



# NEWSLETTER

April 2018



## **Editorial: AIE's next journey**

**By: Giorgia Concas, General Secretary**

Electrical contractors are helping to power Europeans everyday – and I am now honoured to be able to help power electrical contractors in getting them the tools they need to succeed across the EU. As the new General Secretary of AIE, I am excited to start this new journey and take this amazing association up into the next gear.

Thanks to the motivated and knowledgeable former Secretariat and members, AIE has established itself as a key association in the electricity sector, and has been working to be the voice of electrical contractors in Europe for over 60 years now. AIE is now recognised as an expert and has helped influence strategic topics at the EU-level such as training and qualification of contractors, electrical safety and building technologies.

This deep-rooted association has been there for all the big technological revolutions and political developments that have transformed and shaped the electricity sector as it is today.

However, as this sector continues to evolve, so to must the association.

This is why I am thrilled to now have the opportunity to work with all of AIE's members to take the association to the next level.

First off, I would like to extend AIE's reach, exploring more opportunities to grow and diversify our financial resources, covering more countries under our membership, improving visibility with enhanced communication tools and outreach, and collaborating with other associations in Brussels and beyond. Altogether, these elements will ensure that the voice of electrical contractors is heard loud and clear at the EU-level.

As we expand on what is possible for the association, AIE can have an even greater influence on the big issues that will impact electrical contractors across Europe, to ensure that all electricity systems are installed safely and efficiently. This is especially true with the push towards the greater electrification of our society. As AIE's new General Secretary, I will help make sure that AIE is at the negotiation table to establish the needs and recommendations of electrical contractors on issues from emerging technologies to digitalisation to low carbon buildings.

Finally, I will try and facilitate initiatives that boost the attractiveness of the sector for the younger generation, and that also give the current electrical contractors the training they need to stay up-to-date on all the latest trends and technology. This way, the electrical contractor is sure to be highly qualified throughout their whole career and contribute to the expertise of the sector, from apprenticeship to retirement.

However, as I know there are big shoes to fill and this is a tall order for one person, I am counting on the commitment and knowledge of the great members of AIE to help me turn it up a gear and take this association to the next level.

AIE has been on the road for a while now, and I can't wait to be a part of its next journey.

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## **Highlight: AIE's new Secretariat and the modern electrical contractor – an interview with Thomas Carlsson, President of AIE.**



**AIE:** *Since you have been President of AIE, the association has evolved greatly with the new cooperation agreement with SolarPower Europe and new Secretariat - how will these changes help take AIE to the next level?*

**TC:** First of all, I would like to thank our former Secretariat team, Evelyne and Carla, for doing excellent work over the past years. Without them, AIE wouldn't be where it is today, and we are very grateful for their work and dedication. I would also like to welcome Giorgia Concas in her new role as AIE's General Secretary. With her years of experience in EU energy policy, she will bring a new perspective to AIE's work, opening the door to new and exciting opportunities for the association. Alyssa Pek, our new

Communication Advisor, will also be a great asset to the AIE - with her great communication skills, I am sure she will maximise AIE's visibility and outreach.

Electrical contractors are evolving constantly to keep up with all the latest technological trends that impact the sector – similarly AIE is also evolving. Over the past decade, the electricity system in Europe has transformed dramatically with more renewable energy, digitalisation, and sector coupling creating unheard of opportunities for electrical contractors. The job description of electrical contractors has grown exponentially with these transformations, and will continue to grow as society becomes more and more electrified. Electrical contractors must stay on the cutting-edge of all these developments to ensure that they get the training they need to electrify Europe safely and efficiently.

This is why it made sense to cooperate with another association that is on the frontlines of these new technologies. SolarPower Europe is the largest trade association in Europe representing the interests of the solar industry and its reputation and influence have grown exponentially in recent years. They ranked second at the 2016 EU best association award and they have recently led successful EU campaigns, including one for the protection of small-scale renewable installations and one for the removal of trade barriers to solar panels, both of which AIE are a part of. They have more than 200 members, including from neighboring sectors like retail, battery storage and electric vehicles. Having SolarPower Europe as AIE service provider means that AIE can inspire itself from and get access to the resources of a robust and well-established association.

