

EUREKA 2016: The Heating, Cooling and Ventilation Industry tackles the challenges of future generations

The HVACR industry needs to adapt their offer to be simple, intuitive, connected, collaborative, sustainable and cost-effective in a healthy and comfortable environment. According to participants at EUREKA 2016 in The Hague, these are only some of the challenges faced by manufacturers who need to remain competitive and fulfil the needs of future generations.

Brussels, December 2016 – Heating, Cooling, Ventilation – sustainable technologies for a better life: this was the guiding theme of EUREKA 2016, a new conference entirely dedicated to the role of the HVACR sector for society and future generations, which took place on 13 December in The Hague. More than 120 participants from industry, academia, politics and civil society attended this unique event where participants played an active role in brainstorming on how the sector needs to adapt to the challenges of the future.

“The HVACR sector is far too modest,” said the Director General of EPEE, Andrea Voigt. “EUREKA 2016 is about showcasing our industry and the important contributions we can make to ensure that our world remains a liveable place for today’s and future generations. It is about exploring what future generations need and how the HVACR sector can adapt to meet these needs in a sustainable way.”

Joan Miró Ramos, Chairman of the EVIA Steering Committee, said: “Today EUREKA showed our sector to be exciting and highly relevant, both today and into the future. It also enabled us to explore the different fields of activities within the HVACR sector, as well as current and future trends.”

“Our sector plays a primary role, not only because heating, cooling and ventilation cuts across various legislative measures, but most importantly because the sector has been identified and projected in the long-term as the EU’s biggest energy sector,” added Juergen Goeller, Chairman of the EPEE Steering Committee.

The event addressed four key areas which are not only at the heart of the HVACR sector, but which also have a major impact on the lives of the generations to come: food waste, refrigerants, energy efficiency in buildings, and indoor air quality. Panellists in four dedicated debates made it very clear that maintaining the status quo is not an option. Multiple and ever more demanding challenges, including climate change, a growing world population with increasing energy needs, and spending more time inside buildings - offer

great opportunities for HVACR technologies, provided they are being continuously adapted to the changing environment.

That's where the brainstorming session about Generation Z (those born between the mid-1990s and early 2000s) came into play – a generation for whom the internet has been a regular feature of their daily life since early childhood and who are comfortable with technology and interacting with people around the world on social media. What are the needs of this new generation, how do they live, work and interact, and how to best fulfil their expectations?

Several strong trends emerged from a fruitful brainstorm, involving all participants of the conference, such as the need for simple, intuitive, connected, and collaborative solutions. The importance of flexible, adaptive, and self-learning products also stood out as a key priority, and Russell Patten, Secretary General of EVIA, emphasised “the changing working environments and the move away from offices to more flexible spaces, greater use of data, the focus on the service (e.g. cooling) over a particular product, and the need for the service to be cost-effective and climate-friendly”.

In addition to these trends, which participants considered to be crucial for manufacturers to integrate into their research and development work, several societal challenges were discussed, such as the move towards greater globalisation which contradicts the increasing demand for local products, or the availability and usefulness of “Big Data” to tailor solutions to consumer needs versus the loss of privacy.

The EPEE and EVIA Secretariats will now put these conclusions together to form a “Visionary Paper” which will be shared with all participants.

Andrea Voigt concluded: “Understanding and learning from Generation Z and those coming after will be crucial for industry to adapt their products to the changing environment. With this in mind and given the success of the event, the positive feedback from participants, and the need to convene regularly, we very much look forward to the second edition of EUREKA.”



About EPEE:

The European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE) represents the heating, cooling, refrigeration, air-conditioning and heat pump industry in Europe. Founded in the year 2000, EPEE's membership is composed of 40 member companies, national and international associations.

EPEE member companies realise a turnover of over 30 billion euros, employ more than 200,000 people in Europe and also create indirect employment through a vast network of small and medium-sized enterprises such as contractors who install, service and maintain equipment.

EPEE member companies have manufacturing sites and research and development facilities across the EU, which innovate for the global market.

As an expert association, EPEE is supporting safe, environmentally and economically viable technologies with the objective of promoting a better understanding of the sector in the EU and contributing to the development of effective European policies. Please see our website <http://www.epeeglobal.org/> for further information.

About EVIA:

The European Ventilation Industry Association (EVIA) was established in July 2010 in order to represent the ventilation and fan industry both in Brussels with the EU institutions and relevant stakeholders and in the national capitals with our partners. Our membership is composed of 36 member companies and 5 national associations across Europe realising an annual turnover of over 7 Billion Euros and employing more than 45,000 people in Europe. Check our website: <http://www.evia.eu/en/>