



The election of a new EPE Association president is the occasion for a reflexion on the future of this association.

First, I would thank Tore Undeland, past president, who fulfilled his task with continuity and good-nature.

EPE has been founded in 1984, upon initiative of a group of Belgian colleagues, professors Maggetto, Lataire, and Crappe. The first conference has been held in Brussels, in 1985. Since this event every two years a conference has been organized in a European city: Grenoble (1987), Aachen (1989), Florence (1991), Brighton (1993), Sevilla (1995), Trondheim (1997), Lausanne (1999), Graz (2001), Toulouse (2003) and Dresden (2005). The participation is stabilized between 800 and 1000 participants.

The success is based on three main elements:

- The mixture of academic and industrial participants. The actual evolution is a reduction in industrial members. This proportion must be balanced again.
- EPE has a soul: Brigitte Sneyers, as coordinator and secretary general of the Association. She gives it a real identity, and let feel to every member that he belongs to a real group.
- EPE has a scientific Journal. Since 2005, the articles published in our EPE Journal are recognized by ISI, the “Science citation index and web of science”. Obviously, this recognition proves the quality of the selection of the published papers.

In spite of these very positive elements, the situation of such an Association remains fragile. Several reasons could influence negatively the near future:

- If EPE Conferences drains off a large number of participants, the number of members, paying their fees for the Journal and other advantages, is very low. So, the Executive Council (EC) decided to increase the discount on the next conference registration fee for EPE members.
- As already mentioned, the participation of industrial members must increase, it being a condition for high level and fruitful exchanges.
- EPE has been created to merge several smaller conferences. Since then, different new conferences in the same or in closely related domains appeared. It is again time to create an efficient synergy in this field. EPE must remain the reference in power electronics and drives in Europe, with collaboration and exchange with similar associations on other continents.

The future of energy becomes again very actual, due to three main facts:

- the fast increase in energy consumption in emerging countries, but also still increasing in all industrial countries,
- the cost of oil, which evolution is a reaction to consumption, but also to the consciousness rising of the limits,
- the fragility of the different European electricity networks, due to ageing and lack of interconnections.

Power electronics offer solutions to improve the network quality and reliability, but also to reduce the energy consumption, from household devices to large industrial systems. An important aspect in this context is to motivate young engineering students for this field.

The future will be for and with them, with EPE’s support !

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