

# Power up in all weathers



Maria Stefanidou

Maria Stefanidou, Sales Director at Mounting Systems, gave PES Solar an interesting insight into the importance of racking systems. Just outside of Berlin, this German manufacturer supplies a whole range of products to our industry. The latest is for solar car ports. Read on to find out more ...

**PES:** Hi Maria, it's a pleasure to welcome you to PES. To start us off, would you like to give us a brief overview of Mounting Systems?

**Maria Stefanidou:** Mounting Systems is the only racking system manufacturer in Germany. Our production site is in Rangsdorf, 30 minutes outside Berlin, where



we produce a whole range of products for pitched and flat roofs as well as ground mount including solar carports.

Manufacturing products in-house means we are in full control of the system and the product: from the raw material all the way to the delivery to the customer.

Being a large manufacturer, we also make parts for many other brands all over the world, giving us a unique way into many markets. We are selling our products with our Mounting Systems brand, as well as private label.

**PES:** We know that sustainable policies are becoming more of a requirement for businesses and cities want to become greener, we wondered what effect this has had on your solutions?

**MS:** As a business in the renewable energy sector, sustainable trends and policies can have a huge impact on our business. The phasing out of fossil fuels and nuclear power will bring business opportunities for many companies and industries on the one hand, and independence in energy supply on the other.

In many countries incentive programs are in place to support, homeowners for example, to buy solar systems for their roof. As a PV-manufacturer we excel this transition by providing attractive systems for the installation of PV modules.

We developed the solar carports to further provide solutions to help stakeholders choose to install green power options, may it be homeowners, businesses or governmental institutions.

**PES:** Could you tell us about some of the structures you create for solar modules?

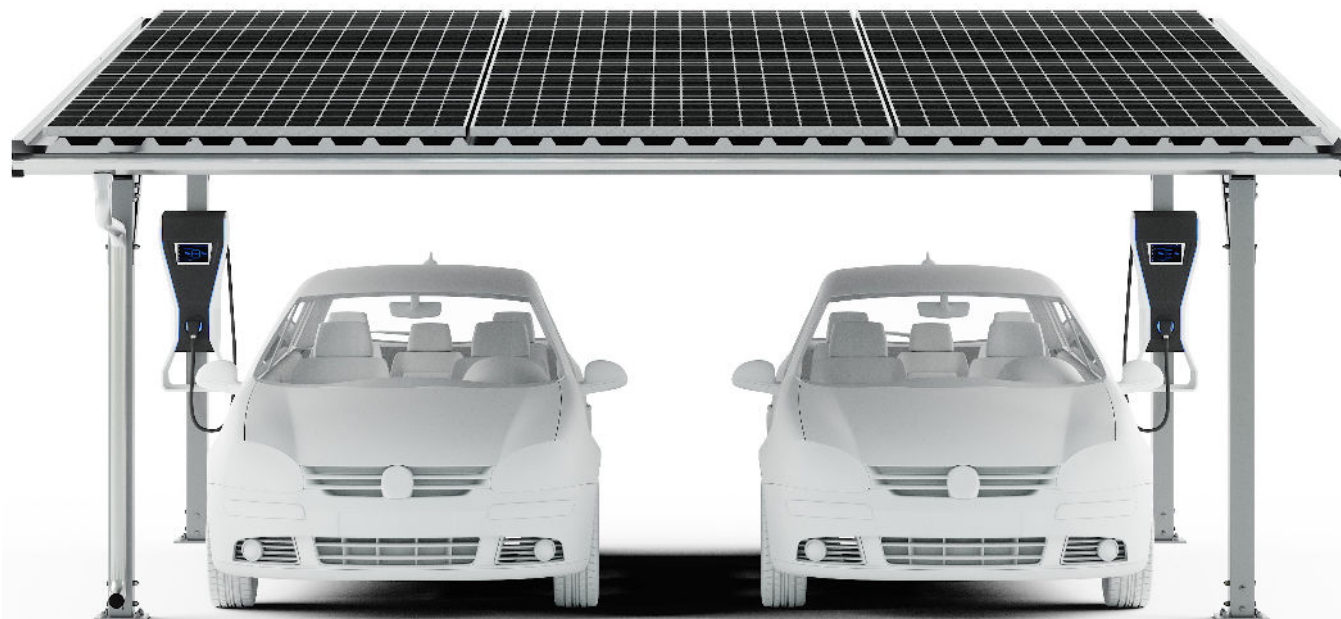
**MS:** We offer a wide range of products and we are constantly in the process of developing new systems that will drive sales in the industry forward.

