



Climate action relies on skilled installers

Speaking at the EU Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels, AIE's secretary general, **Giorgia Concas**, made a point of the need to invest in the training and skills of electrical contractors and electricians. The discussion centered on the digitalization of the energy sector and on how it can be beneficial to efficiency goals. Indeed, it has great potential to catalyze energy saving efforts and can offer several benefits to all stakeholders along the electricity value chain, from grid operators to consumers.

However, the potential stemming from digitalization will rely on the right workforce with the right education. Electrical contractors need the necessary digital skills to support the roll-out of innovative solutions that will enable the citizens to take part in the energy transition. This should be made plain to regulatory and legislative authorities at national as well as EU level.

In Sweden, our member association, **Installatörsföretagen**, has just released a [report](#) highlighting the critical role of electrical contractors in enabling the energy transition. Their national goal of reaching net-zero emission by 2045 led to the realization that everyone, whether it is a company or an individual, needs to contribute. Installatörsföretagen have therefore looked into how their members can contribute and if they had the necessary skillset.

They have come up with a few tangible examples of how skilled electrical contractors are necessary:

- building renovations are key and can lead to 50-80% of energy savings. In Sweden, 800.000 apartments need to be renovated but the shortage of skilled labor drives up the price of energy efficient renovations.
- in order to reap the full benefits of solar energy, more solar cells will need to be installed which will require a greater number of installers with the right qualifications.
- e-mobility will need to be supported by the right infrastructure, amounting to 2,5 million new charge points that will need to be installed by 2030.
- the City of Stockholm has found that the entire coal-fired power plant of Värtaverket could be closed down if only 9000 homes had better energy management systems. However, installers with the right skills are lacking to carry out this transformation.

The technologies that European governments are counting on to reach their climate objectives rely on the availability of qualified and skilled electrical contractors and electricians. The problem is that, as of now, there are 17.500 vacancies in the sector, and this will grow with the demand for low-carbon solutions to a projected 28.000 already in 2023. Aside from the implications for employment policy, these vacancies have direct climate implications. If governments keep investing in renewables and energy efficient technologies, as they should, they cannot overlook the need for skilled installers without risking squandering some of the investments.

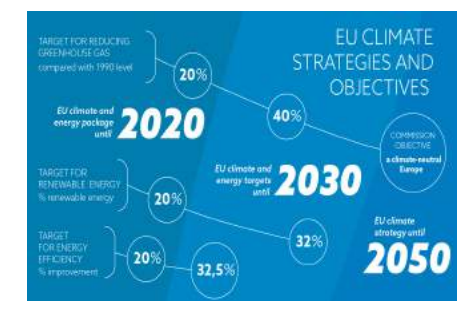
This trend is widespread in the EU. The German electrical contractors' association, ZVEH, explained in its annual report that 61,5% of their members involved in the installation of digital products report vacancies, and that digitalization, electromobility and energy services are the areas of business that fill the orderbooks.

Thankfully Installatörsföretagen have taken upon themselves to offer some recommendations to their government that could be an inspiration EU-wide. They support a holistic approach to increase the availability of skilled workers, here are some of their suggestions:

- provide quality vocational training.
- create opportunities for professional development and change, by being more inclusive of women and facilitating vocational adult education.
- ensure that educational content offered by higher-learning institutions is in line with industry requirements.
- provide for more and better trained teachers in vocational education and training.
- validate professional skills in order to encourage professional mobility.
- improve coordination of various government entities to enhance the management of skills supply.

While these suggestions are meant for the national context and should only serve as an inspiration for non-Swedish readers, we can offer one main policy recommendation that could be implemented across Europe: it is important to identify the number of electrical installers who are able to carry out the necessary work as well as the necessary skills they either already possess or need to develop. **Policy makers should then strive to include provisions on the needed skills and training in climate and energy legislation.**

Finnish presidency puts the emphasis on climate and skills



Finland has seen a great deal of political activity in the last few months, and it is all for the better. In April, they had a national election, in which populists were narrowly defeated. In early June, their newly elected government announced its ambitious plan to become carbon-neutral by 2035, a full 15 years ahead of the EU's 2050 objective. And this comes just a few weeks before the Finland was due to assume the presidency of the Council of the European Union, which now comes as the cherry on top of the cake.

