

The Association

At its May meeting in Madrid and acting upon recommendation from the MLA Council, the General Assembly decided to accept JSMO, Jordan and SEMAC, Morocco as new Associate Members, as well as ATS, Serbia, as a new Full member.

As a result of the MAC meeting held in April 2012, IARM, the accreditation body of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia became a signatory of the MLA in the fields of calibration, testing, inspection and products certification. NAB-Malta, member of the MLA for testing, became a signatory for calibration; OLAS, Luxembourg who was already a signatory for testing, inspection, management systems and products certification becomes a signatory for calibration. ATS signed the EA MLA for calibration, testing, inspection and products certification. Finally NAAU, Ukraine, extended its bilateral agreement to cover calibration, testing and management systems certification in addition to personnel certification.

Overall, EA now counts 13 AB Associate Members, 35 AB Full Members out of which 33 are signatory to the EA MLA and 26 of them for all scopes.

A lot of work is being carried out in EA at the moment which results in a high pressure put on EA's internal and its Members' resources. Implementation of Regulation 765/2008 is a major challenge; EA is fully dedicated to take it up to meet the expectations the Regulation raised in Europe. In concrete terms, this has direct consequences on the workload of the EA Executive Committee in particular. In 2011, the Committee held 5 physical meetings representing 9 working days in all. In addition, 6 web meetings were organised as well as 6 web meetings of the EX task force group (TFG) in charge of EA finances. In 2012, the workload keeps on increasing at the same pace, hence the decisions the Executive Committee made recently. In accordance with the Strategic Plan agreed by the General Assembly in May 2011, the process for the recruitment of an Executive Secretary has started. A job description and financial aspects have started to be looked at with a view to present a proposal to the General Assembly in November 2012.

The Executive decided also to change Julia Ledwon's contract in a contract of unlimited duration with effect from the 10th of April. So far Julia has been much involved in the verification process of requests for payment submitted by the EA ABs in relation with the operating grant received from the European Commission and EFTA. To respond to the increasing pressure put on the MAC, Julia will support the MAC Secretary in the administration of peer evaluations.

To facilitate and improve coordination of EA's input in the Commission's work, it has been decided to set up a list of contact persons in the various Directorates with information on their fields of competence and responsibility. This is aiming to reinforce EA's visibility and efficiency, through a better involvement and follow-up of developments in the various DGs.

At present, EA is concentrating on the setting-up of the necessary processes for the establishment of the MLA for EU/ETS regulations. The "road map" prepared by a task force of the MAC was endorsed by the General Assembly in May. It was also clearly stated that EU funding was expected to be received for the evaluation plan to get started.

Guidelines are being drafted to support accreditation in the field of Organic farming to support implementation of the regulation by DG AGRI. Likewise, the Executive appointed a dedicated TFG in charge of the project.

In December 2011, the Laboratory Committee organised a seminar on food testing. The initiative supported the implementation by DG SANCO of a regulation which requires accreditation for laboratories involved in the control of food. Since then, the issue has been further developing in the Laboratory Committee. A presentation was made by DG SANCO at the General Assembly in May 2012.

The project for the development of a scheme for activities involved in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer has been given a new start, responsibilities on the project being clarified on the Commission's side. An Executive TFG is involved in the discussions.

In parallel, EA continues to be represented at the meetings of the SOGS (Senior Officials Group for Standardisation and Conformity Assessment) and the Inter Service Accreditation Steering Committee, a horizontal group bringing together the various DGs of the Commission to discuss accreditation-related issues. The Chair and CPC Chair attended the April Inter Service meeting and feedback was very good which showed considerable engagement from the different DGs to accreditation. Still in the field of liaison, the General Assembly endorsed the EX proposal to sign a MoU with IAAC, based on the same template as the one in place between EA and APLAC.

The Certification Committee (CC)

The 23rd EA CC Meeting took place on 14 and 15 February 2012 in Sofia, Bulgaria, with the first day fully dedicated to the preparatory meeting with EA-member ABs. As usual, the second day also gathered stakeholder organizations such as CEOC International, Eurolab, EFAC, IIOC and EOQ.

Management of the Committee and Working Groups

The **CC Terms of Reference (ToR)**, dated 2000, needed to be renewed to reflect latest developments and current tasks. The CC Chair, Leopoldo Cortez from the Portuguese NAB (IPAC), and Agenda Panel have revised the EA CC ToR and RoP based on the improvements agreed at the last meeting. After a very last commenting and approving round within the CC, the document was presented to the EA GA in May and finally endorsed.

