

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, December 2015

This AGM sees the end of my three year term as Chairman of ETCl. As members are aware, my term as chairman of ETCl has been dominated by an ongoing battle to save ETCl from being put out of business.

My predecessor Michael Hanly had the onerous task of remodelling ETCl to cope with the collapse in our revenues which was caused by the recession. He handed over an organisation which had been re-shaped and was clearly viable under the most difficult market conditions.

The CER decision of December 2014 has now been progressed and a single Electrical Safety Supervisory Body (ESSB) has been appointed. Subsequent to the appointment of RECI as the ESSB, CER has been considering the implementation of the decision in respect of the wiring rules and ETCl.

The first part of the decision was to remove the sale of certificates from ETCl and to allow the ESSB to print their own. This has been delayed but will happen in the first half of 2016.

With respect to funding ETCl, CER advocated that a fixed and controlled amount of funding be provided to ETCl to maintain the wiring rules and that this funding would be routed via NSAI. Whilst this represents a significant loss of control and revenue to ETCl we have been in a position of, reluctantly, having to accept this. However, when NSAI were subsequently consulted on the provision of the funding to ETCl they stated:

'NSAI is not prepared to fund this work (maintenance and ongoing development of the wiring rules) by transferring funds to ETCl in its current structure, or for that matter to any third party'.

In effect it is proposed that funding would be provided to individual members but not to ETCl as an organisation. NSAI have stated that they wish to maintain their long standing good relationship with ETCl and their desire is to preserve the ETCl brand. However, they have an issue with corporate governance as they had previously with the funding of IEC and CENELEC.

Meetings have been held in the past month between CER/ETCl and CER/NSAI to try and resolve this situation without any resolution to date. In effect, CER and NSAI now hold the future of ETCl in their hands. If this funding is not provided to ETCl then the remainder of our income sources such as other publications and training will be insufficient to sustain the organisation and we will have to cease trading.

We have suggested other means of routing the funding to ETCl but we will have to wait for CER to make their final decision.

ETCl has provided exemplary service to electrotechnical standardisation in Ireland since 1972 thanks to the selfless dedication of its many experts. We hope to do so into the future. I can summarise the year as follows:

1. **Future of ETCl:** In May of 2015 a subcommittee of the ETCl council was formed to discuss the future for ETCl. As a result of the formation of this subcommittee it has become clear that the electrical industry very strongly supports ETCl's continuance in control of the wiring rules and are extremely concerned about the future of ETCl.
2. **Finance:** For the fourth year ETCl has shown a surplus, of €150,364 for the financial year up to June 2015. This has been achieved as the result of difficult decisions that were made and my thanks are due to the many people that continue to make personal sacrifices to maintain the viability of the organisation.
3. **Work of Technical Committees:** I would particularly like to thank all who take part in the work of both our Technical Committees and our Task Forces. Their dedication is exceptional by any standards. Their employers must also be given credit for releasing these members to assist in the committee work. The staff members of NSAI that provide secretarial support to a number of our technical committees have also been, as always, very supportive and a pleasure to work with.

TC3 also deserve mention again in 2015 for completing the High Voltage Rules to publication stage. This is a very comprehensive document which reflects the enormous amount of work put in by the members of TC3. I welcome our newest TC 21 on Electrostatics which will be chaired by Mel Gannon.

4. **IEC AG:** The 78th IEC General Meeting was held in Minsk in October 2015 which was attended by over 1200 delegates from over 100 countries. The meeting was held under two main themes: “Smarter use of energy: improving people’s lives” and “Unified Requirements & Conformity Assessment – key drivers for world trade”.

Smarter use of energy, like so many things today, requires systems thinking. However, smart doesn’t necessarily imply that everything has to be large scale or grid-connected. The growth in developing nations means that in some cases rural electrification or a microgrid can be a smarter way to securing continuous energy access. An interesting area that is achieving growth is LVDC. This will enable the output from photovoltaic and wind power to be harnessed more efficiently by DC to DC conversion rather than AC. The first challenges for the IEC are to agree DC voltage levels and suitable world-wide harmonised plugs. Hopefully this will be more successful than the history of harmonisation of AC voltages, frequencies and plugs!

In addition to the experts on TCs and TFs I would also like to thank the members of the ETCI Board, ETCI Council and the Council Subcommittee for their support and work over the last three years. The high esteem in which ETCI is held has been a revelation.

I would like to thank our office staff Orla and Val who, faced with a constant barrage of uncertainty and doubt over their very jobs, have been very supportive, philosophical and good humoured throughout.

Finally I wish our new Chairman Adrian every success for his term of office and hope that you will continue your support for him just as you did for me.

John McAuley, Chairman ETCI, December 2015