

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE EVOLUTION AND DIGITALIZATION OF THE EUROPEAN ENERGY SECTOR HIGHLIGHTED IN THE FIRST EVENT ORGANIZED BY THE ROMANIAN ENERGY CENTER AND THE EDDIE PROJECT CONSORTIUM

23th November 2020, Carina-Ioana ZIDARU

THE ROMANIAN ENERGY CENTER - CRE and the Partners of the European Consortium which implements the [EDDIE Project - Education for Digitalization of Energy](#), organized on Tuesday, 17th November 2020, the first International Online Conference, dedicated to the role of Strengthening Education for Sustainable Energy Transition and Digitalization. The addressed topics like the role of education in the new age of digitalization and the development of synergies with innovation projects funded by the European Commission (EC) through the Horizon2020 program - [EDGEFLEX](#) and [PHOENIX](#), projects in which CRE is partner, contribute to decisions in the process of digitization of the European energy sector.

More than 120 representatives of academic and industry environment at European level, together with representatives of the European and National Institutions, responded positively to the invitation of CRE and EDDIE to take part in this event. The International Conference was officially declared open by Mihai PĂUN, Vice President of CRE, who highlighted the importance of debates and contributions on strategic topics such as Education and Digitalisation and also defined the objectives of the event. The introductory session chaired by Cristian COLȚEANU - Director Strategy and International Affairs, brought into discussions high-level representatives actively involved in the decision-making process of innovation, development and planning at European level, H.E. Luminița ODOBESCU - Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Romania to the European Union (EU), Manuel SANCHEZ JIMENEZ - Team Leader Smart Grids - EC DG ENER, Sabin SĂRMAȘ – President of The Authority for the Digitalization of Romania (ADR) and Roberto ZANGRANDI – Secretary General of the European Association E.DSO for Smart Grids.

"Romania has a huge opportunity to modernise its energy sector by adopting measures to boost green and digital transition. EU provides necessary financial tools, but strong involvement of authorities, businesses and citizens is needed" pointed out H.E. Ambassador Luminița ODOBESCU. President of [ADR](#), Sabin SĂRMAȘ, recalled the idea by mentioning: *"The digitalisation of society is a complex process and one of the most significant lessons learned in the latest months is that digitalisation saves lives and it saves the economy. We really need basic and advanced digital skills"*.

Further on, two sessions and three panel discussions, questions and conclusions on identifying industry challenges and personnel qualification and training needs in the energy sector took place. The moderator of first session of the event, Mihai MLADIN - Projects Manager and Advisor – CRE, addressed the topic and presented the preliminary results of the EDDIE project. The next two sessions addressed the synergies with other European innovation projects regarding the energy digitization process, namely [EDGEFLEX](#) – session moderated by Dan PREOȚESCU - Projects Manager & Advisor - CRE, respectively [PHOENIX](#) - session moderated by Emiliano MARQUESINI - EU Projects Coordinator, CRE.

"The Education is the responsibility not only of their providers, but also of their demanders", said Miguel Angel SANCHEZ FORNIE, EDDIE Consortium Coordinator, urging a constructive collaboration between academic environment & industry.

The event was focusing on the initial results and the implementation of the [EDDIE Project](#), whose main objective is to develop a long-term industry-driven educational strategy regarding the relationship of interdependence between the educational environment and the industry of the energy sector. This strategy aims to help the industrial and academic environment in the new paradigm of the digitalization of the European energy sector. Synergy with the [EDGEFLEX](#) Project brings to the foreground the revision of the Virtual Power Plants (VPP) concept in the context of the exponential growth of generation from renewable energy sources through digitalization and the use of 5G technology. The contribution of the [PHOENIX](#) Project in the digitization of the energy sector is accomplished by improving the cyber security of European Energy Systems (EPES).

In his final remarks, the Vice President of CRE, Mihai PĂUN, summarized the whole conversation, by pointing out that: *"The CRE is continuously exploring synergies among the telecommunications, energy and transport sectors in terms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), digitalization and infrastructure"*. In conclusion, Mr. PĂUN added: *"We encourage a close collaboration between these sectors in order to use the available resources in an efficient way and with visible results."*

The CRE Association is an active and strategic partner together with its members and other potential members in international consortia for deploying energy projects funded by the EC, such as: [SUCCESS](#), [RESERVE](#), [WISEGRID](#), [NRG5](#), [CROSSBOW](#), [SOGNO](#), [PHOENIX](#), [TRINITY](#), [EDDIE](#) and [EDGEFLEX](#).