It was confirmed that the composition of the **CC Review Panel** – an expert group in charge of giving preliminary answers to the questions raised by CC Members and discussed at each CC preparatory meeting – should include one stakeholder representative in order altogether to increase transparency, avoid duplication of discussions and improve preparation of IAF discussions. Trevor Nash from EFAC has accepted to participate in the next preliminary discussion round of the Review Panel on questions asked by CC Members for the next CC preparatory meeting in September 2012.

A new **Working Group for Accreditation of GHG verifiers** has been set up within the CC to meet the European Commission (EC)'s expectation to have a formal network established between EA-member ABs so as to improve European harmonization of accreditation in the field of greenhouse gas emissions. Actually the two new Monitoring & Reporting (M&R) and Accreditation & Verification (A&V) Regulations were adopted by the EC Climate Change Committee in December 2011, and are expected to be approved by the European Parliament and Council by May 2012. Both regulations shall apply as from 1st January 2013. The ToR of the WG have been drafted by the WG convener and approved by the EA Executive Committee in March 2012.

The CC **Environment WG** is still under reconstruction: further to the disbanding of the EMS WG, the WG ToR have been revisited and endorsed by the EX while a call for convener and member nominations has just been launched.

Document revision in the pipelines

The **CC FAQs**, i.e. the “frequently asked questions” raised by CC Members and answered at the successive CC preparatory meetings, need to be updated while being thoroughly revisited and synthesized for legibility purposes. Indeed FAQs shall be revised when standards are revised themselves. The answers given so far shall be checked in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021:2011, 27006/2011, etc. This huge work should be done by the CC Review Panel in cooperation with stakeholders before further discussion and final validation by the CC. The FAQs format and transparency should also be improved for a wider use and publication.

After having been approved by the EA General Assembly in November 2011, the revision of **EA-6/02: EA Guidelines on the Use of EN 45011 and ISO/IEC 17021 for certification to EN ISO 3834**, building upon the outcome of the workshop jointly organized by EA and the European Welding Foundation (EWF) in December 2010, has been starting with the establishment of an equally EA-EWF composed TFG and a first, physical meeting in March 2012. Online meetings will follow. The revised document is expected for the September meeting.

EA-6/03: EA Document for Recognition of Verifiers under the EU ETS Directive. The document is under revision. It shall support a harmonised interpretation and approach to the accreditation of Verification Bodies according to ISO 14065 and the A&V Regulation. It is intended to be used by Accreditation and Verification Bodies in the process of accreditation for verification of emissions and data in the EU ETS (Emissions Trading System) scheme.

Outcome of CC discussions

ISO/IEC 27006: 2011 was talked about at the last CC meeting at which it was reminded that the transition period will end on 1st February 2013. The CC agreed to put forward the following recommendation to the EA General Assembly in May 2012: *The EA Certification Committee recommends that EA ABs finish the implementation of the new version of 27006 in accordance with the transition period agreed for ISO/IEC 17021:2011.* The corresponding resolution was endorsed by the General Assembly in May.

TFG Scoping successfully completed the additional, dedicated survey among EA-member ABs to observe how scoping is expressed for the **CEN/CENELEC Keymark scheme** and investigate the need for harmonization of CBs’ scopes. The Keymark is a European voluntary third-party certification mark, awarded by CBs empowered by the European Standards Organization CEN, demonstrating to users and specifiers that a product is fully in conformity with the relevant European Standard.

Keymarking shows that the product has been tested in an accredited laboratory, and the manufacturer is under surveillance and continuing audit by an independent third-party body (CB). The CC survey demonstrates that the situation among EA ABs is satisfactorily compliant and harmonized. No further action is needed.

Work items on progress

The mandatory EA document for implementation of the **EU Organic Farming Regulation** is still being awaited to be circulated among both the CC membership and the EA community for comments. This simultaneous circulation will enable to have a shorter commenting period since the document is urgently needed in the CC and for the General Assembly.

The elaboration of a **mandatory guidance document on witnessing practices for management system certification** has been progressing through several online meetings organized by the EA Secretariat. Because it proved difficult to find compromises between very large discrepancies, a cluster approach has been privileged by TFG Witnessing which was given the green light by the CC to go ahead with drafting the document.

