...60 °C

All information is provisional as of April 2010.

SolarMax MT: The power pack for maximum yields.





+ SWISS QUALITY

Both of the new central inverters of the TS series – here the SolarMax 300TS – fulfil all the requirements of the BDEW medium-voltage guideline.

New inverters for Solar Power Plants

Sputnik expands the SolarMax TS series by two central inverters

SolarMax 300TS for the low-voltage grid

The new SolarMax 300TS has a nominal power of 300 kilowatts and works in the MPP range from 430 to 800 volts. With this device, Sputnik's developers were able to increase the European efficiency from 94.8 to 95.5 percent in comparison to its predecessor SolarMax 300 C.

SolarMax Power Station: the complete solution for the medium-voltage grid

The SolarMax 330TS-SV doesn't use a low-voltage transformer, in contrast to the SolarMax 300TS. Through this, the European Efficiency increases to 97 percent. Up to four of the new 330-kilowatt inverters, mounted together in a SolarMax Power Station, can directly feed their power into the medium-voltage grid over a medium-voltage transformer. The station can be easily operated with a central control unit. On its display, one can clearly read the energy yields, peak powers and operating hours as well as all the device's settings. A DC fuse unit and the internet-based data logger MaxWeb xp are also available if desired.

Together with its partners, Sputnik is able to deliver a package which has an output power of up to 1.32 megawatts, preassembled for the direct connection to the grid. Thanks to the modular design, installers can set up all the components – up to four inverters, an optional DC fuse unit, a medium-voltage transformer and the controlling unit – in a concrete station as well as in an existing machine room.

Reliable and durable

As with the other inverters in the SolarMax TS series, a processor monitors the IGBT switches of both new central inverters on the power unit, increasing their operational safety and reliability. In addition, Sputnik has increased the lifetime of the inverters even further by replacing electrolytic capacitors by foil capacitors. With the optionally available potential equalization set, the inverters also work in combination with thin-film or modules

connected on the rear side, without any problems.

Both of the new inverters have been prepared for all the requirements of the BDEW [the German Federal Association of Energy and Water Management] medium-voltage grid guideline – even those that are valid first from 2011. The inverters are able to feed in reactive power, remain connected to the grid during short grid malfunctions and support the grid actively (see also SolarMax Globe 1/2010).

The optional data logger MaxWeb xp monitors all the connected devices. If a plant, grid or inverter error is recognised, MaxWeb xp automatically sends failure reports to the central SolarMax Web portal and – via e-mail or text message – to MaxControl customers. When MaxWeb xp is used, the inverters can also receive remote control commands from the utilities companies and reduce their power accordingly.

MPP operation optimises partial load and shadowing behaviour

When searching for the maximum power point (MPP), Sputnik's customers have a choice: single MPP operation optimises the plant yield in the partial load range via the power-dependent switching of individual power stacks and creates, moreover, redundancy. The multi-MPP operation with three MPP trackers gives installers more flexibility when dimensioning the plant and also

reduces the power losses, which occur during temporary shadowing, by selectively partitioning the solar generator. In this way, high yields can also be guaranteed with different directions, pitches and module types.

Sputnik Engineering will present the new devices at the Intersolar trade fair for the first time, from 9 to 11 June in Munich, Germany. The devices will be available in Germany from July and introduced in Europe in the following months. They are certified by TÜV Rheinland. The two-year standard guarantee can be extended to up to 20 years with the service contract MaxControl. All inverters of the TS series are equipped with RS485 and Ethernet interfaces as a standard. DC and AC circuit breakers are integrated and accessible from outside the device.

Technical Data

	SolarMax 300TS	SolarMax 330TS-SV
AC nominal power	300 kW	330 kW
MPP range	430 to 800 V	450 to 800 V
Max. DC voltage	900 V	900 V
Europ. efficiency	95.5 %	97 %
Max. efficiency	96.3 %	98 %
Dimensions in cm (L x H x W)	2x (120 x 80 x 197)	120 x 80 x 197
Weight, approx.	2,700 kg	1,200 kg
Protection class	IP20	IP20
Ambient temperature	-20 °C...50 °C	-20 °C...50 °C



The Saviours of Yields

SolarMax inverters deliver high yields even under difficult conditions

Neumair & Grieser GmbH from Sielenbach, near Augsburg, Germany, has installed 428 solar modules on completely differently inclined roofs in the Upper-Bavarian city of Altomünster. As an additional challenge, the overhead line tower on the house roof creates shadows for a part of the module surface of the 90-kilowatt plant. Nonetheless, company boss Richard Grieser expects a yield of 1,000 kilowatt hours per kilowatt installed. "The solar plant will have paid for itself in less than ten years", says Grieser, who decided to use 16 string inverters from Sputnik Engineering AG for this installation.

