

Accelerating the switch to zero emission mobility with ChargeUp Europe

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ChargeUp Europe is the voice of the EV charging infrastructure industry. Its mission is to accelerate the switch to zero emission mobility and harmonise regulations, so that drivers can enjoy a seamless charging experience and access to a high-quality, readily available charging infrastructure across the continent. Since its launch in 2020, ChargeUp Europe has already grown to include 13 full industry members active in all 27 EU Member States, the UK and EFTA, a knowledge partner, and now its first ecosystem partner in ALD Automotive.

To find out more about the benefits this new partnership can bring both sides, as well as the challenges in the charging sector, we spoke to [Stéphane Rénie](#), Head of CSR and internal sponsor of ALD Automotive's EV programme.

Why did ALD Automotive decide to join ChargeUp Europe?

Even though the charging business is not our key mission, we're interested in its ecosystem as it forms part of our product and service proposal, and we're keen to follow the development of regulations across the continent.

We reached out to the association in the early days following its launch in a bid to be part of their journey, because we see the charging equation as an integral part of the electrification of fleets. Of course it's vital for a company like ALD to have the right cars, with the most advanced technology and the

longest possible range, but we are witnessing the emergence of a new concern to replace the familiar “range anxiety” (how far will my car be able to drive without breaking down?) “Charging anxiety” involves questions such as: where I will be able to charge my car? Are there enough points available? And will I be able to access them with my charging card, not only out on the streets but at my home? And eventually, how much is it going to cost me?

Issues such as these could either be a massive enabler if handled well, or a show-stopper if managed badly. They’re therefore at the crux of the sea-change taking place across Europe. Our new partnership will help us keep abreast of all the news and developments, and of course pass on the information and benefits to our clients.

Why is the Association unique?

It’s the only body of its kind at international level, whose mission is to work on public policy on charging, and create a cross-industry forum, where industry players, knowledge and ecosystem partners can exchange views and build a common approach. Besides its core purpose, we also identify strongly with the association’s values, especially its open and transparent attempt to make the customer journey as seamless as possible.

This is particularly important at this time because of two conflicting facts: Europe is both very advanced in its journey and yet very fragmented on issues such as taxation and regulation. Both are urgent dire need of harmonisation, across markets and housing types, above and beyond the need to increase the number of charging points.

What does ALD Automotive hope to accomplish by joining ChargeUp Europe?

It’s a two-way street. ALD can help ChargeUp understand the needs of corporate customers, as this sector brings its own specific challenges and opportunities. We deal not only with corporate clients who are the decision makers but also with drivers, who may not be paying for the cars but will certainly be using them and charging them at home. This dual angle makes the contribution of the fleet world unique and essential. In the drive towards electrification, corporate fleets will play a key role and will probably be ahead of the curve compared to retail customers.

Meanwhile, our partnership is also a great way for us to stay in tune with the potential changes of regulation in the charging space. We’re on top of the game when it comes to cars, norms and targets, but it’s vital to be aware of the new wave of regulation in this specific sector, for marketing intelligence purposes, and also to ensure the quality of the advisory services we offer clients.

Key areas of regulation might include, for example, the Energy and Buildings Performance Directives around housing and commercial buildings, regulating as an example the “right to the plug” – your charging rights as a resident in an apartment building. Or indeed charging infrastructure in general, which might ultimately impose norms in terms of numbers of charging points per country (coverage) and standards ensuring ease of access, enabling you to charge irrespective of the card you are holding and pay in a fully transparent way. Developments such as these will not happen by magic. Obviously the market will regulate itself at some stage, but we want this to happen quickly, hence the need for a strong voice.

What's the biggest challenge for charging infrastructure in Europe?

I see three key challenges. The first is interoperability – your ability to use a card obtained from a specific supplier throughout the network, just as you use your mobile freely in various countries.

The second is buildings – the need to massively increase the number of charging points at home – and not just within new builds (which are already being regulated) but current housing stock – where the majority of the volume is found. Anything that can simplify and subsidise this evolution will take us in a good direction, help alleviate charging anxiety and speed up the electrification process. This will move the needle on electric car use, which is still currently low, although at ALD, our corporate fleets are ahead of the curve – with green power trains (a mix of hybrids and EVs) representing 24% of new deliveries in 2020.

The third challenge is market maturity – making sure that electrification spreads, and not only to the most affluent parts of the EU. The current correlation between GDP and number of charging points is too high. Our common aim is to address this – helping ensure that global coverage and consistent charging solutions exist across the EU, and smoothing the path towards an electric future.



Stéphane Renie

Head of CSR at ALD Automotive

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