NEWSLETTER

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Editorial : The new EPBD – what is it and what does it mean for electrical contractors?

By: Giorgia Concas, General Secretary

A few weeks ago, the European Parliament and the Council began to put together the final pieces of the puzzle that is the Clean Energy Package by pushing through one of the key pillars of the package – the new Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).

As buildings make up 40% of Europe's energy consumption, this directive will be essential to make buildings more energy efficient and fulfil Europe's decarbonisation goals. The EU has therefore applauded the relatively smooth adaptation of the directive as a major win to simultaneously boost the construction sector, protect the environment and ensure the well-being of consumers.

So, the question now remains – what does the EPBD actually mean for electrical contractors?

Simply put, the EPBD means more jobs and business opportunities for electrical contractors across Europe. As Member States are required to define long term building renovation strategies to reach a decarbonised building stock in the EU by 2050, renovation efforts will spike significantly over the next 30 years.

One of the major renovation opportunities as far as electrical contractors are concerned are the targets set for charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. While minimum building infrastructure requirements for electric vehicles have been watered down over the course of the negotiations, having these targets in the Directive at all is a huge win and step in the right direction.

Another business opportunity for electrical contractors is the ambitious call for smart technologies in buildings. The new Directive introduces some new requirements for the installation of building automation and control systems. Moreover, it introduces the idea of rating

Europe's building stock not just according to its energy efficiency, but also according to its "smart readiness", which covers also the ability to adapt operation to the needs of the occupants and the grid.

The push for the adoption of both electric vehicles and smart energy systems offers tremendous opportunities for electrical contractors, who are becoming real building experts. The emergence of these technologies requires the knowledge of the electrical contractor not only about electrical installations, but more broadly about all building systems – for example heating & cooling, ventilation, which all interact via electricity. It goes without saying that these technologies also highly digitalise the work of electrical contractors.

Altogether, the EPBD is a unique opportunity for electrical contractors to ride the wave of Europe's building transformation efforts and shape the next generation of efficient, low-carbon and smart buildings.

Learn more about the EPBD **here**.

Highlight: Building the next generation of electrical contractors – an interview with AIE's Vice-President, Gérard Constantin.

AIE : Training and skills is a very important topic for electrical contractors to provide high-quality services for their customers and ensure the safety of electrical installations. What do you see as being key elements to ensure that all electrical contractors are receiving the training they need to be successful?

GC: As there are many risks of the job, both to the worker and the consumer, it is crucial that all electrical contractors have the training they need to prevent these risks such as electrocution and fires.To be a fully qualified electrical contractor takes many years of training and education, and often it does not simply stop at one as contractors continue to take training courses or Masters degrees after they have finished their initial training to stay at the top of their game.

One way to do this is to combine training with professional work, which many countries offer as apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are essential for giving young workers the opportunity to take their theoretical knowledge from their training and put them to very practical use in the real world of electrical contracting. Not only does this fine tune their abilities and expertise, but offers them insight into how businesses work and what opportunities are available to them, which may inspire them to pursue a Master's degree and become an entrepreneur themselves.

Another key element of training is going beyond technical knowledge of the sector, fostering growth in young workers' social and professional knowledge as well. As electrical contractors are the direct contact with customers, social skills are imperative to provide good customer service and foster trust with the customers. Professional knowledge is also important as young workers will need to learn how to work within a team and become responsible for their work to be successful in the industry. More and more, we see these skills being integrated into training programs, which work to provide youth with a holistic skills set when entering the work force.

Finally, training should be offered across the entire work life of an electrical contractor to make sure that they are always informed about the latest technologies, opening new doors for their careers. Often, this is done through local initiatives to provide new training and certificates for electrical contractors which then feed into the national framework. This local dynamism is very important to keep the sector up-to-date and keep the national bodies plugged into what their consumers and electrical contractors need most. Going even further, AIE provides a platform for these national associations to exchange information, which then trickled back down to the local level.

This cycle of training and retraining is essential to nourish the next generation of highly skilled and highly motivated electrical contractors.

AIE : AIE is an official partner of the Euroskills competition, and you will attend as well this September to present awards to the winners of the electrician's competition. Why is the Euroskills competition important for the electrical contracting sector?

GC: In 2014, the successful European Competition of Young Electricians (CYE), an AIE initiative, was integrated into the new Euroskills competition for the first time in Lille, France. This merge provided us with a much bigger stage to highlight the work of electrical contractors across Europe.

EuroSkills helps raise awareness for today's need for skilled young professionals across Europe and provides a unique platform for European policy-makers, educators, industry partners and other organisations to get together and exchange ideas about innovation, vocational education as well as training and partnership possibilities.

