



EUROPEAN  
SOLAR THERMAL  
INDUSTRY FEDERATION



- ❑ REDUCES ADMIN & TESTING COST
- ❑ INCREASES SALES OPPORTUNITIES
- ❑ PROVIDES ACCESS TO EU MARKET
- ❑ ENCOURAGES GROWTH OF MARKET
- ❑ PROVIDES CERTIFIED PRODUCT QUALITY

FAST BECOMING THE "DE FACTO"  
EUROPEAN SOLAR THERMAL MARK  
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SOLAR KEYMARK

## **GREENoneTEC's GERHARD RABENSTEINER:**

**All newly developed collector lines will be keymarked. This is a clear commitment to the solar keymark**

Gerhard Rabensteiner's company specialises in the production of **high-quality solar collectors**.

The factory has 8 production lines, each with its own basic technology which forms the basis for more than 100 collector alternatives and assembly solutions.



- **You have several product lines. Are they all Solar Keymarked? Why do you consider the Solar Keymark as so important?**

Not all the current lines have the Keymark. However, we have strategically decided that all major lines and all newly developed collector lines will be keymarked. This is a clear commitment to the Solar Keymark.

The final importance of the Keymark still has to be demonstrated. However, we expect the Keymark to be the only European collector quality mark of importance and this will facilitate the creation of a single common EU market.

- **What advantages has the Solar Keymark brought to your business?**

So far, as with any investment, the expenditure comes before the revenue. We expect the Solar Keymark will provide us with simplified procedures for both new products and new markets in the near future. France has already shown commitment and also Spain is about to change its rules, hopefully in favour of the Solar Keymark. Also, strangely enough, we have received some interest in the Solar Keymark from some Asian countries who clearly see the benefits of this solar quality mark.

- **How much maintenance is required to keep the Keymark?**

It just involves maintaining our regular manufacturing controls, something which you also have to maintain for a manufacturing Quality Management System.

- **How do your customers perceive the Solar Keymark and has it helped with either individual or corporate customers and regional or national governments?**

More and more customers appreciate the Keymark. It is something that is actively marketed by us. We want to make it happen and want to invite all the solar thermal industry stakeholders to join us in making it happen.

## SOLAR KEYMARK - OVERCOMING TRADE BARRIERS; PROVIDING ACCESS TO INCENTIVES

### 7 reasons why you need the Keymark:

- ❑ Reduced testing and administration costs
- ❑ Certified product & manufacturing system
- ❑ Enhanced customer confidence
- ❑ Improved opportunities to increase turnover
- ❑ Improved image for your company
- ❑ Improved image of solar thermal industry
- ❑ Passport to European solar thermal markets

Solar Keymark is the first internationally recognised quality mark for solar thermal products. It is based on three issues:

- ❑ Initial type testing to EN 12975 or 12976
- ❑ An implemented manufacturing Quality Management System
- ❑ Annual review of QMS and bi-annual product inspection

By obtaining the Solar Keymark, you clearly demonstrate the consistent factory made quality of your product and also qualify for regulatory and financial incentive schemes in many European national markets. It is fast becoming the recognised route to market.



### Yesterday barriers to market entry:

There was huge growth in the solar thermal industry and support programmes were implemented in various countries. Different requirements in separate incentive programmes became an obstacle to market entry.

### Today common acceptance of the Keymark:

Solar thermal is becoming mainstream and most countries accept the Solar Keymark or lesser standard (e.g. EN 12975). However, a few countries (e.g. currently Spain and Germany) ask for additional regulations.

### Tomorrow completely open EU market:

The aim is to realise a completely open European market by making sure the Solar Keymark is recognised as the Europe-wide quality mark and is accepted by all subsidy schemes.

## **THERMOMAX'S KATHY McVEIGH:**

**The Keymark introduced a level-playing-field as the first internationally-recognised solar mark**

Kathy McVeigh's company is one of Europe's leading manufacturers of **evacuated tube solar collectors**. They are Europe's specialists in the production of **glass-to-metal seal tube collectors**.