For solar plants from approximately 20 kilowatts power and upwards, central inverters – for example the transformerless SolarMax 20S – are normally the more economical solution. This is true, however, only if the solar modules are mounted on uniform roof surfaces. "When there are differing roof inclinations and pitches, it can make sense,



Pin-point precise: The MPP trackers of 16 SolarMax string inverters find the maximum power point for every module string of this PV plant in Altomünster.

however, to divide the solar plant into smaller units which have nearly the same irradiation conditions and to connect the module strings to string inverters", explains Martin Holland-Cunz, support leader at Sputnik's German branch office Sputnik Engineering GmbH.

In this case, the individual MPP (Maximum Power Point) trackers of each device adapt the current of the respective inverter to the maximum power point of the solar generator. The maxi-

mum power points of the individual module strings can, thus, be different. A further argument for string inverters of Sputnik Engineering AG is their high protection class. "When an operating room is not available, but rather just a free wall or one would like to install the devices outside – this too can be done with our SolarMax string inverters", adds Holland-Cunz.

Weatherproof and high performance

For eight years, Neumair & Grieser GmbH has been installing roof-top solar plants with power ratings of up to 500 kilowatts. While the company built plants with a total power of five megawatts last year, this year that should jump up to ten megawatts.

From the very beginning, both company bosses Richard Grieser and Rudolf Neumair decided to rely on SolarMax inverters. "The SolarMax inverters work without a hitch with the most varying module types. In addition, they have a high efficiency, are very compact and can be installed very easily. Every kind of equipment one needs – be that the DC circuit breaker or the data storage unit – has already been integrated". This is how Grieser explains his preference for SolarMax products.

Plant Data

Power	89.88 kW
Modules	428 polycrystalline solar modules from Kyocera
Inverters	SolarMax 6000 S (14x), SolarMax 4200 S (2x)
Expected Annual Yield	1,000 kWh/kW
Commissioning	May 2009

Plant Data, PV Plant in Gornji Petrovci

Power	81.06 kW
Modules	386 polycrystalline solar modules from Kyocera
Inverters	SolarMax 20S (2x), SolarMax 35S (1x)
Commissioning	December 2009



Higher, Larger, Wider

The Slovenian company Sonel operates its numerous special plants only using SolarMax inverters

As one of the first Slovenian farmers to do so, Andrej Kresnik built his solar power plant on the roofs of his farm. In September 2008, the 36-kilowatt system went into operation in Smartno pri Slovenj Gradcu, and Kresnik invited visitors from the entire country to an Open Door Day. It was a premiere in Slovenia: no photovoltaic system before had ever been equipped with a central inverter.

A few months later, the highest solar plant in Slovenia began generating electricity. The 24.66 kilowatt system, financially supported by the Slovenian government and the European Union, is found in the north-western Slovenian village Javorje, at 1,160 meters above sea level.

In the summer of 2009, three farmers in Podgorje pri Slovenj Gradcu built solar plants on eight roofs with a total power of 129 kilowatts. The location became known as the first solar village of Slovenia.

Convinced of Swiss quality

All three projects, built by the Slovenian company Sonel d.o.o., work with inverters from Sputnik Engineering AG. The company, which is among the first of its kind on the Slovenian photovoltaic market, was founded by Miran Močilnik, Iztok Jelen and Andreja Knez in 2006. Sonel sells turn-key solar power plants, planning services and photovoltaic studies. Convinced of the Swiss quality, the company has relied exclusively upon SolarMax inverters from Sputnik Engineering AG in its photovoltaic plants since 2008.

The largest photovoltaic plant in Slovenia using SolarMax inverters counts among Sonel's current projects. In the north-western city of Gornji Petrovci, this plant should be officially inaugurated in this year. With a power of 81 kilowatts, the freestanding system is the largest in the Prekmurje region. Sonel's



Weatherproof: The inverters of the SolarMax S series can be installed inside and out – even for this freestanding system in Gornji Petrovci.

boss, Andreja Knez, assumes that the solar plant will produce around 82,000 kilowatt hours of environmentally friendly solar electricity every year. Three SolarMax central inverters with nominal powers of 35 and 20 kilowatts transform the direct current from 386 polycrystalline solar modules into grid-compliant

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Feed-in Tariffs in Slovenia from 1 January 2010

