Interview: Prof. Dr. Sener Oktik; SISECAM Science & Technology Center

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**Converting sunshine into electricity**

*One of this year’s Opening Speakers at GPD 2019 uses his love of sunshine to explore innovations in materials science. Ever since* ***Prof. Dr. Sener Oktik*** *of SISECAM Science & Technology Center studied at Durham University in the UK, he’s been working to efficiently convert sunshine to electricity.*

On June 25, in Tampere, Finland, Oktik will be one of the world-class speakers that will open the event. He will give the audience a view of the global flat glass market, address the role of multifunctional coatings and elaborate on the most recent technological developments.

Prof. Dr. Oktik fell in love with researching materials for renewable energy when he was first attending university in 1979, where his supervisor suggested he do a PhD on converting sunshine into electricity. “And ever since, this has been my passion – working to develop better materials for photovoltaic devices,” he says.

**Researching better materials throughout Europe**

After Oktik finished his studies, he taught at various universities throughout Europe and researched material science, coatings and devices to reach better results in optic, optoelectronic and photovoltaic applications together with renewable energy systems. “I’d say I’m an expert on photovoltaic materials and devices,” explains Oktik. “But my main focus is on smart coatings and making devices with coatings.”

Since 2012, Oktik has been the Chief Research & Technological Development Officer (CTO) at Sisecam Group in Turkey, researching, developing and designing technology, and holds positions in the International Commission on Glass and the Turkish Solar Energy Industry Association.

**Where all walks of science converge**

“Currently, I’m entertaining the idea of using transparent photovoltaic devices on architectural façades. That’s because it’s environmental, it’s experiencing exciting times – and it’s based on fundamental science with technical applications. It spans a large spectrum of physics, chemistry, electricity, electronics – really anything you can think of falls within that subject of generating electricity from sunshine,” says Oktik.

According to him, the photovoltaic sector is growing fast. “This year alone, the total installation of photovoltaics throughout the world reached about 500 GW. Within the next years, we are talking about the number in terawatts for photovoltaics,” he continues. Meanwhile, glass plays an important role in this growth. But multifunctional coatings on glass will just make this material even more important for our future.

**What he hopes to learn and take away from this GPD**

Prof. Dr. Oktik attended his first GPD two years ago and found it very impressive, useful and well organized. This year, he is looking forward to meeting entrepreneurs from startups. “We can help the startups, and they can help us, because I feel most good ideas come from aspiring and dynamic minds,” Oktik says.