- **You obtained the first collector Solar Keymark. Why do you consider the Solar Keymark as so important?**

**It is important to Thermomax for 2 main reasons:**

- This is a quality mark recognised in our various markets. It is important for the solar industry because it introduced a level-playing-field as the first internationally-recognised solar mark.
- There is no doubt that as it becomes more widely recognised by both industry and government, it will provide a vast reduction in investment in national certification procedures.

- **What advantages has the Solar Keymark brought to your business?**

The Solar Keymark is a useful marketing tool as it is a symbol of a quality product. We are currently in the process of bringing new products to market and there is no doubt that because we need one certificate for each new product, the Solar Keymark will simplify our procedures.

- **How do your customers perceive the Solar Keymark and has it helped with national or regional governments?**

We hope that even more regional and national governments recognise that the Keymark as a tool they can use to ensure protection of the end user. We all know that at the moment demand is rapidly rising for solar thermal products.

With low-quality imported goods often available, which combined with lack of knowledge of solar, it would be easy to foresee a situation where low quality goods with a poor performance and reliability are used, leading to disappointment with the solar system. The Keymark provides a certain protection against this.

## BENEFITS OF THIS VOLUNTARY MARK

Sometimes the market feels as if it is awash with a large ards and directives to achieve the necessary market compliance. To simplify understanding of achieving EU market needs:

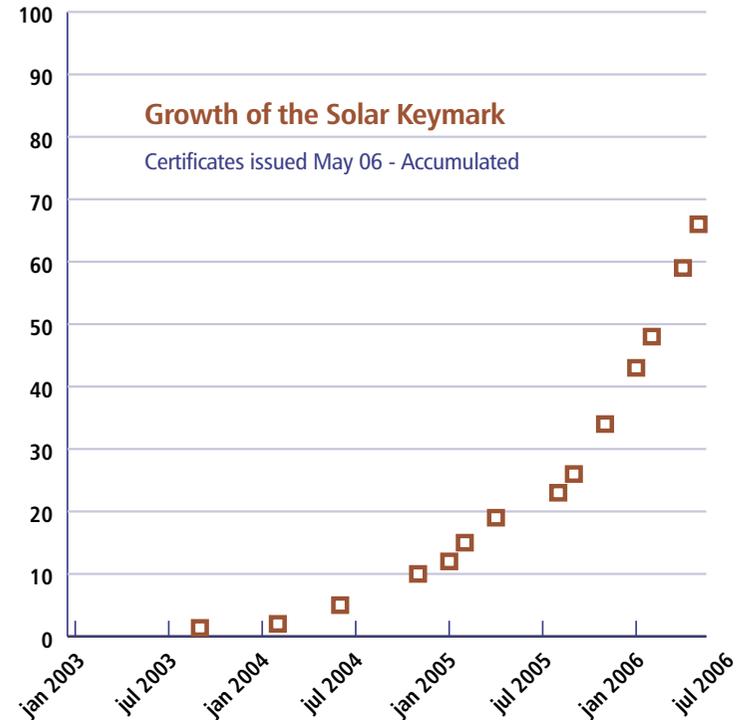
- The **obligatory CE marking** shows conformity with European directives.
- The **voluntary Keymark** certifies conformity with European standards and so offers market opportunities.
- **National marks** certify conformity with requirements of national member state certification schemes

If the EU has produced a directive relevant to a particular product, then manufacturers selling that product have to show conformity by attaching the relevant CE mark. For the time being, in relation to the Pressure Equipment Directive, only very large collectors can be CE marked. Please visit [www.solarkeymark.org](http://www.solarkeymark.org) for more clarification on this subject. In the next 5 to 10 years, in relation to the Construction Product Directive, it is anticipated that collectors will need a CE mark.

CEN and CENLEC, the European Committee for Standardisation introduced the Keymark. This Keymark has been applied to a number of products such as ceramic tiles, condoms and industrial safety helmets. The Solar Keymark is a **voluntary third-party certification mark**. By obtaining the Solar Keymark, the solar product qualifies for nearly all the different member state regulatory and financial incentive schemes. The voluntary Solar Keymark scheme encourages the further expansion of the European solar thermal market by improving market confidence in solar products.

