



NEWSLETTER

October 2018



Editorial: What is an electrical contractor? The answer – much more than you think

By: Georgia Concas, General Secretary

If I were to ask you to describe an electrical contractor, perhaps you would have an image of someone in a blue jumpsuit and a hard hat connecting cables together to make the lights turn on your home. While this is certainly part of the job, the sector is much bigger than this, and the scope of work for electrical contractors grows everyday as new technologies and systems become part of an electrified society.

In fact, electrical contractors are on the forefront of today's digital transformation and electrification revolution.

If we take the traditional role of the electrical contractor that most people associate with the professional, the work and skills needed are vastly different than they were even 10 years ago. With digitalisation, smart homes and the internet have revolutionised the sector. Now to make the light turn on in your home, an electrical contractor often goes beyond simply sticking two cables together and automates this system by programming computers and connecting lighting systems to other installations through IoT. If we add an electrical vehicle charger, smart meter, and a rooftop solar panel into the mix, turning on a light becomes a highly complex and sophisticated process. As the electricity system embraces digitalisation more and more, the job of an electrical contractor evolves to fit the needs of the digital era.

Moving beyond buildings, electrical contractors are also building infrastructure to connect Europeans. Many companies in the sector work on public projects, designing, installing and maintaining the electricity grid that power people and cities. Not only this, many companies are also involved in telecommunication infrastructure, installing both the hardware and taking care of the software that allow us to make that

important call or connect to the internet. Electrical contractors are the people on the ground ensuring that our grids run efficiently and optimally, integrating all emerging distributed technologies, so that all Europeans have access to electricity and communication technologies. The importance of this role can not be emphasised enough, as this infrastructure is the backbone of European economic growth, innovation, and a high standard of living for all citizens.

The opportunities for electrical contractors today are virtually infinite that the term ‘electrical contractor’ in itself almost seems too limiting. Electrotechnical businesses today offer services that were unimaginable in the past, and the modern electrical contractor is no longer simply that person in a blue jumpsuit and a hard hat – they are also that person behind the computer programming software, they are that person using sophisticated technology to design a smarter home and city, they are that person in a suit making high-level business deals, and most importantly, they are that person that can improve the lives of all Europeans.

Highlight: Small-scale energy installations mean big jobs for electrical contractors.



With the final dialogues for Electricity Market Design fast approaching, we are now at a crucial point which could determine Europe’s clean energy future, for better or for worse.

On the 16 October, AIE joined other trade associations and stakeholders part of the [Small is Beautiful](#) campaign at the European Parliament in a high-level briefing to discuss step-wise market integration of small-scale renewables and high-efficiency cogeneration. Hosted by MEPs Martina Werner and Florent Marcelllesi and attended by representatives from the Commission and Austrian Presidency of the EU Council, this event clarified to key decision makers why it is so crucial to consider the specificities of small-scale energy installations.

The Recast Directive and Regulation on Electricity Market Design is an important opportunity for the EU to establish a real business case for a decentralised and decarbonised energy system. For example, removing disproportionate financial and administrative burdens for small-scale energy producers and providing simple business models for new players on the energy market will be crucial, who do not have the same resources as large-scale energy producers to compete on the market.

Not only will this pave the way for an uptake of clean energy technologies, but it will create thousands of local European jobs, especially for electrical contractors. With an increase of energy prosumers and cogeneration projects, there will be more and more business prospects for electrotechnical service companies as they can design, install, operate and maintain decentralised energy installations. In the European solar sector, 75% of the new jobs created will be downstream if we see an increase in small-scale installations – this would therefore be an important opportunity for electrical contractors, particularly SMEs, to grow their business while helping to build a clean energy future for Europe.

With a decision looking to be made by December 19, we hope that the EU choose to support a thriving green economy by creating an electricity market fit for small-scale energy systems.

Europe on the verge of electromobility revolution



It seems like everyday now we are hearing about the rise of electromobility. According to a report by EV Volumes, European electric car sales increased 42% in the first half of 2018 versus that of 2017. If the right regulatory framework is in place and supply constraints and bottlenecks are lifted, it is clear that we will soon have a major EV revolution in Europe.

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On 17 October, AIE’s Secretary General Giorgia Concas spoke at the [AVERE E-Mobility Conference](#) to discuss the role that electrical contractors can play in this revolution.