	Fixed Price in eurocents per kWh			Operational Support in eurocents per kWh		
	Roof-top	Integrated	Freestanding	Roof-top	Integrated	Freestanding
< 50 kW	38.64	44.43	36.31	33.94	39.73	31.61
from 50 kW to 1 MW	35.34	40.64	33.45	30.64	35.94	28.75
< 5 MW	29.33	33.73	26.97	24.47	28.87	22.11
up to 125 MW	–	–	–	20.77	24.68	19.70



Thinking and Acting beyond Borders

Sputnik Engineering finds a new branch office for international sales, service and consulting

The photovoltaic market in the Czech Republic is booming. Sputnik partner Nobility Solar Projects alone plans to build 40 megawatts by the end of 2010, more than doubling its previously installed photovoltaic power (please also see SolarMax Globe 1/2010). The photovoltaic market is growing in Belgium similarly. Here, too, increased feed-in tariffs were recently introduced for solar plant operators, tariffs which are oriented toward the German Renewable Energies Law and guarantee their operators high returns.

“In the past few years, many European countries have created attractive conditions for the construction of solar plants, and others will follow”, says Daniel Freudiger, Head of Sales & Marketing at the Swiss company head-quarters in Biel. “As a photovoltaic manufacturer, we have to understand the changes in the new photovoltaic markets quickly and offer the appropriate products at the right place and time. Therefore, we need a flexible platform to expand our sales activities”.

That is why, on 1 April of this year, the Swiss inverter manufacturer founded Sputnik Engineering International AG as a new branch office of Sputnik Engineering AG at the headquarters in Biel.



The appropriate products at the right time and right location: With Sputnik Engineering International AG, Daniel Freudiger and his team create a flexible platform to expand sales.

Freudiger will act as its managing director; he will remain Head of Sales & Marketing of Sputnik Engineering AG. Sputnik Engineering International AG will be responsible for the sales, service and customer consultation in all of the countries where Sputnik does not yet have its own branch office.

Nothing will change regarding the business of the already existing branch offices in Germany, France, Italy and Spain. To the markets belonging to Sputnik Engineering International AG count, next to the Czech Republic and Benelux, also Bulgaria, Greece, Great Britain, Austria, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

New local offices in Brussels and Prague

“With Sputnik Engineering International AG we are increasing our flexibility and creating closer proximity to our customers”, explains Freudiger. The new branch office gives Sputnik Engineering the ability to give those countries where a branch office does not yet exist the sales, service and consulting appropriate to their markets. Among Freudiger’s team count, in addition to the inner sales service and the technical sales support, which also operate from Biel, key account managers in offices on location.

For the sales and customer service in the Benelux countries, Sputnik has already opened a new office in Brussels, which is managed by the key account manager Paul van der Goten. Marcel Hoffmann is taking care of the Czech and Slovakian customers of the Swiss inverter manufacturer from the new local office in Prague. Further local sales offices are planned. “Like the radiation from the sun, we also do not know fixed borders when it is a matter of expanding our market presence and improving the spatial proximity to our customers”, says Freudiger.

Sputnik's man in Prague



Interview with Marcel Hoffmann, Key Account Manager in Sputnik's new local office

Marcel Hoffmann will be taking care of Sputnik's customers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The 39-year old brings along professional experience as a sales manager for a beverage dealer in the USA as well as a country manager and key account manager for Czech tool and screw manufacturers.

Before you began working at Sputnik, you were employed at an internationally active screw manufacturer. What motivated you to work for Sputnik?

I wanted to be a part of a reputable company with great opportunities for growth. Therefore, I applied for a job at Sputnik.

What do you like best about your new job?

At Sputnik, by communicating and interacting with my customers, I can contribute to pushing the growth of photovoltaics in the Czech Republic. Sputnik offers me the chance of being a part of an industry that is developing at a quick pace in my country.

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Sunshine in France

Solar power plants in France pay off in spite of lowered remuneration



A second job: The French farmer Jean-Paul Martin harvests corn, wheat, peas and solar electricity.

On a surface of 92 hectares, Jean-Paul Martin plants corn, wheat, peas and beans. In his chicken coops, 47,000 hens lay eggs. Last year, the French farmer from Saint-Gilles near Nîmes equipped their stall and a storage shed for manure with 500 solar modules. The roof-integrated system has an output of 112 kilowatts in total.

Martin, who expects returns from eight to ten percent, wants to supplement his retirement income with the solar plant. When choosing his inverters, he relied on the advice of his installer, Armorgreen from La Mézière, Brittany, and the good reputation of SolarMax products. Armorgreen installed five transformerless central inverters, SolarMax 20S. The devices work at an efficiency of up to 97 percent. Martin has already exceeded the yield he

calculated, of 950 kilowatt hours per kilowatt, by 16 percent in the first eight months since the plant went into operation in August 2009.

