

Cooperation between Universities and Industry in Europe - As seen from Norway



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The EPE Association and the Norwegian Institute of Technology have made a COMETT project proposal for a UETP in Power Electronics and Drives (PED). Thanks to the EPE network we managed to get 19 partners from European enterprises, 34 university partners from a total of 13 of the EC and EFTA countries and 4 partners from organizations. This overwhelmingly enthusiastic response on our initiative meant that we had a very hectic time between middle of December '91 and mid January '92 putting the application together. The most positive response came from Prof. Ferraris of Politecnico di Torino, we do look forward to the future cooperation and we hope that the COMETT application will be accepted.

COMETT is the (European) COMmunity programme for Education and Training in Technology. This EC programme is made in recognition of the importance of promoting technology transfer between university and industry. This joint pooling of skills may be as important as the further research at university. In the COMETT framework these aims are met by ¹⁾ short term exchanges of staff between industry and higher education and ²⁾ continuing training in joint projects. The University Enterprise Training Partnerships (UETP) are the partnerships that form the infrastructure of COMETT.

In Norway the cooperation between the power electronic industry and the Norwegian Institute of Technology and its associated research organisation, SINTEF/EFI, has been successful ever since the thyristor was invented about 30 years ago. There have been continuous research programmes sponsored by governmental (NTNF) and industry money. Just now we have even managed to launch a joint programme involving six of the most important power electronics companies in Norway. This work concentrates on the search for the advanced switching techniques, circuit topologies, microcontroller concepts and magnetics design for the switch mode power supplies of the future. Norwegian industry has succeeded in making power supplies for battery chargers, induction heating and UPS systems. If we had a programme for the exchange of staff between us and industry, this technology transfer would have been substantially improved. We also expect that COMETT will provide an impetus to our continuing education courses.

Through EPE and hopefully COMETT the whole of Europe can cooperate in these activities. Many EPE members joined this COMETT network around Christmas. However, it is still not too late to join and show that EPE is well represented all over Europe.