There is, and there will be, no shortage of EV chargers as sales of electric vehicles continue to increase. Chargers can be installed relatively quickly and efficiently by Europe’s wide network of skilled and qualified electricians, and an increase in demand will undoubtedly result in thousands of new jobs for the sector. With training modules on EV chargers made available in several countries, the next generation of electrical contractors have access to the tools they need to build an electrified transport system in Europe.

The challenge for the sector now is to take their role to the next level. This means making the jump from hardware to software so that electrical contractors not only manage the planning, installation and maintenance of chargers, but also embrace the business aspects of the trend by connecting EV to related applications through digitalisation. This will be important for the growth of Europe’s digital economy and the evolution of the sector.

This will also be important for Europe’s green economy. In the context of ongoing negotiations on EU transport legislation, we must keep a high level of ambition on CO² standards, zero emissions vehicle mandate and objectives for public procurement of clean vehicles. This ambition must also be followed by incentives and proper communication for consumers to make the shift to electromobility. We have seen this successfully happen in Norway, who are now one of the leaders in electrified transport in Europe.

Finally, we must also consider how to make this revolution cost-efficient for European consumers. When buildings are equipped with ducts for EVs from the beginning instead of having to refurbish, the costs will be much lower and we can electrify transport at a more rapid speed. This means that we must consider the massive roll-out of EV vehicles in the future when designing today’s buildings to avoid an inefficient

patchwork infrastructure. This does not only include hardware installation of charging points, but also smartness integration with other building applications to optimize use of EV chargers. If this doesn't happen, costs could be up to 9 times higher, according to the Platform for Electromobility. The electrification of transport is not a question of if but when, and we must plan accordingly.

Closing the digital gap: SMARTEL project launches info sessions



Today's electricity system is becoming increasingly digitalised, with smart homes, energy management systems, automation, and IoT cloud solutions becoming more and more mainstreamed everyday. It is therefore essential that the training of the electricians installing these new technologies is fit for the digital era. The SMARTEL project, which AIE has been a part of for the past two years, has worked on closing the digital gap by addressing the skills, knowledge, and competences requirements for electricians to work with smart metering and home automation technologies in the building installation sector.

Through an innovative MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and a series of Open Educational Resources, available in 6 EU languages, the SMARTEL project supports vocational training and continued learning for electricians across Europe in the digital era. The MOOC provides the tools for electricians' to upgrade their knowledge, skills and competences by covering 6 unit topics including:

- Networks of Smart Controlling Systems
- Energy Control
- Sensors and Actuators
- Programming and Installation of Smart Devices
- User Interface for Building Control
- Detailed Definition of Home Automation

To launch this innovative MOOC, SMARTEL project's partners will be holding information sessions and demonstration workshops across Europe. The next dates are:

- 6 November | Limburg, Netherlands
- 29 November | Sofia, Bulgaria
- 30 November | Athens, Greece
- 4 December | East-Flanders, Belgium

If you have already tested the MOOC and want to support the project, please sign our letter of support [here](#). Supporting the SMARTEL project today can guarantee advanced smart metering and home automation VET training for electricians tomorrow!

European News

- Euractiv: [Power sector 'concerned' about new EU data privacy rules](#)
- POLITICO: [Battery battle in the Brussels bubble](#)
- The Guardian: [Shell starts rollout of ultrafast electric car chargers in Europe](#)
- Euronews: [Hungary challenges EU's posted workers reform in court](#)
- EU News: [State aid: Commission approves €200 million in public support for renewable energy for self-suppliers of electricity in France](#)

Member News

- ECA: [Small businesses receive boost from Budget plans](#)
- Installatörsföretagen: [Installation companies are focusing on telecommunications, data, and security](#)
- SELECT: [SELECT backs MSP's bid to enhance the safety of the Scottish public](#)
- STUL: [The Smart Working Group's proposals aim at a customer-centric and flexible electrical system](#)
- ZVEH: [Electrical trade workers and the automotive industry cooperation in electric mobility](#)

Upcoming European Events

- 5-9 November 2018: [EU Vocational Skills Week](#)
- 13-16 November 2018: [Matelec - International Trade Fair for the Electrical and Electronics Industry](#)
- 27-28 November 2018: [BIM World Munich](#)
- 24-25 October 2018: [Solar O&M and Asset Management](#)

Upcoming AIE Events

- 12 October 2018: [Management Committee Meeting](#)
- 13 October 2018: [Board 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](#).