The CC also decided that specific witnessing for OHSAS should be discussed by TFG OHSAS in order for the outcome to be integrated into the witnessing document as an added value.

Approved by the EA General Assembly in November 2011, the drafting of an **EA harmonization guidance on the application of ISO/IEC 17021:2011 for OHSAS 18001** is progressing. A first document should be presented at the September meeting.

A new CC training in 2012

The CC will reiterate the positive and fruitful experience of 2011 trainings on ISO/IEC 17021 and 14065 and organise a **training course on ISO/IEC 17024** in 2012. Since the revised standard is expected to come out in June, the training is planned on 24-25 September and 29-30 October 2012. The two 1.5-day sessions will be hosted by ACCREDIA, the Italian NAB, in Milan.

The previously planned 2012 training on ISO/IEC 17065 has been postponed in January-February 2013 and should take place in Greece. The arrangements will be finalized at the next CC meeting on 11 and 12 September 2012 in Helsinki, Finland.

The Inspection Committee (IC)

The 23rd EA IC Meeting took place on 16 February 2012 in Sofia, Bulgaria. IC Members welcomed a new Chair, Rolf Straub from the Swiss NAB (SAS), who is also the convener of WG Healthcare of the EA Laboratory Committee.

A new impulse

Similarly to those of other committees, the **IC Terms of Reference (ToR)** have to be updated to reflect the current reality with new roles and relations (concerning stakeholders, for instance). They were subject to lively discussions on to which extent they should be standardized and based on a common template for all EA committees for harmonization and simplification purposes. It was finally agreed that the IC ToR should have a more pragmatic structure to be fine-tuned from a uniform pattern still to be decided with the EA Executive Committee.

Further to a call launched by the new Chair, several IC Members volunteered to report on inspection-relevant issues discussed in all other EA committees. These **IC reporters** attend the other committees' meetings or will look for latest information among their attending colleagues within their NAB. The objective is to more inter-relate information between the different committees.

Rolf Straub will also be seeking for **active collaboration between the ILAC and EA ICs** on the numerous issues to be valuably shared. As the ILAC IC Chair, Lal Ilan, who is the UKAS' representative in the EA IC, will report on the ILAC IC meetings; he is also intending to establish various working groups in which EA IC Members are strongly encouraged to participate.

IC training on ISO/IEC 17020

Lal Ilan will lead two **EA IC training sessions on revised ISO/IEC 17020** to be held on 21-22 and 23-24 August 2012 in Bern-Wabern, Switzerland. This training, which is targeted at trainers in ABs' staff, will ensure an effective contribution of all participants within small discussion groups. The revised parts of the standard, i.e. new areas or approaches and changes in assessment, will be focused. Lal Ilan supported establishing a gap list between the previous and new versions of ISO/IEC 17020, as well as a cross-reference list between both versions and ILAC/IAF A4 Guidance, as a very useful exercise for the training. The objective is to determine which tools should be elaborated on to implement and assess the new requirements, which evidence should be recorded to comply with the new requirements, etc. A questionnaire will be circulated in advance asking the participants, once registered, to identify the issues they would like to be clarified and/or solved during the training.

Lal Ilan also invited IC Members to put forward any issues or comments on the revised standard to the ILAC IC. Finally, the IC agreed to further discuss the need for an additional guidance document in light of any feedback received on ISO/IEC 17020 training at its next meeting.

IC networking for new issues

After being talked about at several meetings, accreditation of **car inspection** is being paid special attention for the purposes of harmonization and mutual recognition of PTI (Periodical Technical Inspections) in Europe within the framework of the European Commission's Road Safety Programme for 2011-2020. The issue is whether accreditation can be part of the solution to reach mutual recognition in this area. The discussions revealed great national discrepancies in the type of IBs needed (A or C) and competence requirements – which demonstrates a real need for an expertise group to share information, experiences and practices through a technical network having a dedicated section on the EA intranet. Indeed Rolf Straub knows how fruitful such knowledge-sharing platforms under the EA umbrella (as the EA Laboratory Committee Technical Networks) can prove when all Members play a proactive part. A small TN specific for car inspection has been set up and a survey is being carried out within the IC to begin to get a more comprehensive picture of the car PTI issue in European countries. The outcome will be presented at the next IC meeting.

