Press release

Christophe Ballif wins 2016 Becquerel Prize

Neuchâtel-Lausanne, 21 May 2016 – CSEM and EPFL wish to congratulate Professor Christophe Ballif, the winner of the 2016 Becquerel Prize. This award was created by the European Commission to recognize outstanding contributions by an individual to the development of solar power. Winning one of the world's two most prestigious awards in this field is a crowning achievement for Ballif, who has devoted 20 years to harnessing the sun's energy.

The Becquerel Prize Committee announced that this year's prize will be awarded to Swiss professor Christophe Ballif. The award recognizes Ballif's achievements in solar technology research and industrialization, including his research on high-efficiency crystalline heterojunction solar cells and multi-junction cells. Ballif's work ranges from aspects of materials science and interfaces in different types of solar cells to manufacturing and production processes, without forgetting the development of reliable solar modules and solar modules with architectural appeal. More than 400 frequently cited scientific and technical papers and numerous patents attest to the depth of Ballif's work and his vast contribution to the field.

Harnessing renewable energy while creating value for the economy

Ballif heads both EPFL's Photovoltaics-Laboratory in Neuchâtel, which focuses on fundamental research, and CSEM's PV-center, which is devoted to transferring solar technology to industry. Ballif draws on this dual role to highlight the benefits of solar power for both the economy and society. His efforts were recognized earlier this year when CSEM won the Swiss Environmental Prize for the white solar panels developed by Ballif's team.

Recognition for the city of Neuchâtel

The Becquerel Prize is awarded to an individual in a scientific, technical or economic field for globally recognized achievements in solar technology research. The award was created by the European Commission in 1989 to mark the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the photovoltaic effect by French physicist Alexandre Edmond Becquerel. This is the second time a researcher working in Neuchâtel has received the award, after Arvind Shah, the founder of EPFL's Photovoltaic-Laboratory, won it in 2007. It is an acknowledgement of the outstanding work being done there in pursuit of an attractive and accessible form of renewable energy that will help to create a more sustainable world.

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About CSEM

CSEM – Technologies that make the difference

CSEM is a research and development center (public-private partnership) specializing in microtechnology, nanotechnology, microelectronics, system engineering, photovoltaics and information and communications technologies. More than 450 highly qualified specialists work for CSEM in Neuchâtel, Alpnach, Muttenz, Landquart and Zurich.

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About EPFL

EPFL is a technical university at the cutting edge of training, research and technology transfer (www.epfl.ch)

EPFL, located in Lausanne, Switzerland, is one of Europe's most cosmopolitan technical universities. Its 10,000 students and 5,000 staff come from more than 120 different countries. In addition to its main campus in Lausanne, the school has specialized campuses in Geneva (biotechnology), Sion (energy), Fribourg (construction) and Neuchâtel (microengineering).