Tariffs secured until 2012

For every kilowatt hour of solar electricity fed into the grid, the farmer receives 60.2 eurocents for 20 years. If he had connected his solar plant this year, the tariff would have been 50 eurocents. Since the beginning of this year, operators only receive this latter amount for each kilowatt hour for roof-integrated systems in agriculture or the industry. Nonetheless, the tariff is still attractive especially because the module prices, which make up about 80 percent of the material costs, sank by about 25 percent in 2009.

In January, the French government also reduced the maximum rate for building-integrated systems to 58 eurocents. It now only grants this rate to solar plants integrated in hospitals, educational facilities or apartment buildings. Roof-top plants are now considered "simplified integration" and are remunerated at a rate of 42 eurocents per kilowatt hour. The government sank the basic tariff from 32.8 to 31.4 eurocents. There are surcharges dependent upon the global irradiation for solar plants in the north of France with more than 250 kilowatts power. Plants in Corsica and the overseas departments receive 40 eurocents.

In comparison to the tariffs that are paid in Germany, the French remunerations are still very high in spite of the cuts.

Feed-in Tariffs in France from 12 January 2010

Basic tariff (up to 250 kW)	31.4 eurocents per kWh
Basic tariff (over 250 kW)	31.4 to 37.7 eurocents per kWh (dependent upon the global irradiation in the respective department)
Simplified integration in buildings (modules are parallel to the mounting surface)	42 eurocents per kWh
Building-integrated systems (hospitals, educational facilities, apartment buildings)	58 eurocents per kWh
Building-integrated systems (other buildings)	50 eurocents per kWh
Corsica and overseas departments	40 eurocents per kWh

Interview with Didier Jeannelle, Managing Director of Sputnik Engineering France S.A.R.L.



What moved you to work for Sputnik?

I wanted to work for an international manufacturer who develops high-tech products for the renewable energies branch. It is a very dynamic market, which also fits well with my own values.

What role does environmental protection play in your life?

As a child I lived in Chamonix, surrounded by nature, then in Annecy on a very clean lake in natural surroundings. After I later lived in a filthy city with 22-million inhabitants in Asia, it became very important for me to work for a company that contributes to protecting our environment.

What goals do you have for Sputnik's French branch office?

The expansion of our French branch office and the move to Lyon come at exactly the right time. The French solar market is booming and we can expect stable growth until at least 2012. The future development is dependent upon legislation. I want to make the SolarMax brand better known, as well as our high quality products, sales and services. Moreover, I will continue to expand the partner network in the sector of medium-sized and large plants as well as sales in the French overseas departments.

Indeed, solar plant operators can continue to expect high returns. Additionally, the tariffs in France are secure until



Plant Data, Saint-Gilles

Power	111.78 kW
Modules	496 polycrystalline solar modules from Solon
Inverters	SolarMax 20S (5x)
Commissioning	August 2009

2012 and will not be readjusted to the depression every year as they are in Germany.

The SolarMax products have established themselves on the French mainland as well as in the French overseas departments for many years. While Sputnik Engineering exported four percent of its inverters to France in 2008, one year later this number had jumped

to ten percent. For private solar plants, Sputnik is already the number two in France; the market share for medium-sized and large installations will grow short-term (please also see page 14). Jean-Paul Martin is very pleased with his SolarMax installation. He is already planning the construction of another photovoltaic plant.

► Continued from page 9

alternating current. The operator will receive the increased feed-in tariff – 35.97 eurocents for each kilowatt hour he produces – for 15 years.

New remuneration rates are valid for 15 years

Last year Slovenia introduced new feed-in tariffs for renewable energies. Now, plant operators are paid the remuneration rates for 15 years in full. Before they had to expect cuts after five and ten years. The amount of the tariff is based on plant size and type of installation. Building-integrated photovoltaic plants with up to 50 kilowatts of power receive the highest rate, large freestanding plants the lowest remuneration.

Plant operators can decide between fixed prices and the so-called operation-



The largest freestanding system in the region: This solar plant in north-slovenian Gornji Petrovci has a power output of 81 kilowatts.

al support. The fixed price is received by those who sell their electricity to the state utility. The operational support, in contrast, is conceived for electricity producers who either use their electricity themselves or sell it on the free market.

Sonel wants to continue expanding its sales and install solar plants with a total power of a megawatt this year. "Our company is growing and we are pleased that we can grow with such an excellent partner as Sputnik Engineering AG", says Andreja Knez.