The cooperation with SolarPower Europe has also involved the move to new offices in the heart of Brussels only a stone throw away from the European Parliament; an unmissable opportunity for AIE to grow its visibility and influence to better serve its members and the interests of electrical contractors across Europe.

**AIE:** *This year the Council of Delegates will take place in your home country, Sweden – could you give us a sneak peak of what to expect for this years' edition of the annual event?*

**TC:** The theme of this years' joint Council of Delegates between AIE and GCP is digitalisation. Now, this has become quite a buzzword across many sectors, and the electricity and buildings sectors are no exceptions. The digitalisation of these sectors will transform how electrical contractors work and the opportunities available to them across Europe. At the Council of Delegates in September, we will look to

discuss what exactly are the challenges and opportunities for electrical contractors in an increasingly digitalised system. While some might view digital technologies as a threat to our trade as certain elements become more automatised, others view digitalisation as a major prospect for job growth in the sector, as it will facilitate increased electrification of our society.

Either way you look at it, digitalisation will be the future of Europe's electricity system so it is important to recognise and get ahead of these trends so that our sector can continue to thrive. At the Council of Delegates, we will do a deep-dive into all of these questions to better understand the electrical contractor's place in a digitalised world. I also look forward to welcoming you all to Stockholm and enjoying a little taste of Sweden when we gather for what is sure to be an exciting event!

***AIE: As you are nearing the end of your time as President of AIE, what do you see in the future for the association?***

TC: Electrical contractors will always continue to play an important role in the electricity market, as we are in a unique position to provide customers with first-hand expert advice on their electricity installations and solutions that no other company or sector can provide.

The role of AIE now is to make sure that electrical contractors are recognised for this important role in a transforming electricity system. From smart buildings to electric mobility to microgrids - creating and implementing the proper training for these new technologies and instituting appropriate safety standards will be key priorities for AIE in the coming years.

With our new Secretariat located close to other trade associations with similar interests and the European institutions, AIE's visibility and knowledge base will increase significantly, and I am confident that the interests of electrical contractors will be heard loud and clear at the EU-level.

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### AIE talks #SmallisBeautiful at the SolarPower Summit



On 15 March at the [SolarPower Summit](#) in Brussels, Giorgia Concas, General Secretary of AIE, was part of a dynamic panel about the opportunities for small-scale renewable installations in Europe. The issue of small-scale renewable installations is currently quite the hot topic in the EU, as final negotiations on the Clean Energy Package begin.

This engaging EU-focus panel included high level speakers: Frauke Thies, Executive Director at smartEN Europe; Karol Gobjczynski, Climate and Energy Manager at IKEA Group; and Claire Roumet, Executive Director at Energy Cities. Together they discussed the challenges and opportunities for small-scale renewable installations in Europe from cities to countries, from businesses to individual citizens.

Small-scale renewable installations are an important tool to help Europe reach its renewable energy targets while empowering energy consumers and opening the door for new business and job opportunities.

One conclusion of this panel discussion was clear – a specific framework for small installations is key to a consumer-powered, decentralised energy transition.

For electrical contractors, small-scale renewable installations are an important opportunity for new local job opportunities. However, the right training and qualification must be available and implemented in all European countries to make sure these installations are installed safely and efficiently. As one of the key arguments against small-scale renewables is that they have potential to be dangerous and start fires in homes, having the right training in place can quell these worries and improve the reputation of small-scale renewable installations.

"The EU needs to clarify that small-scale renewable installations being integrated into the grid are installed by qualified electrical contractors to ensure electrical safety" said Concas during the panel discussion.

This panel was part of the larger Small is Beautiful campaign, which urges policy makers to acknowledge the specificities of small-scale renewable installations and cogeneration facilities in the EU electricity regulatory framework. AIE is a proud member of this campaign since November 2017 along with other trade associations in the energy sector.

Members of AIE's Policy Coordination Committee were also invited to attend the SolarPower Summit, gaining deeper insight into the PV industry and how this can impact electrical contractors across Europe. This information is significant for AIE and its members as solar continues to grow in Europe, so we can educate electrical contractors how to install and maintain PV safely and efficiently.

Learn more about the Small is Beautiful campaign [here](#) or join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #SmallisBeautiful.