These competitions are also organised on the national level – for example my organisation in Switzerland is a member of SwissSkills. Not only do we provide training facilities to practice for the competition, but we provide guidance for young professionals who are beginning their career. The members of our SwissSkills team have even seen great success at the World Championship level!

Often in Switzerland and in many other places across Europe, we see young people not having an interest in doing apprenticeships in the sector - the image of an apprenticeship is not as highly regarded as following the education path towards a university. However, both paths are recognised as equal under European regulation and an apprenticeship as an electrical contractor can allow young people to by professionally and economically autonomous.

These skills competitions are therefore a unique way to show young people how complex the work of an electrical contractor is and all the opportunities available for them if they follow this path. This not only helps to improve the image of the sector, but will help recruit new young people, which is absolutely necessary at the moment to support an aging workforce.

AIE : The winner of WorldSkills 2013 has designed a project in your home country of Switzerland called the SmartHome Mobile – what is this project and how is it contributing to skills development in the sector?

GC: In Switzerland we are very proud to have recently launched the SmartHomeMobile, which is a four-year-long project created to promote the role of the modern installer and encourage apprenticeships. It is even greater that this project has come out of the initiative of a previous WordSkills winner, as it shows not only that such competitions have fostered passion in young people for the sector, but that they help educate and build the next generation of potential competitors and workers.

In essence, this project is a mobile smart home travelling from school to school across Switzerland and demonstrating all the new smart technologies that will be part of the electricity system of the future. Students will have the opportunity to experience and learn about these technologies, and the skills required to install them in a very interactive and dynamic education experience.

Powered by solar panels and managed by a cutting-edge smart home system, this class room on the move will show students that the electrical contracting sector is not a traditional job, but one that is playing a key role in implementing the technologies that we once thought were science fiction. This is supported by further training modules about electricity, energy efficiency, and smart living will be made available to the participating schools to further the students' knowledge about what they learnt during the SmartHomeMobile experience.

Over the course of the four years, the SmartHomeMobile will visit over 60,000 high school students – this will hopefully instil enthusiasm for the exciting developments in the sector and encourage the next generation of students to learn more about following an apprenticeship as they decide the course of their future.

Learn more about the SmartHomeMobile on our website in **French**, **German**, and **Italian**.

AIE appoints new Energy Task Force Chairman, Alexis Delepoulle of FFIE

AIE is happy to announce that it has appointed a new Chairman of its Energy Task Force, Alexis Delepoulle of the French association FFIE.

"It's a pleasure and an honour taking over the leadership role of the Energy Task Force and I hope to have great success with the task force. I'd like to thank the dedicated work of the past Chairman, Francis Bouquillon, and look forward to taking this task force even further in the years to come", said Delepoulle.

Delepoulle has been involved in the electrical contracting sectors for many years and in many different roles. After graduating with a Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Science, he spent the beginning of his career working for Schneider's electric company in France, South America, and Taiwan. After this world tour, Alexis Delepoulle returned to his family company in France, which specialises in offering solutions and services in automation, energy efficiency, electrical distribution, building control, and fire and safety systems.

He has been an administrator of **FFIE** for 10 years, and has now grown into the role of vice-president of the FFIE Northern French region. Through his work with FFIE, he has also been very active in AIE's activities over the years in the Technical Task Force.

Delepoulle's appointment of chairman of the Energy Task Force goes hand in hand with AIE's renewed forward looking vision, both for the association and the sector

"AIE is now starting a new era – a new team has taken on the leadership of the association and our sector is faced with more challenges and opportunities than ever. From CO^2 reductions, to an increase in the renewable energy mix, to the digitalisation of the energy system, to increased energy efficiency – electrical contractors and AIE are in a unique place to embrace these changes and build a better energy future for the next generation" commented Delepoulle.

AIE's Energy Task Force investigates all the new developments in Europe's energy system and the policies that are produced by this at the EU level, and envisions how the role of the modern electrical contractor is impacted or can contribute to these changes. Topics such as e-mobility, renewable energy, smart metering, and energy efficiency are all priorities for the Energy Task Force as it works with the EU institutions to create a safer and sustainable electricity system. .

"The modern electrical contractor does much more than pulling cables together – the modern electrical contractor is a true service provider for European consumers across the continent. With Alexis as the new Chairman of the Energy Task Force, we hope to bring the importance of electrical contractors to the forefront of discussions at the EU level and solidify their key role in Europe's transforming energy system" said Giorgia Concas, General Secretary of AIE.

To learn more about the work of AIE's Energy Task Force, please contact **Giorgia Concas**.

Remove solar trade measures – AIE signs joint letter to the European Commission

Five years ago, the EU Commission introduced trade defence measures for solar cells and modules, to protect the EU industry from the import of Chinese products sold below market value.

In light of the negative effects that these measures have had on the electrical contracting business, AIE and many AIE members have consistently called for their phase out. Last week, we did this again by signing a letter together with more than 250 EU companies and associations.