Their position as head of the Council, which started on July 1st, allows them to push forward their priorities for the next 6 months. And, as could be expected, climate action is a cornerstone of their agenda. Indeed, Finland wishes to position the EU as a "global leader in climate action". They will strive to have a solid 2050 strategy by the end of their presidency, as well as promoting circular economy, emissions reductions and sustainable living. Further, existing instruments such as the MFFs or the CAP will have to take climate action into account in their functioning.

In their own country, the Finns aim to produce less carbon emissions than what can be absorbed either by nature or new technologies. Further, they will not rely on carbon credits or offsets and plan to phase out coal by 2029 already. Additionally, they are discussing the objective of becoming a carbon negative country by 2050.

Reacting to the government's ambitious plans for climate action, Olli-Heikki Kyllönen, Managing Director of the Electrical Contractors' Association of Finland STUL, said: "Challenging, but by no means impossible! We have a wide range of resources, know-how and experience related to reducing the carbon footprint of energy production, construction, housing or traffic". We have previously reported on STUL's initiatives, such as the "Wellbeing through electricity" project, bringing together all the main actors of the industry, all of which share the same vision of electricity holding the keys to save the planet. Olli-Heikki Kyllönen speaks highly of the Finns' ability to cooperate, noting that only in few countries are associations, business, education and research, as well as public authorities working so closely and efficiently together towards common goals.

Another priority for the Finnish presidency is to invest in skills and support the international mobility of labor. The EU economy is changing with new sectors arising as a result digitalization, meaning there is a strong need to ensure that citizens have the means to develop the set of skills necessary to follow the developments in the labor market.

The planned increase in skilled labor and in mobility of workers is key for our sector. As for other sectors, digitalization is a great opportunity that can lead to fuller orderbooks and to more qualified staff. However, digitalization can also be a threat if not addressed properly. Meaning that electrical contractors need to be upskilled in order to keep up with the digitalized demand.

The need for skilled and upskilled labor is not just an issue by itself. It can be linked to the climate objectives of the Finnish presidency. These objectives will rely on our workforce to implement the policies tackling energy efficiency in buildings or transport electrification. Currently, electrical contractors are facing a shortage of skilled employees to work on digital applications, leading to vacancies and inability to fulfill certain orders. With the right training, electricians would be able to take up new (digital) tasks, which would also make the profession more attractive to the younger generation and ensure continuity.

If the EU really wants to achieve its goals for climate neutrality, it needs to think about equipping the workforce behind these goals with the right skills and motivate the youth to join it to fight climate change.

Photograph: Finnish Presidency

All aboard the #KNXTrain



"Since the introduction of KNX almost 30 years ago, training has been an integral part of KNX's continued success.", Mr. Franz Kammerl, President of KNX Association

KNX has been AIE's media partner for several years now, and we are happy to spread information on their behalf about exciting training opportunities for electrical contractors looking to broaden their professional horizons.

On May 1st, the #KNXTrain left its home base and is bound to the world, bringing KNX Training to the people! The interactive #KNXTrain and its wagons is bound to the world, to promote KNX Training and its advantages. The team on the #KNXTrain, consisting of KNX Association, KNX Training Centres, KNX National Groups and other KNX community members, is looking forward to welcoming you.

What to expect and how to benefit?

Broaden your horizon: Not only in the world of smart homes and smart buildings - Training is key to a higher quality of your work. With this focus, the #KNXTrain offers you the broad world of KNX Training. Visit the dedicated KNX Training website to never miss an update about the [#KNXTrain Route](#).

Join the many events all over the world, organised by the KNX community: For the first time, KNX Association, KNX Training Centres, KNX National Groups, KNX Userclubs and other community members join forces in order to deliver first-hand experiences by industry experts. A list of all currently scheduled events can be found [here](#).

Can't join an event? No problems! KNX Association brings the train to you. Simply follow the hashtag #KNXTrain on Facebook and Twitter and never miss your chance to win one of the many attractive prizes.

