

Tripoli energy storage industry

Policies and ethics

Francesco Del Pizzo, head of network development and dispatching strategies at Terna, announced the huge level of interest from battery developers on Dec. 2, 2024, during the first day of the Italia Solare Forum trade event, in Rome.

At the show, Del Pizzo said Terna expects Italy will have installed around 7.5 GW of renewables plants during 2024, with 8 GW or 9 GW expected in 2025. The manager said a flood of utility-scale sites is on the way with 5.5 GW authorized and set to take shape in 2025.

Dr Konrad Wojnarowski, undersecretary of state at the Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, opened this week's Large Scale Solar Central Eastern Europe conference in Warsaw by pointing to these figures, and explaining that they had driven a rapid change in Poland's power sector.

September saw the country's coal sector provide less than half of the country's electricity generation for the first time in history, according to the undersecretary, and October saw renewable power, driven by solar, account for 30% of the country's electricity generation, developments that Wojnarowski called a "breakthrough" for the country's renewable power sector.

"The national development strategy [defines] - after consultation with ministries, organisations, entrepreneurs and society, of course - the basic conditions, objective and directions of the country's development in social, economic and spatial dimensions over a period of ten to 15 years," said Wojnarowski, of the government's plans to build on this recent growth.

The undersecretary's speech touched on a number of topics that would be discussed in greater depth later during the conference: the importance of batteries in tackling grid challenges, the need to engage private investors in the Eastern European solar sector and how risk can best be managed in a high-potential industry.

The rapid pace of growth in the Eastern European solar sector has created challenges for the region's energy infrastructure, and speakers and attendees alike expressed concern about how best the region's grids can tackle this recent uptick in solar generation.

These concerns are borne out in the figures for some of the region's largest electricity grids. In Poland, transmission system operator (TSO) Polskie Sieci Elektroenergetyczne had curtailed 13GWh of solar generation alone as of May this year, while the Bulgarian Association for Production, Storage, and Trading of Electricity reported a 35GW pipeline of new solar and wind capacity awaiting for grid connection as of August 2023.

At a panel on grids, speakers discussed alternative technological options to alleviate grid connection issues - including the addition of more storage capacity - and greater awareness of the priorities of other actors in the sector. Robin Hirschl, CEO of financier PV-Invest, said that the current means of assessing the value and production of energy production, distribution and storage is lacking, and that "the whole market needs to be a bit more intelligent."

"We are ready, and we are 100% convinced that we need to move away from this stupid megawatt-hours [approach] to more intelligent systems, that includes batteries, that might include electrolyzers, green hydrogen [and] forecasting models [so] that we have the right energy balancing in both directions," said Hirschl.

"In the last 45 minutes I have revised, a bit, my opinion about grid operators," Hirschl added; by speaking on a panel comprised of himself and three grid operators, he expressed a newfound respect for grid operators to engage with technologies, such as storage, and consider new ways of working to alleviate grid capacity issues.

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