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### A forward looking Primary Energy Factor for a greener European future



As Europe moves more and more towards electrification, it is important that we build on electricity market that promotes energy efficiency and a sustainable electricity market. An appropriate Primary Energy Factor (PEF) is an important tool that can be used in building this market.

As electricity is a final carrier of energy, produced from various primary energy sources including fossil energy fuels, nuclear, and renewables, a PEF is used to connect these primary and final energy sources.

The PEF is used to translate primary into final energy use and savings in many pieces of EU legislation including: the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, and the

EcoDesign Directive and Energy Labelling Directive. How the PEF is defined can therefore impact how Member States calculate the energy they save, how energy efficient the building stock is perceived to be, the competitiveness of technologies in the market place, and which energy label class is achieved by energy using products. Altogether, the value of the PEF will heavily influence Europe's speed on the road to decarbonisation and energy efficiency.

However, while there is an obvious connection between energy use and carbon emissions, this is not reflected by the PEF. The current default PEF in the EU is 2.5 – this implies that each unit of electricity require an input of 2.5 units of primary energy, regardless of the energy source. In a nutshell, this means that all power generation, without taking into account individual technologies' efficiency or carbon footprint, is assumed to be only 40% efficient ( $100 \div 2.5 = 40$ ) in the EU.

The 2.5 value for PEF is therefore problematic and counterintuitive to the EU's objectives of decarbonisation and energy efficiency. This value was calculated based on old data reflecting a European power system without any significant share of renewables in the power generation mix. In 2017, renewables made up 30% of Europe's power generation mix according to a [recent Sandbag report](#), and this is projected to continue to grow even further with more ambitious renewable energy targets for 2030.

The current PEF therefore motivates consumers to purchase products that run on fossil fuels instead of electricity at end-user site, regardless of energy savings, carbon emissions, and maintaining Europe's security of power supply. This misrepresents the efficiency of electricity using products, as it props up higher emitting fossil fuels, making them more competitive than they should be with more efficient technologies.

AIE has recently signed a letter along with other trade associations that calls on the EU to reduce the PEF from 2.5 to 2.0, as well as using a factor of <1 for non-combustible renewables. With this lower PEF value, more efficient technologies would become more competitive against fossil fuels, therefore incentivising the consumer to shift towards lower-emitting primary energy sources to power their activities.

With a more forward-looking PEF, not only will the EU and consumers save money on their energy bill, but this will help catalyse a secure energy transition by establishing in a competitive market that promotes low-carbon energy instead of polluting fossil fuels as we move toward the electrification of our society.

Read the full letter [here](#).

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## Electrifying the transport sector – AIE signs joint letter on the Mobility Package



AIE has signed a joint letter with the other members of the Electrification Alliance calling on the Council and the Parliament to ensure a fair recognition of the benefits of electrification of transport in the Mobility Package.

The Mobility Package plays a crucial role in the further electrification of the transport sector, which will be an important source of new jobs and business opportunities for electrical contractors throughout Europe.

This letter puts forth key recommendations for the EU Council and Parliament to include in the Mobility package in order to catalyse the decarbonisation and the electrification of the transport sector.

For electrical contractors, the greatest interests lie in the Action Plan for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure, which will serve as the basis for developing an electric transport system in Europe.

The Electrification Alliance supports this plan and its key facets such as:

- Improved financing tools for charging infrastructure
- Acknowledges the importance of interoperability, by making compliance with EU plug standards a pre-condition for EU funding
- Highlights the need to focus on smart charging infrastructure in order to harvest the vast potential of sector coupling

Other recommendations in this letter include more ambitious regulations on CO<sub>2</sub> from cars and vans, as well as the broadening of scope for the Clean Vehicles Directive.

All of these recommendations have been sent to policy makers to help them create a Mobility Package that can benefit EU industry, businesses, and citizens alike while decarbonising the transport sector to meet the EU's Paris Agreement objectives

The Mobility package is part of a larger EU initiative called the [Renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy](#), which aims to help European industries stay or become the world leader in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation.

Download the full joint letter [here](#).

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## Can digitalisation boost youth employment in the energy renovation sector?

On the 28 March, AIE attended Renovate Europe and the Youth Intergroup's joint event, 'Digitalisation of Energy Renovation to Boost Youth Employment' at the European Parliament in Brussels, along with other stakeholders in the construction sector.