Of course, if you only supply solar thermal products in a single member state, you can still qualify for national certification schemes by qualifying for the relevant national standards but these national standards will not enable you to sell the product in all the other member states. The Solar Keymark will become the voluntary passport to the global EU market.

The Solar Keymark was developed by ESTIF and CEN with the support of the European Commission.



### Indicative Cost of Solar Keymark

Certification costs for one collector/system:

- First year costs approx: € 2000-3000
- Annual costs following years approx: € 2000

This includes CEN fee & audits/inspections but excludes type testing n.b. reduced prices for collector sub types

## **SOLAHART'S ROB MEESTERS:**

### **The Keymark dramatically reduced our testing, certification and administration costs**

Rob Meesters' company is a leading manufacturer of solar hot water systems for residential and commercial applications. In February 2005 Solahart obtained the first Solar Keymark issued for a **factory made system** according to standard EN 12976.

- **You obtained the first "system" Solar Keymark? Why do you consider the Solar Keymark as so important?**

Solar Keymark gives the end consumer a reliable independently-tested quality product.

- **What advantages has the Solar Keymark brought to your business?**

Since the solar market is growing in general at this moment, it is difficult for us to say how much of this is generated by the Solar Keymark. However, it has dramatically reduced our testing, certification and administration costs because we are active in 20 European countries.

- **Are you aware of any disadvantages or problems with the Solar Keymark and how could it be improved?**

We only see advantages with the Solar Keymark; testing, inspection and certification is all well organised. We hope that all European countries will accept the Solar Keymark without any extra requirements in the near future.

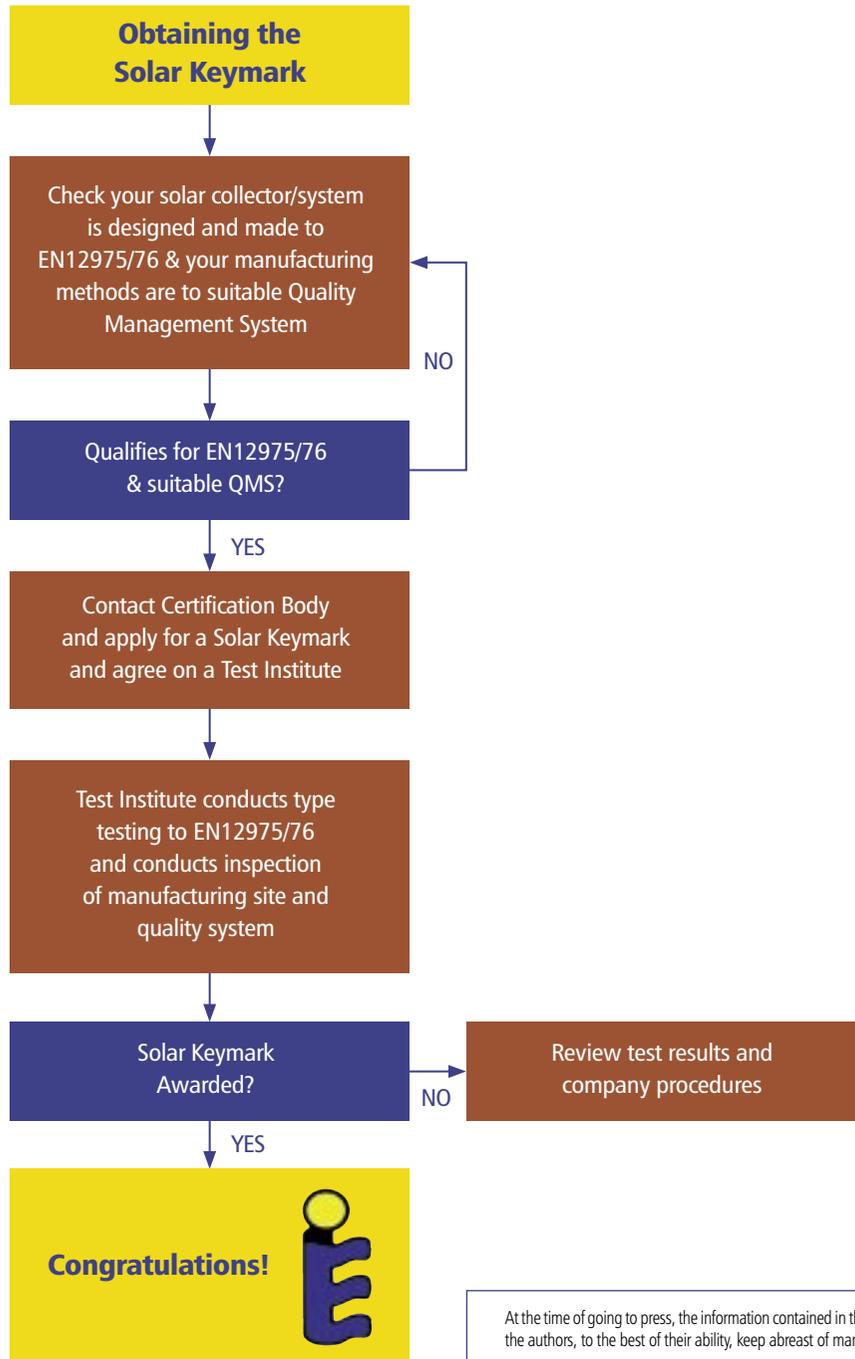
- **Was the Solar Keymark easy to obtain? How many months did it take from initiating the process to issuing of the certificate? And how much human resource was allocated to this work?**

