



*Publication
Reference*

EA-1/21 A-AB: 2008

EA Internal Procedure For Liaison Activities

PURPOSE

In the context of EA Policy to intensify its international activities with other regional bodies and stakeholders, this document defines the process for appointing EA liaison persons, adopting mandate and positions for participation in liaison activities and the obligations for those persons and the reporting from international liaison activities.

Authorship

The publication has been written by the EA Executive Committee.

Official language

The publication may be translated into other languages as required. The English language version remains the definitive version.

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Category: Governance and Policy Documents

Date of Approval: 12 July 2008

Date of implementation: Immediate

Transitional period: None

Note: The EA Executive Members warns that the last clause of section 1 will not apply until 2009.

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	SELECTION AND APPOINTEMENT	3
3.	LIAISON FOR INFLUENCING OR PARTICIPATING IN THE DECISIONS OF THE OTHER BODY.....	4
4.	LIAISON FOR NEGOTIATING SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COOPERATION WITH EA OR ITS ACCREDITATION BODY MEMBERS.....	5
5.	REPORTING BACK AND RECEIVING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.....	6
6.	OBLIGATIONS OF EA AND EA COMMITTEES TO LIAISON APPOINTEES	6
	APPENDIX A – TERMS OF REFERENCE: EA LIAISON REPRESENTATIVES	7
	APPENDIX B – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE LIAISON ARE ESTABLISHED.....	8
	B.1. Objectives	8
	B.1.1 What would EA or a particular EA Committee wish to accomplish by liaising with this group (organization)?.....	8
	B.1.2 What is the desired result of this liaison?.....	8
	B.2. Target audience	8
	B.3. EA Activity.....	8
	APPENDIX C - REPORT OF EA LIAISON	9

1. INTRODUCTION

Liaisons are those persons who have been formally appointed to represent the EA membership in fora outside EA. These persons have a special responsibility to the EA community and therefore have to follow the road map given in this internal procedure.

From time-to-time EA or a Committee of EA will appoint one of its members or an associated person to represent it at meetings of other European, regional and international bodies. These meetings may include those of ILAC, IAF, APLAC, PAC, IAAC, SADCA, ISO, IEC, BIPM, OIML EURACHEM, EUROLAB, EUROMET, WADA, European Commission, EU Working Groups, etc. In each case, there are different purposes for EA being represented at these meetings. These purposes may include:

- influencing the decisions of the meeting to coincide with the aims of EA;
- promoting EA in general or some of its specific activities to stakeholders;
- observing a meeting and reporting back to EA or to an EA Committee; and
- gathering information to assist EA in making decisions about extending its involvement or association with that organisation.

The appointee may already be a member of the meeting to which EA or the EA Committee has appointed them as a representative. However, in each case, the appointee will be representing EA's wider interests or specific EA Committee interests and must make it clear when providing input into such meetings, whether the input represents the views of EA members, is the view of their parent organisation or is simply a personal view.

Depending on the appointment conditions and EA expectations, the appointee will need to take specific actions described in this procedure. The procedure applies only to liaison persons formally appointed by the EA Executive or another EA Committee. In such cases, it shall be explicitly decided that the present procedure applies.

EA funding for transportation and / or accommodation for liaison / participation will generally be available after decision by the Executive Committee. Requests for financial support would have to be presented in advance for the following year by the responsible Committee and agreed by the Executive as well as included in the budget submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

2. SELECTION AND APPOINTEMENT

Before any selection of a person as a representative, the EA or its relevant Committee must analyze the situation for each case separately by answering such questions as:

- Do we need EA (or EA Committee) representation or is it just useful if someone happens to be available?
- Are they preparing document(s) which may influence the work of accreditation bodies or their clients or which EA could adopt in future?
- Are they operating sector specific recognition / accreditations and seek EA assistance or input or EA wishes to give assistance or input?
- Are they key supporting organisations for accreditation processes, such as those writing standards or providing the various forms of traceability of measurement?
- Do we expect only feedback and transfer of information?
- Do we expect input from our representative to influence the directions / decisions of the meeting?
- Do we expect the appointee to be a negotiator / spokesperson on behalf of EA or an EA Committee, because we are looking for future co-operations / arrangements, or to act as an observer?

- Do we wish to have EA promoted / marketed to this organisation?