The global construction sector may be worth \$10 trillion a year, but its productivity has barely changed since 1945 compared to a 1,500% growth in manufacturing, retail, and agriculture according to a recent [report by McKinsey](#). Yet, the time has finally come for this to change with a new wind of digitalisation blowing through construction sites across Europe.

Digitalisation is sweeping through the energy renovation sector, from collaborative robots and virtual reality modelling (BIM) to indoor prefabrication, drones & 3D printing. This event explored how these digital trends could simultaneously address the issues of rising youth unemployment and an aging construction sector by creating a more attractive sector for the younger generation.

“Digital solutions have the great potential to reach women and young people, nowadays underrepresented in the sector, by alleviating burdensome physical tasks and creating new high qualified jobs”, explained Eugenio Quintieri from the European Builders confederation (EBC).

An important tool to promote the digitalisation of the sector while boosting training and youth employment will be the post-2020 EU Budget. “The European Parliament will be united in pushing for more support for SMEs and investing in the workforce. We’ve been pushing for structural funds, especially the European Social Fund to be used more specifically for digital literacy and retraining for new jobs”, said MEP Brand Benifei, Vice-Chair of the Youth Intergroup and host of the event.

It was stressed, however, that while the benefits are undeniable from such digitalisation, the process must be done inclusively, which means that there must be enhanced collaboration across the value chain.

Fulvia Raffaelli from DG Grow also explained how digitalisation is not an end in itself, but rather must be understood as a tool to reach a clear objective, in this case a highly energy efficient building stock which will boost employment, prosperity, and wellbeing among EU citizens and businesses.

The electricity sector is inherently intertwined with the energy renovation sector and is currently facing many of the same issues such as the digital transformation of the sector, an ageing workforce, and a decrease of interest in young people. As was concluded in the event, electrical contractors must look at digitalisation as an unprecedented opportunity to give the sector the boost it needs. To stay competitive, it is therefore crucial that electrical contractors and energy renovators stay at the frontlines of the digitalisation trend and learn how to use it to benefit the entire sector.

To learn more about this event and digitalisation in the energy renovation sector, click [here](#).

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### European News

- POLITICO: [Energy efficiency: The missing link](#)
- EU News: [Digital Day 2018: EU countries to commit to doing more together on the digital front](#)
- The Guardian: [Lack of models, not charging points, 'holding back electric car market'](#)
- European Commission: [EU invests €1 billion in transport network development](#)
- HORIZON Magazine: [Buzz feed- bringing renewables to the power grid](#)

### Member News

- ECA: [What can we do to be more cyber-secure?](#)
- KNX: [Lighting + Building 2018 attracts 220,000 Trade Visitors from 177 Countries](#)
- NELFO: [Workshop on maritime electrification](#)
- SELECT: [Read the newest edition of CABLEtalk](#)
- UNETO-VNI: [Smart Home Society will make consumers happy for smart homes](#)
- VSEI: [Digital power puts its foot on the gas with the SmartHomeMobile](#)

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### Upcoming European Events

- 15-17 May 2018: [The Battery Show Europe](#)
- 15-17 May 2018: [The Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Technology Conference Europe](#)
- 4-8 June 2018: [European Sustainable Energy Week](#)
- 8 June 2018: [ECA Awards](#)
- 20-22 June 2018: [Intersolar Europe](#)

### Upcoming AIE Events

- 2 May 2018: [General Secretary Committee Meeting](#)
- 3 May 2018: [Technical Task Force Meeting](#)
- 3 May 2018: [Energy Task Force Meeting](#)
- 14 May 2018: [Policy Coordination Committee Meeting](#)
- 19-22 September 2018: [Installers Summit 2018](#)

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## European Association of Electrical Contractors - The Voice of Electrical Contractors in Europe

Who we are:

For over 60 years, the European Association for Electrical Contractors (AIE) has represented the interests of electrical contractors from 15 different countries at the EU-level. The AIE works as a network to exchange information and best practices for electrical contractors

between its members and to inform policy makers to ensure all electricity is installed safely and efficiently in Europe.

**For more information, visit our website: [www.aie.eu](http://www.aie.eu) or send us an [email](#).**