ACCREDITATION
TESTING
INSPECTION
CALIBRATION
VERIFICATION
CERTIFICATION
EXAMINATION

European co-operation for Accreditation

A BRIEFING FOR EUROPEAN COMMISSION OFFICIALS

About Accreditation

The accreditation process determines, in the public interest, the technical competence and integrity of organisations offering testing, examination, inspection, calibration, verification and certification services. It operates across all market sectors, providing an impartial assessment against internationally recognised standards, which

- provides a transparent approach to conformity assessment in all sectors
- supports Regulations across a growing number of policy areas.

About the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA)

EA has been appointed by the European Commission to manage the accreditation infrastructure within the EU, EFTA and Candidate countries. It is a non-profit association responsible for defining, harmonising and building consistency in accreditation within the European region, with the aim of reducing barriers to trade and contributing to protecting health, safety and the environment. EA ensures that national accreditation bodies operate in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008.

Regulation (EC) No 765/2008

In 2008, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 that provides a legal framework for the provision of accreditation services across Europe.

The Regulation covers the operation of accreditation in support of testing, examination, verification, inspection, calibration and certification activities (collectively known as conformity assessment) including conformity assessment required by legislation.

Under the Regulation, accreditation, when carried out against the recognised harmonised standards, is regarded as a public authority activity.

EU Member States are required to appoint a single national accreditation body for these activities.

An overview of the European accreditation structure and process

European co-operation for Accreditation

- Peer evaluation (ISO/IEC 17011)
- Regulation (EC) No 765/2008

National Accreditation Bodies (NABs)

NABs assess and confirm the technical competence and integrity of organisations offering testing, examination, inspection, calibration, verification and certification services.

Laboratories	Inspection Bodies	Certification Bodies	Verification Bodies
Laboratories (calibration, testing and medical) perform tests and/or calibrations	Bodies that perform inspections of products, installations, etc	Bodies that assess conformity, and certify products, management systems, persons, processes or services	Bodies that carry out validation or verification of greenhouse gas assertions
ISO/IEC 17025 ISO 15189	ISO/IEC 17020	ISO/IEC 17021 ISO Guide 65 (EN 45011) ISO/IEC 17024	ISO 14065

NABs assess compliance with the requirements in international standards, as well as criteria included in Regulations.

Regulators and other users can have confidence that the conformity assessment activity is provided by a competent supplier

PRODUCT & SERVICE PROVIDERS

Government, purchasers and the consumer have **confidence** that products and services placed on the market meet specification or legislation.

GOVERNMENT **PURCHASERS** **CONSUMERS**

Supporting the work of the European Commission

Accreditation is gaining increased recognition as an important and practical tool in the delivery of objectives across an increasing range of policy areas.

For example, the Regulation reinforces the requirements for the notification of conformity assessment bodies. Accreditation shall now be used as the preferred means of demonstrating the competence of these bodies.

EA currently supports the following initiatives with Commission services:

- EU ETS Accreditation & Verification Regulation – DG CLIMA
- Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) – DG ENV
- Regulation (EC) 834/2007 – organic production and labeling of organic products – DG AGRI
- Regulation (EC) 882/2004 – official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules – DG SANCO
- European Breast Cancer Services Accreditation Project – DG SANCO
- Regulation 445/2011 on a system of certification of entities in charge of maintenance for freight wagons – DG MOVE
- Regulation (EU) 305/2011 Construction Products Regulation – DG ENTR
- Directive 1999/93/EC on a Community framework for electronic signatures (in cooperation with ETSI)
- Regulation (EU) 1151/2012 including the official controls of protected designations of origin (PDO), protected geographical indications (PGI) and traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG) – DG AGRI
- Regulation (EC) 479/2008 on the common organisation of the market in wine – DG AGRI
- Regulation (EC) 842/2006 on certain fluorinated greenhouse gases – DG ENV
- Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (biofuels) – DG ENV
- EU ETV project on the validation of the performance claims put forward by technology manufacturers – DG ENV
- Vehicle inspections (in collaboration with (CITA – International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee).

EA welcomes the opportunity to assist DGs in the drafting of regulations to ensure that references to standards and accreditation are clear and unambiguous.

The EA Multilateral Agreement (MLA)

The EA MLA is an agreement signed between EA accreditation body members to recognise the equivalence, reliability and therefore increased acceptance of results provided by accredited testing, examination, verification, inspection, calibration and certification organisations across Europe. It provides a framework that delivers equal, comparable and reliable accreditation services.

National Accreditation Bodies are admitted to the MLA only after stringent evaluation of their operations by a peer evaluation team to determine continued compliance with ISO/IEC 17011, the internationally recognised standard for accreditation bodies.

The MLA process is observed by personnel from the European Commission, national authorities and an EA Advisory Board, which consists of stakeholders and other interested parties in the business and regulatory community.

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