Some suggested questions to be answered are included in a form in Appendix B.

Once these sorts of questions have been carefully considered (usually by an EA Committee or working group) a person suitably qualified and competent for the task should be sought. This should not just be a process of asking for volunteers nor asking someone who happens to be there unless such a person is judged suitable for the task and has time to deliver the requirements of EA. Conflict of interest issues should also be considered. In some cases it may not be possible to achieve these ideals, but the use of a clearly unsuitable volunteer should be avoided.

The EA Committee or relevant working group for that topic should evaluate a name or names of potential candidates. The appointed person should be presented to the EA Executive for endorsement and formal appointment. Often it will be preferable to appoint an EA Committee member to such a representative position because, having been at the relevant EA Committee's meetings they will have a full understanding of the thoughts and wishes of the particular EA Committee members, of the discussions leading up to the appointment and of the purposes of the appointment.

The General Assembly of EA shall then be informed of the appointment through the report of the relevant Committee to the General Assembly.

3. LIAISON FOR INFLUENCING OR PARTICIPATING IN THE DECISIONS OF THE OTHER BODY

There are EA or EA Committee representatives to other bodies where EA wishes to influence the decisions or to participate in the work of those bodies. In these situations the body may be preparing standards or guidance documents that will affect the processes of accreditation or the processes of accredited organisations. Such example organisations are ILAC, IAF, APLAC, PAC, IAAC, SADCA, ISO, IEC, BIPM, OIML EURACHEM, EUROLAB, EUROMET WADA, European Commission, EU Working Groups etc.

In these cases it is vital that the appointee is fully acquainted with the purpose(s) of their appointment, the aims of EA and/or the EA Committee in relation to the meeting / organisation they are to liaise with, the consensus wishes of relevant EA Committee members and specific concerns / sensitivities for individual members.

There should be an EA Committee's approved work item on the subject, probably an EA Committee's working group and the EA Committee itself should have had an opportunity to discuss the particular representation at one of its meetings.

The appointee should then be fully briefed by the relevant EA Committee or working group and the appointment and briefing would preferably be confirmed in writing through a paper approved by the relevant Committee and Executive wherever possible. The member must be clearly instructed that their input into the meeting / organisation is as a representative of EA and that the input is to be representative of the agreed consensus views of the relevant EA Committee membership.

If the appointee feels moved to give to the meeting / organisation, personal views or specific views of their own economy or their home organisation, then this fact must be clearly disclosed to the meeting. Appointees shall be instructed that if they have views that are contrary to the consensus views or instructions of the appointing EA Committee, then they are not to express them at the meeting or otherwise they are to resign from the position as EA or EA Committee appointee.

It is understood that as a particular meeting progresses, further information presented may require views / opinions / input of an appointee to be modified and the appointee will need to feel free to use their own intelligence and initiative in the light of the circumstances as they develop. However if the appointee feels that they need to move outside the consensus views of the EA Committee's membership they should delay their input until the issue has been brought back to the particular EA Committee for further deliberation.

4. LIAISON FOR NEGOTIATING SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COOPERATION WITH EA OR ITS ACCREDITATION BODY MEMBERS

There are EA or an EA Committee's representatives who may be asked to attend meetings or to organise communications directly with particular organisations with the view to negotiating agreements for cooperation between those organisations and EA or its accreditation body members. In particular, organisations using (or wishing to use) recognition / accreditation for sector specific conformity assessment bodies would be included here. Examples are IEC, Bluetooth, WADA, GLOBALGap etc.

The appointees for these tasks may in addition to having a close knowledge of the particular sector, have personal contacts / associations / friendships within the specific organisation. They would be expected to have a presence / aura of authority and be good negotiators. In some of these cases, the appointee may well be outside the EA or the EA Committee's membership as the necessary skills and experience may not be internally available.

There should be an EA Committee's approved work item on the subject, probably an EA Committee's working group and the EA Committee itself should have had an opportunity to discuss the particular representation at one of its meetings.

Here it is even more vital that the appointee is fully briefed by the relevant EA Committee or working group and that the appointment and briefing is confirmed in writing with a paper approved by the relevant EA Committee. The appointee must be clearly instructed by the Executive that their input into and negotiations with the meeting / organisation are as a representative of EA and that the input is representative of the agreed consensus views of the relevant EA Committee. Here there is no room for the appointee to be moved to give to the meeting / organisation, personal views or specific views of their economy or their home organisation, or to negotiate outside the brief of the EA Committee. Appointees shall be instructed that if they have views that are contrary to the consensus views or instructions of the EA appointing Committee, then they are not to express them at the meeting or otherwise they are to resign from the position as EA appointee.

