

Student Award

Speech by Hildegard Müller

Ladies and gentlemen,

You might be wondering what a student can contribute to the future of the electricity industry but let me remind you that a “dinosaur” industry risks extinction if it is not open to change and fresh new ideas that come from the creativity of our younger generation. This is the reason we honour the inspirational minds of our students who are our customers and leaders of tomorrow!

After years of being at the end of the energy value chain, our customers are moving centre stage, determining our strategic direction. Utilities are facing unprecedented change and must look for new avenues of value creation. Mastering the customer relationship is one pivotal element in our transformation into a smart, innovative and competitive industry.

The electricity industry of tomorrow will be very different. The evolution – and in some cases revolution - has already begun. Today, there is a “new deal for European energy consumers” and we can already witness an evolving retail market with new players, game-changing technologies and services.

In this process, we need the resourceful and creative minds of students to shape the world of tomorrow. The transition is an enormous challenge for us all - but it is also a great opportunity for those with smart ideas, who are able to think “out of the box”, and who dare to innovate. Who better than the younger generation, our ingenious students, to support the electricity industry in this process?

We see more and more technologies being developed that require the use of electricity – digital and high tech devices, domestic and commercial appliances, medical appliances, electronic goods, electric cars, etc. It is absolutely clear therefore that in the decades to come, the use of electricity will only increase. In this world, where economic turmoil brings various products to decline, electricity stands out as a dynamic and vibrant product, with a bright future.

As such, I am convinced our sector is not the “dinosaur of the past” but “the innovator of the future”. It is an extremely attractive industry for the young generation to work in – and there is no reason it should be any less attractive in the years to come.

The industry needs not only brilliant engineers and scientists but also a wide variety of other talents - business, economic and legal experts as well as communication and IT specialists, researchers and innovators. Each one has a role to play in our future direction if we want to stay connected to our customers.

I am therefore extremely happy that, for the sixth year in a row, EURELECTRIC has organised a students’ programme on. Students from various countries in Europe are here in the room with us, following our discussions and hopefully deciding to join our industry very soon...

These students participated in a competition for which the winner will now be announced. I am happy to invite Bill Kyte, Chair of the Student Award jury, to tell us more about the competition on the “dinosaurs of the past” versus the “innovators of the future”.

Bill, the floor is yours.