This year we released the solar carports and we are also optimizing the trapezoidal rail system, triangle system, as well as a new flat-roof system. At Mounting Systems, we always find a solution for every project, and if we see demand for a new racking technology, we are quick to engage the product management team.

One way to recognize one of our products is the module clamp, it has an inner-click technology and is used on all our systems.

**PES:** Are there a variety of designs or is it





Double charging station

**one fit for all, with just a variation in size?**

**MS:** I'm pleased to say, we have developed 3 versions for the 3 uses that we identified.

E-Port Wings, which are large scale commercial sized areas such as airports, supermarket, public parking lots etc. For these projects, getting the maximum output is important, and so this is why we use a double-sided carport. As the name suggests it has a foundation in the middle and covers, through wing-like arms, both sides.

Between each foundation up to 6 cars can be charged, where two thirds of the parking lots can be equipped with a charging infrastructure.

E-Port Line, is for medium scale businesses that want to have a charging infrastructure, perfect for about 9-12 parking lots. The cars will be parked on a line and two thirds of them can be charged.

E-Port Home, for the domestic small to larger households. Homeowners with one or two cars, can now install a high quality and

good-looking solar carport in their driveway for an affordable price.

The E-Port Home is offered as single and double for respectively one car and 10 solar panels or two cars with 15 solar panels. It's also possible to have additional features added such as led lights, preferred color and more luxurious design for those who wants the best of the best for their electric vehicle.

We sell the E-Port Home through our trusted wholesalers around Europe

**PES:** Why are these important to the environment, customer and end user, what are the tangible benefits in terms of sustainability and cost reduction?

**MS:** Cars need a parking space, and if that car also is electric, a charging infrastructure is needed. A solar carport, serves multiple needs with one solution, it produced energy and protects the car from strong sun or rough weather.

This multipurpose use on its own is valuable for a homeowner or a business owner, who wants to have a modern, cost-efficient and sustainable solution. Additionally, being energy independent gives freedom and can reduce fixed costs.

**PES:** Who and where are your main customers?

**MS:** Our strongest market is Germany, and we have an established presence in almost all the EU countries. Our sales strategy is transparent and loyal. Therefore, we limit our partnerships in each country to just a handful of wholesalers, supporting them with marketing, product trainings and handing over leads.



Single charging station

‘The development of Mounting Systems has been really promising and we are determined to gain a higher share of sales in the European market.’

Developing strong partnership gives us the benefit of long-lasting deals, where it's easier to calculate production forecast. For example, in 2019 we managed to deliver 95% of all our products on time, which we only managed due to the close communication with our partners.

We also work with larger project companies (EPC). They work project for project and do not keep stock of our products, which can make it challenging to have accurate production forecasts.

For a manufacturer it's very important to work with project-based businesses as well, because the people working in project-based businesses often are very knowledgeable about the newest systems on the market, new market opportunities and upcoming challenges. We look at these partnerships as a source for market intelligence and a nice way to develop a good network in the industry.

**PES:** Geographically speaking are there any new markets you would like to break into?

**MS:** Spain! Spain is a unique market due to the industry knowledge that is there, and that the market is finally recovering, after years with a very conservative policy, which stopped most of the solar industry over the past years.

Now, finally the market is attractive to investors again, and due to the increasing pressure from the European Union to increase renewable shares in the grid, the market is recovering. This year we exhibited at the Genera fair in Madrid and was overwhelmed with the success. We really look forward to seeing the development the



House with double charging station

next few months.

In addition to Spain we are also focusing on Scandinavia, which is a slow market, but with a big buying power and with strong focus on sustainable technologies. We are starting in Sweden, with the aim to eventually deliver our products to Denmark, Norway and Finland.

**PES:** What do you think will be the greatest opportunities and challenges for the solar industry in the general and Mounting Systems in particular, over the next few years?

**MS:** From a sales perspective, the solar industry sales channels are messy, which puts price pressure on racking producers and results in non-comparable pricing between competitors. This can be frustrating for customers, since they have no transparency

when they are deciding for a partner.

The development of Mounting Systems has been really promising and we are determined to gain a higher share of sales in the European market. New marketing campaigns and a refreshed focus on our brand will support that vision and bring a strong identity that all stakeholders can recognize.

We have a new internal structure and a strong and supportive investor. So, we are focusing on creating additional values for our partners. We have hired a complete product, innovation and engineering team, with solar experience and top engineering expertise.

We can already see promising results through creative and realistic product developments.

 [www.mounting-systems.com](http://www.mounting-systems.com)