

# The European Energy Forum *History*

By Jean-Claude Charraut  
Director General of the EEF from 1995 to 2012



# Origins

The Forum was originally a French association registered in Alsace-Moselle. It was created in the early 1980s by Senator François Pintat, a parliamentarian representing the French Parliament in the European Parliament before it was elected by universal suffrage.

He believed that programmatic energy decisions were too often dictated by considerations that were far removed from the interests in play and, at the time, dogmatic! He sought a solution to this via an association open to all ideas and in which all sectors of industry and research competent in the fields in question could participate.

The association was named the Fondation Européenne de l'Energie (European Energy Foundation) and was led by a Secretary General, Jean-Claude Béranger.

The administrative structure consisted of a president who is a Member of the European Parliament, and a vice-president from industry. The structure of the board of directors was the same.


## The “European Energy Foundation” association

At the time (early 1980s), I was a “senior official” assigned to the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Energy. That is where I met and was associated with all the people who would be involved in the creation and the activities of the European Energy Foundation.

The relations between the members of the Foundation were very good and the association had a good reputation with both European parliamentarians, many of whom were not members (although some often sought its assistance) and with the representatives of energy companies including producers, transformers and users.

The association’s activity consisted primarily in the collection and dissemination of industry information and documentation to parliamentarians who requested it and included occasional meetings of Foundation members to discuss specific topics at dinners hosted by the industry.

In addition, a monthly liaison and information bulletin was designed, written and distributed on a regular basis by the Secretary General. The bulletin covered energy topics throughout the world as well as related scientific topics including geology and cosmology. The bulletin reproduced press articles and did not contain any opinions.



One Sunday morning in early 1993, Jean-Claude Béranger called me from Paris. He asked me if I might know someone who could replace him. He explained that his wife wanted him to stop working for the Foundation. He was working far too much for someone his age and he was working at a loss because the work was not remunerated. After thinking about it for a few moments, I answered that "I know someone who would be a good fit. Actually, I know him very well: it's me. But I'll only do it under certain conditions."

## Recasting of the EEF: 1995

European parliamentarians had a very positive perception of the Foundation thanks to the dedication of its Secretary General and the charisma of its promoters in Parliament, primarily its president at the time, Dr Rolf Linkohr. It was very clear that the environment was changing quickly. The European institutions were becoming more powerful, the number of means of transport was increasing, and companies were growing. Brussels hosted more and more lobbyists and provided European parliamentarians with direct access to the information they needed. However, with respect to energy policy, objective positions were still to a large extent countered by dogmatism.

I believed that it was no longer useful for the Secretary General of the European Energy Foundation to work to provide documentation to parliamentarians, but that it was necessary to ensure that the documentation obtained was debated so that they could form their own opinion about its objectivity.

To accomplish this, it was necessary to create a structure that was light to limit costs, but which was rigorous enough to have value.

*Rolf Linkohr, Giles Chichester,  
Jean Claude Charraut*



I proposed the creation of new articles of association for the Association Européenne de l'Energie (legal name of our association) to President Linkohr that would define two different categories of members:

- On one hand, **Active Members**, European parliamentarians with an interest in energy policy, and
- On the other hand, **Associate Members**, industrial companies (or, potentially, research centres) working in an energy sector.

Associate Members would pay an annual membership fee to enable the Foundation to exist and operate. Active Members would pay an annual membership fee to demonstrate their interest in the energy field.

The Secretary General would be responsible for organising events to attract parliamentarians which would be organised by the Associate Members with the greatest involvement in a particular topic. All of the European parliamentarians (not just Active Members) and all Associate Members would be invited to every event.

President Linkohr agreed and told me that "I will help you for two or three months, then the Foundation will become whatever you make of it."

## Rolf Linkohr

In fact, when President Linkohr and I implemented the new organisation, he played his role to the fullest. He continued until he left as President of the Foundation. He led our events, and given their success, was happy to continue.

## The EEF and Giles Chichester

Rolf Linkohr was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1979 by universal suffrage and didn't run in the European elections in 2004. As a result, he resigned as President of the Foundation. It was at this time that the Foundation had to change its name due to modifications to the laws in France and Belgium. Use of the term "foundation" was now reserved for a very specific kind of organisation.

Our association was renamed "Forum" and became the European Energy Forum with Giles Chichester as its president. He exercised his mandate with the meticulous management and energy required.

Giles Chichester's mandate as president of the European Energy Forum expired after 10 years because he didn't run in the 2014 European elections. However, he took the measures required to ensure that the Forum would survive and that his succession would go smoothly.



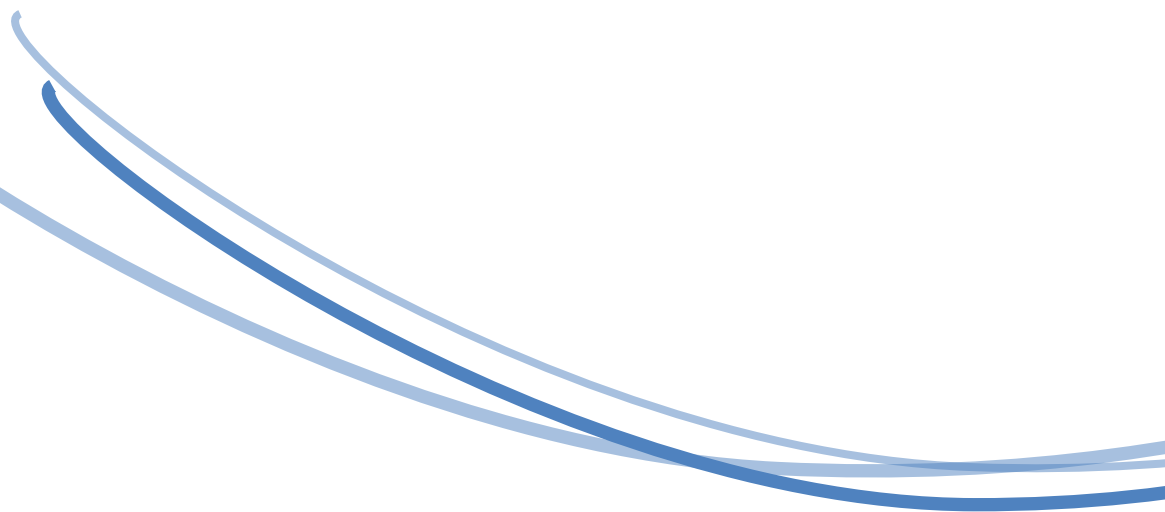
# Jerzy Buzek

Jerzy Buzek, former President of the European Parliament, was elected President of the European Energy Forum on 1 July 2014. He had already been active in the EEF for 10 years. It is an honour for the EEF to have him as President. I wish him all the best in preparing the future of the association.

## The EEF, a unique association

Twenty years have gone by since the transformation of the Association Européenne de l'Energie. I can truly say that I'm very satisfied with what it has been, is and what, I'm convinced, it will continue to be.

In January 2013, I turned my Forum Director General mandate over to Pascale Verheust. The EEF will continue to evolve with its new President and its new Board. The future will continue to provide the EEF with new and fascinating energy topics.





For more information on membership or on our activities, please visit our website:  
[www.europeanenergyforum.eu](http://www.europeanenergyforum.eu)

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