Again it is understood that as a particular meeting or negotiation progresses, further information presented may require views / opinions / input of an appointee to be modified and the appointee will need to feel free to use their own intelligence and initiative in the light of the circumstances as they develop.

However if the appointee feels that they need to move outside the consensus views of the EA appointing Committee they should delay confirmation of their input until the issue has been brought back to that Committee for further deliberation.

5. REPORTING BACK AND RECEIVING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS

As a minimum, the liaison person has to provide a brief report on the activities of the meeting / organisation to the EA relevant Committee and EA Secretariat within a month after the specific meeting has taken place. Particular issues of interest to other EA Committees should be highlighted and opportunities for ongoing or increasing cooperation should be identified. Such reports shall be posted on the EA website for liaison activities.

Where the task has been to influence the deliberations of the other body, the extent / success of that influence should be reported back. Where the influence has been less than ideal, the appointee should provide recommendations on ways to increase the influence or to overcome any difficulties that may arise for EA or its members as a result of that lack of sufficient influence.

Where the task has been to negotiate an agreement for cooperation with accreditation processes for sector specific organisations, the results of the negotiation will need to be reported back along with clear instructions on how individual accreditation bodies are to proceed to implement the processes agreed in the negotiations.

6. OBLIGATIONS OF EA AND EA COMMITTEES TO LIAISON APPOINTEES

The Executive, relevant EA Committee and its relevant working group must take seriously their obligations to liaison appointees.

The appointments should be made carefully with full consideration of the items mentioned above.

Briefing of liaison appointees must be full and clear giving them reliable information about the consensus views of the relevant EA Committee.

Instructions should include clear guidance on:

- why they are to do this job
- what is expected of them
- what is the most desired outcome that the relevant EA Committee hopes for them to achieve
- what the relevant EA Committee wishes to hear back

For these purposes, those briefing the appointee may wish to prepare a list of items about which they wish to receive information in the report.

Appointees should be supported in their work, thanked for the giving of their time freely and not blamed if the organisation does not accept the proposals / views of EA or the EA Committee.

APPENDIX A – TERMS OF REFERENCE: EA LIAISON REPRESENTATIVES

EA representatives have to:

- attend meetings and monitor activities of his/her assigned liaison body
- make statements on behalf of EA in an appropriate way
- prepare a concise report about the outcome of the meeting/planned decisions with regard to the EA issues and send it to the Secretariat for distribution
- where relevant or appropriate and in relation with the appointing EA body, collect written views from EA members and send them to the Secretariat for distribution
- endeavour to derive EA's position from EA members, prepare an EA position and suggest future activities
- endeavour to find a substitute if he/she can not attend
- in case of alert send a note immediately to the EA Executive and Secretariat

APPENDIX B – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE LIAISON ARE ESTABLISHED

B.1. Objectives

B.1.1 What would EA or a particular EA Committee wish to accomplish by liaising with this group (organization)?

(Use the following options to sharpen the goal)

- Create/increase awareness of EA activities
- Cooperate with the organization (specify what type of cooperation)
- Upgrade present cooperation
- Educate a target audience
- Establish the leadership of EA in a particular area
- Change perceptions of EA or its activities

B.1.2 What is the desired result of this liaison?

B.2. Target audience

- Who will be the audience?
- How well do they know the activities of EA?
- Do they operate any competing activity?
- What is the reason they want to interact with EA?
- Do they have any conflict of interest with EA?
- Do we need to penetrate multi levels within the organization? Define those levels and their roles in decision-making processes.

B.3. EA Activity

- What is the most important message that needs to be delivered?
- What other important messages would EA like to convey to the target audience?
- Is this single liaison the only activity or do we want to establish a long-term relationship?
- What kind of marketing/advertising/educating material should be delivered to the target audience?
- What decisions of the target body / audience does EA wish to influence and how?

APPENDIX C - REPORT OF EA LIAISON

EA Liaison person: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Summary of meeting

Important topics concerning EA interests

Actions/decisions needed from EA