On 8 February 2017, the European Commission stated that they would phase out solar trade measures by September 2018 - this letter aims to keep the Commission accountable to their word. It seems that an

expiry review of the measures could be requested, which could mean another 12-15 months of the Minimum Import Price (MIP) and solar trade duties, it is therefore crucial to ensure that the Commission sticks to their promise.

These measures have only resulted in reduced demand for solar, lost jobs, and reduced competitiveness. Rather than boosting European production, solar module and cell production has continued to decline in the EU. This is because the trade measures keep the prices of solar artificially high, discouraging the uptake of the technology and reducing overall demand.

For electrical contractors, a decline in the demand for solar in Europe means less jobs and business prospects for local SMEs and contracting companies, which is simply an opportunity that cannot be missed to boost local development and create a better energy system.

In a 2017 study from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), the impact of the trade measures on solar self-consumers was assessed. It was found that if the trade measures were to be removed, the increase in uptake of rooftop solar in most of the EU Member States would be some 20-30%, in comparison to their baseline scenario.

If there were to put such an increase in the uptake of solar in Europe, this would lead to an incredible boost in jobs. In fact, according to a 2017 EY Study on **'Solar Jobs & Value Added in Europe,'** the removal of the trade measures could result in the creation of more than 40,000 new jobs by 2019 – this is an extremely significant increase as currently only 80,000 people are employed in the European solar sector. Not only this, but the majority of the jobs would be created in the small-scale solar sector, with jobs in installation and maintenance making up the most significant part of these new jobs.

It is therefore clear that the trade measures have not been beneficial to the solar sector and electrical contractors. The European Commission must create a holistic policy that boost the entire value chain, not segmental measure that benefit no one. A strong industrial competitiveness strategy is the best way to accomplish this - such a strategy could create more than 300,000 jobs.

On 3 September 2018, it is therefore crucial that the European Commission sticks to their promise and removes these trade measures. This is not only important for Europe's energy transition, but is essential to encourage the development of SME's and local economic growth by creating new and exciting opportunities for electrical contractors across the EU.

Read the full letter **here**.

How to ensure fire safety in Europe? Let's start with electrical safety

After the tragic Grenfell Tower fire last year, there has been much focus in the UK and beyond on how to best ensure the fire safety of buildings. As an attempt to answer this burning question, England's Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government commissioned Dame Judith Hackitt to carry out a review on this issue, which has been published on 16 May as the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.

AIE member, the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA), was a major contributor to this report, ensuring that electrical installation safety was at the top of the agenda.

"ECA and the Fire Safety and Security Association (FSA) are pleased that the independent Hackitt Review broadly agrees with many of the recommendations we made during the consultation. We will continue to work closely with government and industry to achieve the broad aims of the Review, and to deliver a holistic approach to fire safety training and regulation", said Steve Martin, Director of Technical at ECA and Head of FSA.

The report comes with a whole host of recommendations and conclusions, which, most importantly focus on systemic issues of fire safety rather than short-sighted material issues. Recommendations such as a rigorous set of roles and responsibilities for duty holders, the creation of digital records charting work on all new high-rise projects, the establishment of a Joint Competent Authority (JCA) to oversee the management of safety risks, and the Electrotechnical Certification Scheme (ECS) as a benchmark for best practices are all examples of tools that can be used to ensure that all electrical installations in buildings are safe.

Hopefully this report will inspire EU institutions and national administrations to implement more comprehensive fire safety strategies in regards to electrical installations. It is estimated that 20-30% of all domestic fires are electric fires – a statistic which could be eliminated if electrical installations were installed and maintained properly by qualified electrical contractors.

Although European countries have advanced standards to ensure the safety of domestic electrical installations, these standards generally only apply to new buildings. Therefore, as Europe's building stock and population continues to age all while society simultaneously shifts more and more towards electrification, electrical systems will face a growing strain and will become increasingly at risk for fire. Adding fuel to this fire is the era of Do-It-Yourself, as electrical installations are increasingly not being done properly by experts, and thus going below the radar of regulation and maintenance.

To ensure that the EU addresses this increasingly important issue, AIE is part of the initiative Forum for European Electrical Safety (FEEDS), along with other stakeholders. FEEDS is the first European forum that addresses directly the connection between electrical safety and fire safety, and is working to paint a better picture of just how pertinent this issue is for all Europeans.

According to recent FEEDS research, over 7 million electrical installations would be at risk right now – this is unacceptable and an issue that could be fixed relatively easily with the right regulations and tools, such as those proposed in the Hackitt review.

In order to ensure fire safety in buildings, it is crucial to bring electrical safety into the spotlight again - AIE will continue working with FEEDS and other stakeholders to make sure that we can turn down the heat on electrical fires in Europe.

