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Summer talks with industry leaders

ClimaNovela interview series, today: Morten Schmelzer

In each ClimaNovela edition throughout the summer, Eurovent Board and senior staff members are going to answer a question concerning the state of the European industry, technological evolutions, digitisation, the upcoming Eurovent Summit in Seville or other issues of relevance. Our second one goes to our Executive Director Morten Schmelzer: One of the key points on which Eurovent focuses its attention on is energy efficiency. Do you think that the objectives set by the European Union for 2030 are sufficient?

Morten Schmelzer (30) has been working for the Eurovent Association since 2013. Within Eurovent, Morten is responsible for the coordination of a large variety of tasks ranging from supporting the wider management of the association, communications, membership relations, international business development, and managing the ventilation department. Morten is particularly passionate about air handling units and driving multiple activities in this field.

ClimaNovela: One of the key points on which Eurovent focuses its attention on is energy efficiency. Do you think that the objectives set by the European Union for 2030 are sufficient?

Morten Schmelzer: Compared to 20 years ago, in today's Europe the application of state-of-the-art direct-driven EC fans are the norm, and not an exception. Refrigeration technologies with natural refrigerants are experiencing an impressive development pushed by the F-Gas Regulation. The level of innovation in this field is exemplary. Our members came up with new technologies that helped pushing the CO2 equator down south. In Air Handling Units, incorporating energy recovery systems and high efficiency air filters is now considered a must. Innovative heat pumps can slowly but steadily be found in heating, ventilation, and cooling applications all over Europe.

These are just some of the many things happening. Very positive. But it should not make us tired in constantly pushing further. There is thus still a long way to go until 2030. We need to continue thinking beyond energy efficiency, putting an increasing focus on issues such as indoor air quality, demand-controlled ventilation, life cycle costs and a circular economy while not ignoring the consumers essential need for comfort.

That said, energy efficiency is and will remain of high importance. Nevertheless, at some stage physical and practical limits are met. Let me name you an example from the ventilation area. We could raise minimum energy efficiency levels again within the Ecodesign Regulation for ventilation units. Yet, the questions are: How are we going to do this? To which extend does it make sense? We have seen that a push for heat recovery proves useful in most of Central Europe, but it does not always make full sense in the South of Spain, Portugal or Italy.

The amortisation time of an Air Handling Unit with a heat recovery device in Seville for instance is longer than the average life cycle of an air handling unit. We thus need to ensure that the 2030 plans make sense through, for instance, incorporating climate zones, focussing on not only heating recovery but also cooling, and to take into account aspects such as controls that play an essential and useful role in pushing for even higher efficiency levels.

By 2030, we should also ensure that an increasing focus is being put on units after they were installed. A unit can for instance be delivered with a highly efficient air filter, but what happens after that? The filter can be replaced by a cheap version, which negatively impacts the efficiency of an otherwise highly performing unit.

It is no longer solely keeping the units performing through adequate maintenance with the correct components. The industry is reflecting on the end-of-life of these products and their future replacements.

It is the tasks of all of us – manufacturers, associations, magazines and the like – to constantly raise awareness on such issues.

Related documents and links

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