

# Electra

## A refreshing modern day alternative to a Greek tragedy

Opinion on a new report launched on growth and investment to 2020 and beyond

BY ROBERT MAHLER

**T**he old adage ‘don’t give me problems, give me solutions!’ often rings out in business circles. Well that is exactly what the European electronic and electrical engineering sector is doing, offering solutions, solutions and more solutions. In a refreshing report entitled ‘Twenty Solutions for growth and investment to 2020 and beyond’, the European Institutions are gently guided precisely how – with the right framework conditions in place – the European Union can address its ‘20% CO<sub>2</sub> reductions, 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020’ promises, using technologies that are available now.

The Electra Working Group, co-chaired by Vice President Günter Verheugen and former Orgalime President, Edward G Krubasik was launched in 2007 and has concentrated on 3 areas – Energy efficiency, lead customer markets and framework conditions. Representatives from major EU industrial companies such as Siemens, ABB, Alstom, Electrolux, Infineon, Legrand, Pauwels Schneider Electric, Schréder and others have worked together to produce a document that highlights a win-win situation.

Based notably on studies which propose a global mapping of greenhouse gas abatement opportunities, the notion of marginal abatement cost curves demonstrating how profitable are energy efficiency investments in relation to the cost of ton of CO<sub>2</sub> and on the results of the High Level Group on “Competitiveness, Energy and Environment”, Electra focuses on the inefficient use of energy and taking up energy efficient technologies which are already available on the market today. This is technically possible and in many cases economically feasible, with investment in energy efficiency providing positive returns, in particular in the face of the staggering rise in energy prices. Recommendations are therefore made in market segments which cover most of the energy chain, from the supply side to the demand side.

### LOOKING BEYOND THE 2020 HORIZON

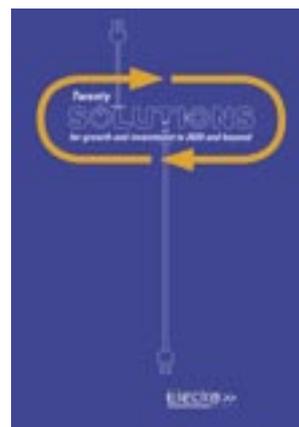
Energy efficiency will lead to energy savings and, as a consequence, the projected 2020 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction target. Due to the long lead-in time needed to change today’s installed base, the report considers that it will take longer to reach the goal of 20% of renewable energies, which will require considerable changes in our traditionally highly-centralised

power production systems.

By making the necessary adjustments there will be improvements to the security of energy supply, fostering of competitiveness, growth stimulation thereby supporting the development of lead customer markets in the field of energy efficient technologies.

The investment trend in Europe in most segments is such that we need to take into account that about 80% of the installed base of 2020 has already been built. Policies and measures must therefore foster early renovation or retrofitting to guarantee the target will be achieved. Time is therefore critical because of the size of the required change and the effort required to work through the installed base. It is a matter of urgency.

Finally, the report looks well beyond the 2020 horizon: it also highlights the framework conditions that the both the industry and its customers need in the EU in the long term, as well as technologies offered and being developed and supported by Electra manufacturers, who are invest-



ing considerable resources in R&D and innovation, often in close collaboration and with the support of public authorities and the world of research. These technologies will provide answers to the challenges faced by our society in the coming years: growing urbanisation, an ageing population and of course the rising price of energy in the face of increasing scarcity of non-renewable supplies.

The solutions are there – is there the will to match? ◀

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**ABOUT ROBERT MAHLER**



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