



50 Years of EUREL

International Day of the Electrician

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Dear Mr President
Dear Mr Szymczak,
Dear Mr Pienkowski,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the member organisations of EUREL, thank you very much for allowing me to address you today in my capacity as Chairman on the Board of Directors of EUREL on the occasion of EUREL's 50th birthday.

EUREL is the Convention of National Associations of Electrical Engineers of Europe - a European umbrella organisation of electrical engineering associations. The beginnings of EUREL date back to 1971.

The German-based VDE – Association for Electrical, Electronic and Information Technologies intensified contacts with its European sister organisations. During a congress in Lausanne in 1971, European electrotechnical associations agreed on loose cooperation. A liaison committee, which included representatives of electrotechnical associations from eleven countries, drew up a programme that was signed by 17 associations from 13 countries in Zurich in November 1972.

The programme aimed above all at closer cooperation in the field of scientific and technical further training, professional and technical promotion as well as the exchange of speakers and intended joint meetings.

EUREL's first Secretary General was Ernst Dünner from Switzerland. Born and raised in Zurich on August 25 1921, Ernst Dünner graduated in electrical engineering from the ETH Zurich in 1946. Dünner became the first Director of the Swiss Electrotechnical Association SEV, now Electrosuisse, in 1968 and remained so for almost 20 years. The planning for the 50th anniversary of EUREL included inviting Ernst Dünner to the celebrations taking place in Lisbon. Unfortunately, however, Ernst Dünner passed away in February 2022 at the age of 101.

The course for EUREL was set in the mid-1970s. Thus, in 1975, the EUREL General Assembly elected the VDE Chairman Ronald Dingeldey as its Chairman. In addition, the EUREL Secretariat was transferred to the VDE in 1976. In 1978, the General Assembly decided to establish the EUREL Secretariat as a permanent secretariat at the VDE.

In the following period, EUREL increasingly turned to topics such as occupational research and the development of statistics to enable comparisons across national borders.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain and German reunification in 1990, EUREL's role in the international exchange of ideas among electrotechnical associations became increasingly important.

In view of the imminent establishment of the EU internal market, it was now particularly important to position EUREL better.

EUREL was to become a crystallisation point for the electrotechnically oriented engineering associations in Europe. The concepts developed for this purpose were adopted by the EUREL General Assembly in 1991.

By strengthening the organisation and providing greater material resources, EUREL set up a permanent office in Brussels in 1993.

The aim was to bring the competence of the European electrotechnical associations into the relevant EU bodies in an advisory capacity.

The aim was to influence the political decision-making process and the drafting of the EU Commission's guidelines in matters of technology policy, technology assessment, research promotion, standardisation activities and engineering education.

Conversely, information on new developments, EU research programmes and planned EU directives was to be made available to the member associations.

The VDE has formed the financial and organisational backbone of EUREL since its foundation. The main impetus for EUREL's work also comes from the VDE.

Since 2019 I am Chairman on the Board of Directors of EUREL and EUREL sees itself as the strong voice of European electrical, electronic and information technology engineers.

Europe and the entire world are facing significant energy, climate and security policy challenges. Electrical engineers can and must make an important contribution to stability in Europe with their know-how.

We as EUREL are also challenged to advance technological solutions for the benefit of the people and to support our democratically elected politicians – all across Europe.

We focus on two objectives

EUREL establishes the framework for stability in Europe. The first is to connect electrical engineers from young to old across Europe and beyond. The organisation facilitates an inspiring exchange and contributes specifically to sharing important approaches to solutions.

Furthermore, we provide knowhow and knowledge. The focus is especially on politics and authorities in Brussels. The expertise of the EUREL network can also be used in the member countries.

We want to contribute to ensuring that political decisions are based on the latest facts and findings and that important technological topics receive the appropriate attention in politics and society.

Currently we are facing challenges that need to be solved across borders.

A technologically united Europe is an absolute necessity. Only together we can master key issues such as:

A. Technological Sovereignty: From microchips to e-mobility to AI. Europe is facing extremely fierce competition. Beijing, for example, set their goal of technological world leadership years ago.

B. Climate Protection: We need more innovations for this common task. Europe's diversity – see the special expertise in hydropower in Northern Europe, solar technology on the Mediterranean and hydrogen in the heart of the continent – holds enormous potential.

C. Resilience: More urgently than ever, Europe needs to strengthen its resilience, especially in the CRITIS sectors. Functioning power and communication networks, sufficient energy and secure supply chains must be ensured.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is a shortage of electrical engineers all over Europe. Professional associations, universities and education policy must finally find answers in cooperation instead of thinking in terms of national borders.

Students and young electrical engineers in the EUREL Young Engineers Panel (YEP) have to solve the future tasks. The current Chairman of the YEP is Jarek Krysiak from SEP.

EUREL specifically addresses the next generation of European engineers with the International Management Cup. Up to 200 young people can take part in the annual management game. The award ceremony for the first three places is always held at the location of the annual EUREL General Assembly.

Second example is the annual EUREL Young Engineers Seminar 2022 which takes place in Brussels: Young students and professionals visit Brussels for three days, get insights into the political processes, visit the EU Parliament and meet top representatives of the institutions.

The annual EUREL Field Trip offers students and young engineers from EUREL's member associations the opportunity to get to know the different member countries of EUREL.

Finally EUREL offers high impact, efficient structures.

For EUREL and its leaders, one principle is absolutely clear: we want to achieve the highest possible impact with the fewest possible resources.

For our members, our contacts in politics and authorities, and for Europe as the world's leading location for electrical engineering, electronics and information technology.

With an office and a General Secretariat in Brussels EUREL is accordingly lean and effective in the heart of the European Union.

EUREL is based on the commitment and cooperation of its members. Working structures and benefits at a quick overview:

A. Networking Opportunities: EUREL has been on the ground in Brussels for years and is in contact with top politicians, authorities and the media. The General Secretariat supports members in establishing contacts.

B. Encouraging Exchange: EUREL offers structures to exchange with more than 80,000 engineers in the fields of electrical engineering, electronics and information technology in Europe and Israel. Whenever conferences are planned, members invite each other. No other organisation can offer anything comparable.

C. Spread of Positions: EUREL regularly publishes studies and positions that have been approved in advance through an efficient circulation procedure. These are usually based on papers that a EUREL member organisation has already produced at national level. Duplication of work is thus avoided.

D. Using Local Representation: Members have access to a fully equipped office free of charge at EUREL's Brussels Representation, which can be used for short stays in Brussels. Meetings with several people are also possible free of charge.

We work on all these activities together in the EUREL family.

So that EUREL will continue to play an important role in Europe in the decades to come.

Bottomline: only together we are able to master the challenges of the present and the future.

Thank you very much!