Similarly, an EAIC ETV Informal Leading Group was established at the previous IC meeting in October 2011 in order for those EA ABs already more or less active in verification projects within the framework of the EU **Environmental Technological Verification** (ETV) Programme, to exchange experiences and best practices with a view to influence the relevant European authorities. The IC agreed in February 2012 that the timing is too early to activate an EAIC TN for EU ETV until further activity takes place in the field.

The current EAIC ETV Informal Leading Group will be maintained, exchanging information within an unstructured network.

The next IC meeting will take place on 13 September 2012 in Helsinki, Finland.

The Laboratory Committee (LC)

The LC met in Rome on 21-22 March 2012. The meeting brought together 55 participants representing 40 EA ABs and 6 Recognised Stakeholders. Paolo Bianco chaired his first meeting as the incoming Chair. Highlighting a busy work program for the Committee, he insisted that he would need all support from the Members. The election of Natalija Jovicic-Zaric, ATS, Serbia, as the LC Vice Chair was very much welcomed in this respect.

Claudio Boffa, NAB-Malta, was appointed as the new LC liaison person with MAC. Ioannis Sitaras, ESYD, Greece, the active Convener of the Technical Network on Food and Feed, accepted to convene the TN Environment until the September 2012 meeting in the absence of any other candidate after the previous convener stepped down. The LC is grateful to Ioannis for his proposal since TN Environment is one of the most active networks. Erik Oehlenschlaeger, DANAK, Denmark, accepted to be the EA representative in the joint EA/EURAMET group, with support from Trevor Thompson, UKAS, UK. The setting-up of a new TN for reference materials was postponed until a convener can be appointed.

Good progress was made with revision of LC documents:

- **EA-4/02:** *Expressions of the Uncertainty of Measurements in Calibration*. The purpose of the revision is to align the EA document with ILAC P14, P14 being adopted as mandatory EA requirements. The revised draft, with the existing supplements 1 and 2, is ready for voting;
- **EA-4/09:** *Accreditation for Sensory Testing Laboratories*. A final draft is being finalised within TN Food/Feed. It will be sent out for comments within the LC in the next stage;
- **EA-4/10:** *Accreditation for Laboratories Performing Microbiological Testing*. EURACHEM accepted to take on board revision of the document, EURACHEM taking full ownership of the document including for its publication;
- **EA-4/15:** *Accreditation for Bodies Performing non-Destructive Testing*. Revision is undertaken by a TFG of TN Mechanical and Toys Testing.

Besides, the LC agreed to put a recommendation to the General Assembly in May 2012 proposing that **EA-3/04:** *Use of Proficiency Testing as a Tool for Accreditation in Testing* is withdrawn. The corresponding resolution has been endorsed by the General Assembly which confirmed also that EA should adopt ILAC G22:2004 *Use of Proficiency Testing as a Tool for Accreditation in Testing* as a guidance document for all EA Members.

The issue of ILCs and use of ILC results within the peer evaluation system came up. The opinion was that the current requirements put too big a burden on ABs with regards to reporting on and recording of performance of laboratories in international PTs and ILCs, while this is something that is already very much focused during assessments and surveillance. There was a proposal to revise the MAC requirements and the Committee agreed to invite the MAC to consider changing the rules, recommending that “*peer evaluation teams should focus and address the AB policy for nomination of laboratories to international PTs and ILCs.*” The proposal was forwarded to the MAC.

The LC TFG on Documents conducted a survey on the use of **EA Advisory Documents**. The preliminary results showed that the definition and intended use of advisory documents needs clarification. Furthermore, their classification and accessibility on the EA website should be improved. Because of the relatively low response rate, the LC agreed to re-launch the survey not only in the LC but also in the other technical committees, with the agreement of the EX.

8 December 2011 – Seminar on testing in Food

The objective of the seminar was to highlight the challenges and identify the expectations of all concerned parties with respect to the accreditation of official control food testing laboratories in the framework of the Regulation (EC) 882/2004. 22 accreditation bodies, 2 representatives of the Commission and 2 representatives of the competent authorities of the Member States (Belgium and Italy) attended the seminar, with a total of 38 participants. The program included presentations from the Commission, 2 national competent authorities and 2 accreditation bodies.