Do you already want to claim your first benefit? - During the #KNXTrain campaign, KNX Association rewards the best student of a certified KNX Basic Course with a free ETS Professional licence, worth 1.000€! Contact your trusted [KNX Training Centre](#) and ask for the next scheduled [KNX Basic Course](#) near your

Surprises to come: If you thought that the train is complete, think again! Stay tuned by regularly visiting this page to discover new surprises, which will make your journey on the #KNXTrain unforgettable!

All aboard the #KNXTrain

The EU needs solar on all new and renovated rooftops



We already know that climate action is becoming increasingly urgent and that all solutions to tackle global warming should be considered. Keeping this in mind, solar energy should be tapped as extensively as possible. This ranges from solar farms to the smallest PV systems on residential buildings. AIE has already joined SolarPower Europe in the **SmallIsBeautiful** campaign, promoting small-scale renewables, to emphasize the impact of smaller installations. However, we believe this is not enough and that it is unacceptable, in this context of climate change, that new buildings are not immediately equipped with solar panels and that they would only rely on traditional, possibly fossil, energy source. Not to mention the creation of local and skilled jobs that would go with the uptake of PV, from manufacturing to installation and maintenance, the employment potential is not to be overlooked.

To this end, AIE is proud to announce its participation in the **Solar4Buildings** campaign launched by SolarPower Europe. The aim is to introduce a requirement into EU legislation for all new and renovated buildings (residential, commercial and industrial) to have solar installed.

Indeed, installing solar on the rooftops of all new and renovated buildings in the EU can save more than 4 million tons of CO2 each year. Additionally, consumers and households can then have access to clean and reliable energy as well as a reduced energy bill. And let's not forget that solar has seen its price plummet by more than 96% since 2000, and comes with a payback time of around 10 years and a 30 year lifespan. Still, 90% of roofs in the EU are currently not equipped with solar.

"Solar is an easily deployable, scalable and versatile technology which is available at a very affordable cost. Already today, thousands of local and skilled electrical contractors are offering solar solutions to consumers across Europe. The roll-out of solar on all new and renovated buildings would help tackle climate change, while creating important green jobs for young people in our sector. This is why we support solar on all new and renovated buildings in the EU and call on you to do the same" said **Giorgia Concas**, AIE's secretary general.

So, what are we waiting for?

A wind of change is blowing through the European electrical contracting sector



As we have already seen in this newsletter, the profession of electrical contractor and of electrician is changing. The era of **digitalization** has dawned on the electrical industry and the urgency of climate action has pushed the electrical contractor to the vanguard of the energy transition.

We have already mentioned how climate and environmental policies are contingent on upskilled electricians, especially in the areas of energy efficiency in buildings or transport electrification. They are relied upon to install all the equipment needed to achieve energy savings and emissions reductions. As they have a new role in society, acquired new skills and offer innovative solutions, their representative bodies have undergone some changes as well.

SERCE, our member association from France, has revamped its logo, as well as its description. The latter now emphasizes the role of their member companies in the energy transition as well as in digitalization. With their expertise in the contracting sector, the latter have strived to increase their skills in energy and digitalization, leading them to assume a critical role in the energy transition. Their members have been involved with energy efficiency for over a decade and have now grown to become major actors in the development of smart grids and smart cities. It is to reflect their members' ability to anticipate current trends that SERCE has decided to update its visual identity.

In Switzerland, our member association has been renamed. Formerly VSEI (in German) or USIE (in French), it is now called **EIT.Swiss**. As the requirements for electrical contractors have evolved the association had to reconsider their position in order to be able to defend the renewed interests of the sector.

Last but not least, your own AIE will undergo a drastic change in the coming months, as our board and general secretaries have recently agreed on a new name and visual identity. The impetus behind this re-branding comes from the need to accurately represent the expanded electrical contracting sector, as well as the central nature of the role that our sector will and currently plays in making the energy transition possible.

Our new logo and name will be unveiled in the fall, so stay tuned for an exciting update!

European News

- Politico: [Behind 4 countries' resistance to an EU climate neutral goal](#)
- The Guardian: [Under new rules for selling solar power, is it still worth it?](#)
- Euractiv: [EU countries urged to see 'opportunity in climate change'](#)
- Euractiv: [Swedish battery maker secures \\$1bn funding for Europe's first 'gigafactory'](#)
- Euractiv: [Finnish PM calls for 'heroic act' to solve climate crisis](#)

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](#).