

Power Electronics in Europe in 1996

In number 1 of Vol. 2 of the EPE Journal, Prof. T. Undeland enthusiastically explained his new initiative: a COMETT project proposal for a new University Enterprise Training Partnership in Power Electronics and Drives – in short: COMETT UETP-PED. Several initiatives were started under this programme: the partners' network, including e-mail network; students placements and various courses. The first course was organised in Aachen by regretted Prof. Skudelny in February 1993. The last course was organised in Brussels in July 1995. Between those two courses, several other courses were organised in different parts of Europe. These courses were not easy to organise. To comply with the EUC rules, teachers had to find new ways of collaborating with colleagues from other institutions, other countries. They had to adjust to the level of knowledge of the participants that was varying widely. In the same connection and with the help of the Human Capital and Mobility programme, EPE Association organised the first EPE Tutorials, the days before the EPE '93 Conference. Since that time tutorials are always organised before an EPE Conference or a Symposium.

What is to come next?

The future does not look as bright as it used to. Nobody can disregard the consequences of the new economic order, of the economical "democracy". More work for fewer people in an ever changing world. Who still dares making long terms plans? The opening session at the Sevilla Conference was clear: communication people do, information people do ... until they will notice that they have nothing to communicate?

I followed a seminar on the Cordis Data base in November 1995, kindly invited by Eurel*. I walked out that seminar with a strange feeling: Power Electronics does not exist, there is nothing to do about it, nothing to look for, nothing to search for, no partners, no projects, no conferences, nothing ...

Do you feel like being nothing? to be disregarded? Our field has actively contributed to most of the great progresses of the latest technologies, but we are not seen, we are on the backstage, not on the front page of the media.

As I recall at the beginning of this column, EUC contracts have started and supported important initiatives in the field of sharing knowledge and experience. This activity must be continued. The Comett programme has come to an end, as the HC & M did. Proposals have been entered in response to the different calls for proposals of the 4th frame programme. No positive answer came back. I told you: we do not exist.

An initiative has been started inside the EPE Association to start a discussion at the highest level of the EUC. The journey will last more than expected and take much energy, but it should be done.

The EPE Association offers a unique opportunity to unify the efforts of our community. It is open, everybody is welcome; it is flexible, topical events, courses, local events can be easily organised in close collaboration or with only the needed support (experience feedback, publication of announcements, etc...). The EPE Association is primarily a forum where everybody should feel at home, free to discuss, exchange, progress ...

Let's make the future brighter!

Brigitte Sneyers, Editor

* Eurel: Convention of National Societies of Electrical Engineers of Europe