Christina Waddington (outgoing EA-LC Chair) introduced the meeting and explained that the seminar was intended to provide a forum of exchange of views between the accreditation bodies and the regulators. The following speakers made a presentation:

- Mr. Alexander Rogge (DG SANCO) focused on the issue of mandatory accreditation of official laboratories and the requirements of the Regulation (EC) 882/2004;
- Mr. Geert De Poorter (Food Safety Agency – Belgium) presented the situation in Belgium with respect to the organisation of the Food Safety Agency, the accreditation of food testing laboratories and the cooperation with the national accreditation body BELAC;
- Dr. Antonio Menditto (Department of Food Safety and Public Veterinary Health – Italy) went in detail through the specific requirements of Regulation (EC) 882/2004;
- Elisa Gredilla (ENAC, Spain) reported on ENAC's accreditation practice in the food testing sector.

The discussions highlighted a need for clarification and harmonisation in the fields of flexible scopes, selection and qualification of assessors and description of competencies on accreditation scopes.

Overall all participants found the event very useful; Regulators represented recognised the value and benefits of accreditation in the development and implementation of regulations. It was warmly recommended that such seminars should be repeated to address similar issues in other fields of laboratory accreditation.

The next LC meeting will take place on 19-20 September 2012 in Oslo, Norway.

The Communications and Publications Committee (CPC)

The 21st EA CPC Meeting took place on 21-22 March 2012 in London, United Kingdom, where Graham Talbot, EA Chair and Chair of both the ILAC MCC and the IAF CMC, opened the meeting by reinforcing the importance that communication will play in supporting EA's long-term vision.

Graham Talbot underlined the crucial role of the CPC in raising the profile of EA, accreditation and the EA MLA to the marketplace, in facilitating closer relationships between national authorities and accreditation bodies, as well as with stakeholders and the European Commission, and in improving internal communications for more efficient information and experience sharing. Indeed effective communication, both internal and external, is a core factor in achieving a consistent implementation of Regulation (EC) 765/2008 and meeting the additional requirements placed on EA by the EU Commission (EC), EFTA and the national authorities.

The CPC Chair, Vagn Andersen from the Danish NAB (DANAK), confirmed that the **EA Marketing and Communications Plan 2011-2015** had been endorsed by the EA Executive Committee in November 2011. The CPC should now focus on the implementation of the plan by agreeing a work plan setting out responsibilities and timeframes for completing the activity. During the next four years, the CPC will strengthen the EA brand to reflect its position as an official European institution. This will encompass all EA communications and platforms, on which EA's visual identity will be enhanced.

A new set of EA promotional materials

The CPC is developing two brochures. The generic brochure on EA is being revised to mainly focus on European regulators. An EA MLA brochure is being drafted as a material promoting the EA MLA so as to meet the EA Advisory Board's expectations.

A 2011 EA MLA Annual Report has been prepared together with the EA MLA Council, based on the example of the IAF MLA Report.

All these publications are due to come out during 2012 after endorsement by the CPC.

A new EA Communication template

EA will circulate regular branded emails to different target groups such as EA-member ABs, regulators or stakeholders to inform them of latest developments, new promotional tools, events and technical information. These communications will adopt the brand identity and ensure a professional look-and-feel.

In London, a CPC Task Force Group was entrusted with editing the articles, first drafted by the EA Committee Chairs, with a more marketing approach.

The first e-bulletin will be circulated in summer and will focus on the results of the EA General Assembly held in May.

Redevelopment of the EA website and intranet

In early 2012, a CPC TFG has been starting a new project on the revamping of the EA website. Improving the content management process and making it more user-friendly, refreshing the look-and-feel of the web pages, incorporating up-to-date technologies as far as relevant for EA, and setting up new facilities for online collaborative work in the Members Only section, are being looked for in order to reflect EA corporate values, keep in line with European goals and meet the needs of EA members in terms of working practices.

Communication routes to be reinforced and developed

The last CPC meeting considered how to further enhance EA's relationships with national and European regulators as well as stakeholders and technical organisations.

Another benchmarking survey on NAB's communication with national regulators will be elaborated on to include new items to best reflect new issues. The key issues are how regulators use accreditation and how far national authorities are involved in drafting regulations. A renewed survey will be presented at the CPC meeting in October 2012.

The CPC Members were also invited to share their local national contacts in order to develop close relationships with a larger number of technical organisations and stakeholders.

