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IMELCO brings 350 professionals together in Budapest to celebrate 35 years of cooperation

The 11th IMELCO convention brought electrical wholesalers and manufacturers from 25 countries together to discuss shared challenges, exchange ideas and explore the future of independent electrical distribution.

For three days in June, Budapest became a meeting place for 350 people from across the electrical industry. Coming from 25 countries, they represented different markets and businesses, but shared many of the same challenges and ambitions. From June 8 to 10, 2026, IMELCO celebrated its 35th anniversary at its 11th international convention, under the theme Spark. Connect. Grow.

Founded in 1991, IMELCO has grown into a global network of independent electrical wholesale organizations, most of which are family-owned businesses. Held every five years, the convention brings the people behind these companies together, away from their daily routines, to exchange experiences, challenge ideas and learn from each other.

Independent businesses, shared challenges

The electrical industry is moving fast. Electrification, digitalization, changing customer needs and growing competition are reshaping the way manufacturers and wholesalers do business. For independent companies, the challenge is clear: how do you stay competitive without losing the entrepreneurial spirit and local market knowledge that make you successful?

Another pressing issue is the future of family-owned businesses. Who will lead the next generation? How do you prepare for succession while preserving the values and culture built over decades? These are questions many IMELCO members face. In Budapest, they had the opportunity to compare experiences, discuss different approaches and learn from fellow business owners who understand these challenges firsthand.



IMELCO Chairman Fabian Eberhard addressing the audience.



The contestants in a teambuilding activity during the convention.

The conference program offered plenty of food for thought. Adventurer Mark Beaumont shared his perspective on perseverance and pushing boundaries, while data expert Ola Rosling challenged participants to question assumptions and look at the world differently. Senior representatives from ABB, Hager, LEDVANCE and Siemens brought the discussion back to the electrical industry, sharing their views on its future.

Beyond the conference room

Some of the most valuable exchanges took place outside the main conference program. Breakout sessions brought smaller groups together to discuss practical challenges, compare business approaches and share best practices. Informal conversations continued throughout the event, giving participants the chance to reconnect with familiar faces and get to know new ones.

Factory visits to the Hungarian facilities of Prysmian and OBO Bettermann took participants behind the scenes, offering a closer look at daily manufacturing and logistics operations. The combination of business discussions, shared experiences and an informal atmosphere captured what IMELCO stands for: independent entrepreneurs who value their freedom to do business their own way, but also recognize the strength of working together.

Celebrating 35 years, with an eye on the future

The convention ended on a festive note with a gala dinner at Budapest's Museum of Fine Arts, celebrating IMELCO's 35th anniversary. According to Co Braber, President of IMELCO, the organization's growth over the past 35 years is largely due to independent businesses recognizing the value of cooperation. "Our members know their local markets better than anyone, but they also understand the benefits of sharing that knowledge internationally. Budapest reminded us once again that, ultimately, it is the people who make this network successful."

After three days of conversations, new perspectives and shared experiences, participants returned to their businesses across the world. The convention may have come to an end, but the relationships and ideas developed in Budapest will continue to matter. Thirty-five years after its foundation, IMELCO remains built on a simple principle: independent businesses are stronger when they work together.



The gala dinner at the Museum of Fine Arts was the apotheosis of a successful convention.

ABOUT IMELCO

Headquartered in Charleroi (BE), IMELCO is a member-owned group of electrical wholesaler organizations across Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and North America. Established more than 30 years ago, IMELCO brings business partners from 25 countries to one table, enabling the exchange of experiences and facilitating a common framework for the success of individual members and the group at large.

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