

The International Conference on Electricity Distribution CIREC (the acronym of *Congres International des Réseaux Electriques de Distribution*) is an association that brings together those involved in the electricity distribution business: a wide circle of specialists from distribution companies, institutes and faculties, equipment manufacturers and service providers, suppliers and consumers, regulators. The objective of CIREC, as set out in its Statutes, is to increase the competencies, skills and knowledge in a broad area of the electricity distribution business, including distributed generation.

CIREC was established in 1970 by AIM, Belgium – Association des Ingénieurs de Montefiore, an association of engineers holding electrical engineering degrees from the electrical engineering institute Montefiore in Liege, one of the oldest European electrical schools (today an electrical engineering faculty) and IEE, UK (today IET: the Institution of Electrical Engineers and Technologists, the largest European association of its kind). The first CIREC conference was held in May 1971 in Liege and since then CIREC has been the main meeting point of the international electricity distribution community. Since its establishment, CIREC conferences have been held every odd year, in the beginning alternately in Belgium and the UK and in the past decade in various places all over Europe: the most recent, XIX, conference was held in Vienna in 2007 and a jubilee, XX, conference will be held in Prague in 2009.

CIREC is a non-profit and non-governmental association, registered in Belgium. It has no assets of its own (other than its name) and all costs are borne by its participants.

The activities of CIREC are based on national and liaison committees. The status of national committee is held by countries that are especially active in CIREC by having an organized approach and internal structure and by the number of conference papers and participants, work, transfer of knowledge and sharing of experiences from CIREC. The status of liaison committee is held by those countries that collaborate in CIREC but do not have a recognized national committee.

A country with a national committee has its representative in the Directing Committee of CIREC. A country with a liaison committee is considered an associate member. Today, CIREC has 15 directing members and 23 associate members.

CIREC is governed by the Directing Committee, which meets once a year as a rule and which is also a general assembly of the association. The Advisory Committee prepares the meetings of the Directing Committee and carries out the tasks delegated to it. Both Committees, as well as the association, have a common chairman.

The Technical Committee is responsible for technical activities of CIREC. The Committee is chaired by the vice-chairman of the association. It has its session and advisory groups. The electricity distribution issues are dealt with in six study/technical groups/sessions: 1) Network Components, (2) Power Quality and Electromagnetic Compatibility, (3) System Operation, Control and Protection, (4) Distributed Generation – Management and Utilization of Electricity, (5) Power Distribution System Development, and (6) “Regulation, Management, Organization and Related IT Systems”

The Secretariat of CIREĐ is run jointly by AIM and IET in financial and staffing terms.