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PRESS RELEASE

European electricity manufacturers call for sustainable investments in network infrastructure at CIRED conference in Prague Necessary step to achieve EU climate protection targets

Europe faces major challenges as it seeks a reliable, climate-friendly way to meet the growing need for energy in the future. It is crucial that aging power grids be modernized and expanded. The European industry association T&D Europe is calling for immediate action and sustained investment in the urgently needed expansion of network infrastructure. This is an important prerequisite to achieving the ambitious EU climate protection targets. Action must be taken, for example, to balance load fluctuations resulting from the rapid growth in power generated from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. This requires modernizing the networks and expanding long-distance power transmission capabilities. Intelligent power distribution - like demand side management - is also needed.

"We need a high level of stable investment through 2020 to equip the European power grids for the future," says Ralf Christian, President of T&D Europe. "Our industry is a global innovation leader and a cornerstone of the European technological base. To protect and expand this competitive edge for tomorrow, we must make significant investments in Europe today. Manufacturers of power transmission and distribution technology see this as an initial step in the right direction, one that removes obstacles to investment. Now it is necessary to quickly move forward on concrete projects."

After a decade of low growth the power transmission and distribution equipment industry has seen increased investments in recent years. Depending on the country, new orders in 2008 rose between five and ten percent for various countries over the previous year. The number of people employed in the industry increased three percent during the same period. But demand is now dropping, in some cases sharply, as a result of current economic developments. A decline is expected above all in Southern and Eastern European countries. Meanwhile, the network infrastructure is already over 30 years old in some areas and needs urgent upgrades.

“The best remedy for the current economic crisis is to invest in technology,” says Nadi Assaf, Secretary General of T&D Europe. “The power transmission and distribution industry is ready to do its part to reduce CO₂ emissions in Europe. We are confident that with renewable energies, interconnections and smart grids, we can remain competitive in the future.”

T&D Europe (The European Association of the Electricity Transmission and Distribution Equipment and Services Industry) is the European umbrella organization of the national associations of manufacturers of power transmission and distribution technology in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. T&D Europe thus represents 400 manufacturers with some 200,000 employees in Europe and a business volume of approximately €25 billion.

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