Benchmarking exercises

A CPC-designed survey on identified performance goals and service level will be launched among EA-member ABs. This exercise will provide EA Members with greater insight into their performance and identify areas for improvement.

Contributing or parallel issues progressing within the CPC

EA-1/01: List of EA Publications has been thoroughly revised, introducing the revised categorisation of EA documents adopted by the EA General Assembly in 2009. The reference number of the document has been accordingly changed into EA-INF/01.

Further to the adoption of the list of international documents applicable to EA, EA Members and accredited CABs by the EA General Assembly in November 2011, all international documents adopted by EA have also been included into a specific section of the document.

The new *List of EA Publications and International Documents* has been published on the EA website. It's worth noting that the Publications webpage has been deeply modified to improve navigability and visibility of EA Publications' status, including ILAC/IAF documents endorsed by EA.

Since its publication in November 2010, **EA-1/16: Statement of Equivalence to be used by EA MLA Signatories** was regarded as too long and complex by some members and stakeholders. The CPC then considered a shorter version of the statement.

The purpose of the document is to improve the consistency of information provided by NABs to the marketplace about accreditations granted, and of responses regarding the acceptance and recognition of activities delivered under the EA MLA.

Following a recommendation from the EA Advisory Board, the CPC prepares a whole set of common templates for use by NABs when responding to requests on the equivalence of accreditation systems and the validity of reports or certificates issued by accredited CABs under the EA MLA. A template for an Accreditation Statement has also been developed, which NABs may issue to facilitate European acceptance and recognition of an accreditation certificate issued by NABs.

A revision of the document to become EA-INF/04 and re-entitled **Statement on Acceptance and Recognition of Activities under the EA MLA** has been considered by the EA Executive Committee; the final version will be published as an informative document in September 2012.

No new revised draft of **EA-3/01: EA Conditions for Use of Accreditation Symbols, Text Reference to Accreditation and MLA Signatory Status** was presented since September 2011.

The CPC agreed to achieve a first, quicker revision of the document that should focus on EA Resolution 2011 (27) 38 providing that it is mandatory for NABs to refer to the EA MLA, and encouraging NABs to develop a policy allowing CABs to use the accreditation symbol in combination with "EA MLA Signatory". The reviewed version should be sent out for comments to the EA membership during the summer, and presented at the autumn CPC meeting. The need for further revision will be reconsidered in 2013 once EA-1/06: *EA Multilateral Agreement* is revised.

Finally, an **EA Marketing and Communication Workshop** led by Jon Murthy, the CPC Vice-Chair, on 22 March afternoon enabled CPC Members to update their knowledge in raising awareness on accreditation and their NAB's activities, in improving the navigation and visibility of their NAB's websites, etc.

As regional, EA representatives, two CPC members volunteered to participate in the ILAC TFG in charge of the redevelopment of the ILAC website.

A dedicated workshop to promote the **EA database and Search Facility** is being set up to take place during the next CPC meeting on 10 and 11 October 2012 in Paris, France.

The Horizontal Harmonisation Committee (HHC)

HHC held its last meeting in Brussels on 6-7 March 2012. 44 delegates attended the meeting, representing 31 ABs and 3 Recognised Stakeholders.

Management of sector schemes is ranking high on the Committee agenda, in terms of both the number of requests by schemes owners applying for acceptance under the EA MLA and the level of resources necessary for the analysis and management work. In this field, the HHC is working hand-in-hand with the CC through the CC WG Food mainly. To support the process, the HHC undertook a deep revision of EA-2/11: *EA Policy for Conformity Assessment Schemes* (now EA-1/22) with a view to set out the necessary principles and procedures for the management of conformity assessment schemes and EA's interaction with scheme owners. A revised version of the policy was recently put out for voting. A few significant comments were raised during the ballot. According to the EA rules, the Executive is considering the comments with a view to decide whether to re-start a comment round or go for a new vote. In the meantime 12 schemes are under EA's scrutiny at present and 2 more applications have been received recently.

EA-2/13: *EA Cross Frontier Policy for Cooperation between EA Members* is another major document which is being revised under the HHC auspices. A TFG was appointed specifically to carry out the task. It appeared in the process that procedural aspects, including relating to the application of principles for multisite accreditation, should be dealt with separately. Another specific TFG was tasked with performing the job. Revision of the policy is on-going; a final draft should be published for voting before the summer break.