Read the full Hackitt Review **here**.

Finland aims to be pioneer in intelligent electrification

As the leading industrial policy lobbyist for electrical contractors in Finland, as well as a member of AIE, The Electrical Contractors' Association of Finland STUL is one of the launchers and developers of the project "Wellbeing Through Electricity – Vision 2030", a cooperative project of the electrification industry.

The project aims to educate Finns about the possibilities of electrification, by means of informing, among other things. Once a year, a seminar is held on varying themes related to the electricity sector. The theme of the seminar on April 25 was "Finland aims to be pioneer in intelligent electrification".

Outlining the future

The future of buildings, transport and energy networks is both electrified and intelligent. Adding logistics, communications, public services, health and security, we have composed a list of the most important ecosystems of a smart city. All of these are enabled by digitalization and electricity – the gate to human-serving A.I. and diverse use of clean energy.

The audience of the seminar, consisting of over 200 decision-makers, influencers and professionals, became convinced that Finland has the potential and will to stand out as a pioneer and become an example for other countries.

Grip of the big picture – and go

"The presentations and talks seen at the seminar showed that internationally acclaimed proof of both innovations and widescale business activity already exist within our country", CEO of the Electrical Contractors' Association of Finland, Olli-Heikki Kyllönen, points out. Next step is to embrace new opportunities, deriving from digitalization and artificial intelligence, and make bold decisions in terms of social policy.

"The key to success is a common idea of the megatrends and of our own position amongst them. Based on this knowledge, we are able to make the right decisions on how to proceed. By means of cooperative planning and coordinating, operators break free from their traditional roles, making room for brand new business, in the field of platform economy, for example", Kyllönen outlines.

The presentations held at the seminar demonstrated world-class accomplishments in the field of smart energy systems in property and electro mobility. Applications of artificial intelligence are ready to be discovered, and Finland has a great opportunity to jump to the top of the world, as the country already has strong expertise in many areas that could benefit from applications of A.I.

"We have high level of education and eagerness to introduce new technology, as well as a society that's open for experimentation", Kyllönen explains.

The four themes of the vision

The Wellbeing Through Electricity vision for 2030 consists of four themes: Comfortable, energy-efficient buildings serve their users and produce energy; Electricity is intelligent; Electricity moves people and things; Electricity increases wellbeing and security. Finland has a good chance to pioneer in all of the above.

The four themes comprehend various areas of application and a countless amount of prospective projects. The ideas and implementations are supported by the vision project that brings together different actors in the industry. The yearly seminar is an example of the project activity.

To learn more about this event and for photos, please contact Tarja Hailikari, CEO, Finnish Electrotechnical Trade Association (STK), phone 040 735 8673 or visit our websites **www.stkliitto.fi** and **www.hyvinvointiasahkolla.fi** .

Wellbeing Through Electricity is a vision of the future and the role of electricity in our daily life in 2030. The organizations engaged are Finnish Electrotechnical Trade Association, Association of Finnish Electrical Designers NSS, The Electrical Contractors´ Association of Finland STUL, SESKO – Electrotechnical Standardization in Finland and The Finnish Association for Electrical Safety. In addition, several other companies and organizations in the industry work as affiliates.

*More information on this project **here***

European News

- Euractiv: **Deadlocked energy savings talks restart as Bulgarians eye final deal**
- Handelsblatt Global: **European Commission to mull over SME definition**
- EU News: **Europe on the Move: Commission completes its agenda for safe, clean and connected mobility**
- POLITICO: **EU countries face deep digital development gap: 2018 survey**
- Euractiv: **EU proposes 25% 'climate quota' in new long-term budget**

Member News

- ECA: **An apprenticeship can take you far**
- FFIE: **New professional diplomas and titles for electricians in France**
- Installatörsföretagen: **New joint business venture to attract career changers to the industry**
- SERCE: **Palmarès du Concours Lumières 2018**
- SELECT: **SELECT calls on Scottish Government to follow UK lead and punish serial late and non-payers**
- ZVEH: **ZVEH Annual Meeting 2018**

Upcoming European Events

- 4-8 June 2018: **European Sustainable Energy Week**
- 8 June 2018: **ECA Awards**
- 20-22 June 2018: **Intersolar Europe**
- 21-23 June 2018: **EUEW General Convention Bonn**
- 11-12 September 2018: **World Summit on Digital Built Environment WDBE**

Upcoming AIE Events

- 8 June 2018: **BIM Working Group Meeting**
- 20 September 2018: **Policy Coordination Committee Meeting**
- 19-22 September 2018: **Installers' Summit 2018**
- 24 October 2018: **Energy Task Force Meeting**
- 25 October 2018: **Technical Task Force Meeting**

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 or send us an email.