Sputnik expands in France

The new managing director, Didier Jeannelle, develops Sputnik's French branch office

Didier Jeannelle heads Sputnik's French branch office Sputnik Engineering France S.A.R.L. At the end of 2009, he took over this responsibility from Daniel Freudiger, who will concentrate upon the further development of new markets as the managing director of the new branch office Sputnik Engineering International AG and as Head of Sales & Marketing at the Swiss headquarters (please also see page 10).

Jeannelle strengthens Sputnik's presence in France. The 43-year-old Frenchman brings along 15 years of experience with technologically advanced products. Before he began at Sputnik, he worked as a key account manager, managing director and sales manager at a manufacturer in the semiconductor industry. "With its high-tech products, Sputnik Engineering contributes to protecting the environment, which, for me personally, is tremendously important. It is an exciting challenge for me to further expand the French branch office", is how Jeannelle describes his motivation. The boss in France wants to quickly increase the number of his employees to six. Currently he is supported by the Key Account Managers Denis Ferra and Jocelyn Rogron, who work from Grenoble and Nantes, as

well as from two sales employees at the new location in Saint Priest.

From Paris to Lyon

In April, Sputnik Engineering France S.A.R.L. moved from Paris to Saint Priest near Lyon. "In south-eastern France, one finds the largest amount of solar plants, especially in the region of Rhône-Alpes. Lyon, too, has become a centre of attraction for the solar industry. About half of all French PV installers have their company headquarters in this region. They build a large part of the French solar parks", explains Jeannelle, who wants to push



Equipped for further growth: The new company headquarters of Sputnik's French branch office in Saint Priest near Lyon.

the sales and service of SolarMax products in France, create a closer contact to customers and expand the training program.

His new company building, equipped with a heat pump and soon with a solar plant, in Technoland Parc is only 20 minutes from the inner city of Lyon and the Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport. "I assume that the French solar market will continue its boom", says Jeannelle. "For plants in the private sector, Sputnik is already the number two in France. In the future we will continue to expand our market share for medium-sized and large plants with central inverters".

New Address from April 2010

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Service at a Top Level

Sputnik offers individual customer training seminars, the most modern service tools and perfect all-round care

Thursday, 8 April, 9:00 a.m. in the SolarMax Training Center in Biel. René Hechtl and Fabian Uhl are training seven SolarMax dealers from Belgium and Slovenia. The supporting engineers explain the way the SolarMax inverters and the data communication function, as well as the service and monitoring package MaxControl.

In addition to the training rooms at the Swiss company headquarters, Sputnik has equipped other SolarMax Training Centers at the branch offices in Lyon, Neuhausen, Madrid and Milan. The respective branch office announces its programme and the dates for the free training sessions on the internet page www.solarmax.com.

Everywhere where a SolarMax supporter can be found, SolarMax training seminars take place – even in the new markets covered by Sputnik Engineering International AG (please also see page 10). Furthermore, Sputnik Engineering offers its customers in-house training seminars. “This way dealers can invite, for example, installers to their headquarters, and we train them there”, explains Hechtl.

The program of the SolarMax Training Center consists of eleven modules that Sputnik’s trainers can adapt to the most

differing customer’s needs, individually. From the foundations of photovoltaics to the programming of the data communication and the technical details of new products all the way to plant dimensioning and commissioning, they assemble the fitting modules for end customers, dealers, installers, planners and system integrators from all over Europe.

Strong on the market thanks to proximity to customers

The SolarMax Service Center creates even closer proximity to customers with its customer hotline, which Sputnik has integrated in the Swiss headquarters. The investments in the most modern service tools and qualified employees ensure perfect all-round care all over

Europe – no matter if in German, English, French, Italian or Spanish.

A new software application records all the telephone calls, faxes and e-mails centrally. According to their capacity, competency and language skills, the appropriate hot-line employees answer customers’ questions. Every call is recorded to enable a targeted error analysis.

“We do not only want to manufacture high quality products, but we also want to convince our customer of our service”, explains Sputnik managing director Christoph von Bergen. “Many of our customers thank us by working with us for many years.”

The SolarMax Service Center

Accessibility of the Service Center	Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Telephone Numbers	<p>Calls from:</p> <p>Germany +49 (0) 180 276 5 276</p> <p>Switzerland +41 (0) 32 346 56 06</p> <p>France +33 (0) 4 72 79 17 97</p> <p>Italy +39 (0) 362 312 279</p> <p>Spain +34 (0) 902 16 06 26</p> <p>Belgium +32 (0) 2 535 77 32</p> <p>Czech Republic +420 222 191 456</p> <p>Other countries +41 (0) 32 346 56 06</p> <p>Fax +41 (0) 32 346 56 26</p> <p>E-mail hotline@solarmax.com</p>

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