Yes, it was easy to obtain. It took us about 3 working days to prepare for the organisation of the whole Solar Keymarking process. Therefore, there wasn't a significant administrative burden in obtaining the Keymark. The type testing process (obtaining EN 12976 for a system) took about 5 months to completion because the solar system had to be tested outside and we were dependant on the weather. For collectors, we can test indoors so the type testing process (obtaining EN 12975 for a collector) takes about 3 months.

- **How much maintenance is required to keep the Keymark?**

This is not so much work because the Certification Body keeps us informed when an inspection has to take place. Each year, we spend about 2 working days in total on the inspection & information gathering process.





## How do I obtain a Solar Keymark?

A Solar Keymark can only be issued by an accredited and empowered “**Certification Body**” after the product has been tested by an accredited “**Testing Laboratory**”. To confirm the current list of Certification Bodies and Test Institutes, please go to the Solar Keymark website.

The Certification Body is the organisation responsible for issuing the Solar Keymark certificates and the Test Institute is the organization for all the testing; both type testing at the institute and checking the product and the Quality Management System as implemented at the factory. The Certification Bodies are empowered by the CEN Certification Board (CCB), the European Committee for Standardisation.

Please contact your most appropriate Certification Body & complete their application form to start the keymarking process. Please note that certain Test Institutes work with specific Certification Bodies.

Please check [www.solarkeymark.org](http://www.solarkeymark.org) for latest updates.

**Obtaining the Solar Keymark Requirements:**

- Factory product selection for type testing by Test Laboratory inspector
- Collector/System type test at Test Laboratory to EN 12975/76
- Inspection of manufacturing Quality Management System

**Maintaining the Solar Keymark Requirements:**

- Annual check of manufacturing Quality Management System documentation
- Every 2 years, physical inspection of Keymarked product selected from production or stock by Test Laboratory inspector

At the time of going to press, the information contained in this document was, as far as the authors are aware, complete and accurate. However, the solar thermal market in Europe is constantly changing and whilst the authors, to the best of their ability, keep abreast of market conditions, we take no responsibility whatsoever for business or other decisions taken as a result of the information contained within this brochure.

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## Intelligent Energy Europe

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This brochure has been compiled by ESTIF and developed as part of the "Large open EU market for Solar Thermal products" project a.k.a. Solar Keymark II.

### The project partners are:

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Arsenal Research | CSTB      |
| Demokritos       | ESTIF     |
| GREENoneTEC      | INETI     |
| ITC              | ITW       |
| Solahart         | SolarKey  |
| SP               | Thermomax |



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