Revision of **EA-3/09:** *Surveillance and Reassessment of accredited organisations* is also underway. Rules for the surveillance of sub-contractors of CABs will have to be addressed in the future document.

EA-2/02: *EA Policy and Procedures for the Multilateral Agreement* went through a deep review aiming at taking out any element describing a requirement or giving information on the MLA. The review ended up with a proposal to revise EA-1/06: *The EA Multilateral Agreement* and include the corresponding provisions. A HHC TFG has been appointed to progress the work.

Upon request of the EA Advisory Board, the Committee conducted a survey on ABs' rules and processes in place to deal with suspensions and cancellations of accreditation. All EA ABs responded and the results of the survey will be discussed in detail at a next meeting of the Executive Committee, in particular with regards to the consequences of ABs' policies in the regulatory area.

Building upon the very positive feedback received on the seminars held in Paris in September 2011, the HHC decided to plan again a 2-day event on 6-7 June 2012 to discuss accreditation/notification issues. The seminar is targeted to AB staff, and the convenors of Directives Networks will be invited to attend and report on their work.

The next HHC meeting will take place on 2-3 October 2012 (location still to be confirmed).

The EA Advisory Board (EAAB)

The 28th EAAB Meeting was held on 26 April 2012 in Brussels, Belgium. Elections for the Board will take place in October. Nominations have already been called. In the meantime, Michael Nitsche, from the Board's National Authority College and currently one of the EAAB Vice-Chairs, chaired the meeting on an interim basis.

At its last 2011 meeting, the Board agreed that the **establishment of non-EA member European accreditation organizations competing with EA-member NABs** formally appointed by their national authorities is a real issue to be considered within the legal framework of EC Regulation 765/2008. If ILAC or IAF accepts as a member an unaffiliated body located in Europe, and that body becomes a signatory to the respective mutual recognition arrangement, both EA and EA ABs will have to fully recognise the accreditations as equivalent to those issued by EA ABs due to the requirements of EA's membership of ILAC and IAF, even though those ABs do not meet the requirements that NABs in Europe have to meet. This would undermine the intent behind Regulation 765/2008 in Europe, place EA and its members in a difficult position, and cause confusion in the marketplace.

The EA Chair presented the outcome of a recent internal survey launched by EA to have a better view on how much this is a problem. The Board welcomed the results of the parallel discussions in the SOGS (Senior Officials Group for Standardisation and Conformity Assessment) at its April meeting, which provide clarification and preliminary guidance on how to deal with the issue. Further progress in SOGS to agree on a way forward will be followed up closely by the EAAB.

Revision of ILAC P10 ILAC Policy on Traceability of Measurement Results was discussed. The EAAB colleges expressed different views about the new draft and the proposed option 3, with regards to its application in particular. The Board agreed to follow on next developments and re-address the point in October when it is expected to have reached more mature draft.

Two key topics were also tabled for discussion:

Sector schemes in the light of EA-2/11: EA Policy, Criteria and Procedure for the Evaluation and Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Schemes for Inclusion in the EA MLA (now EA-1/22). EAAB Members had been invited to submit their questions or comments relating to sector scheme issues in order for EA to give most appropriate feedback and answers. It was agreed that comments raised by all colleges about the revised EA-2/11 will be reviewed by HHC and the EX. If necessary, any remaining questions will be reviewed by the EAAB when the new EA-1/22 (EA-2/11) is published.

The future of accreditation: Jacques McMillan from the EC DG Enterprise and Industry, attended his last EAAB meeting before retirement. It was the opportunity for him to give his views on the future of accreditation and EA. Rigour was a keyword in his address to the Board. Regulation (EC)765/2008 is a result of a wide consensus. All parties involved, i.e. accreditation bodies, CABs, but also Industry, Consumers and Regulators should commit to maintain confidence in the "European model for accreditation" that has been successfully established. How important it is that the system be properly resourced was also emphasized.

The EA and EAAB Chairs paid tribute to the immense work achieved by Jacques over the years, as one of the "fathers" of the current European accreditation infrastructure.

To conclude, Jacques insisted that the success had not been that of a single person but of a team. He confirmed he is very confident that accreditation will develop in future in accordance with the high expectations put on it by all interested parties.

The next EAAB meeting will take place on 30 October 2012 in Brussels.

EA Secretariat, 1 June 2012
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