

APPROVED Minutes of the 50th Meeting of the EA Advisory Board
held on Friday 20 October 2023 in Brussels, Belgium, in a hybrid form.

Participants:

EAAB Chair: Miruna Dobre (EURAMET).

EAAB Vice-Chairs: Martin Stadler (BUSINESSEUROPE), Bruce McGill (TIC Council).

CAB College: Ivan Savov (EFAC), Alexander Safarik-Pstrosz (EUROLAB), Marcus Long (IIOC).

Industry College: Andrew Evans (CAPIEL), Lars Bo Hammer (Danish Industries).

NA College: Ariane Van Cutsem (NA, Belgium), Natália Kolibová (NA, Czech Republic), Michael Ottmann (NA, Germany), Maria Elena Greco (NA, Italy), Sezen Leventoglu (NA, Turkey).

Consumers: Libor Dupal (ANEC).

European Private Scheme Owners: Thomas Votsmeier (EOQ).

European Standardisation Organisations: Enda McDonnell (CEN-CENELEC).

Metrology Stakeholders: -

EC: Zacharias Bilalis, Lina Karbauskaite.

EFTA: Gudrun Rognvaldardottir (EFTA).

EA: Maureen Logghe (EA President), Andreas Steinhorst (EA Executive Secretary), Frédérique Laudinet (EAAB Secretariat).

Apologies were received from Benny De Blaere (EUROCER Building), Franziska Wirths (ORGALIM) and Marc Wouters (WELMEC).

1. Opening of the meeting - Roll call

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members who participated physically or remotely in this new hybrid meeting, which was the 50th EAAB meeting.

EAAB Members were invited to a roll call and introduced themselves briefly.

2. Approval of agenda

List of conclusions and resolutions of 49th Meeting of the EAAB

Approval of Draft Minutes of 49th Meeting of the EAAB

Action list (actions not covered elsewhere)

▪ Approval of agenda

The meeting agenda as distributed was adopted.

▪ Approval of previous minutes

The Chair called for comments on the minutes of the last meeting which, exceptionally, had been distributed very late without any specific round for comments.

She gave the floor to M. Long who proposed an addition to the minutes under Agenda Item 4.4 about the IAF CertSearch database, on Page 9, to indicate that the draft mandatory document (MD) had been shared on a couple of occasions at the time of the EAAB meeting on 11 May. M. Logghe pointed out that the call for comments on the MD had only been launched on 31 May, i.e. after the EAAB meeting, until 31 July 2023. It was agreed to add M. Long's remark as a post-meeting footnote for information purposes – see decision below.

There was no other comment and the minutes were approved with this sole addition.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz complained about receiving the minutes too long after the meeting. The Chair apologised for this exceptionally long delay, while explaining that drafting and reviewing the minutes needed some time to get an exhaustive overview of the discussions. Normally minutes are distributed within two months after the meeting, whereas the Conclusion and Resolution List stating the main discussion points and decisions made at the meeting is published within two weeks. These deadlines were confirmed by the members.

Decision

The Board:

- agreed that the Conclusion and Resolution List should be published within two weeks of its meetings, and the draft minutes sent out for comments within two months of its meetings;
Action Chair to include revision of EAAB Rules of Procedure into next meeting agenda.
- approved the draft minutes of its 49th meeting as distributed, with the following post-meeting footnote to be added under Agenda Item 4.4 about the IAF CertSeach Database:
The draft mandatory document was shared with the IAF CertSeach Database Working Group members on 14 March 2023. This was then shared with the IAF Technical Committee Leads (one of which exists for each IAF member) on 6 April 2023. Finally, further to the EAAB meeting, the draft mandatory document was shared with all IAF members for 60-day consultation.
Action Secretariat to amend and publish the minutes of the relevant intranet and internet pages.

Finally, the Chair went through the action list, saying that every action would be followed up during the meeting.

3. Topics for discussion

3.1 Challenges for the conformity assessment infrastructure: new regulations for new technologies' implementation (Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Sustainability): update

The Chair gave the floor to A. Steinhorst who updated the Board members on the numerous activities carried out by EA with regard to the new EU regulations, especially cooperating activities with the EC and EA Members to harmonise their implementation. The crucial challenge is to achieve capacity building.

A specific WG deals with the new Cyber Resilience Act, which is to be published before the EC elections next year, and artificial intelligence. Several steps are already in place to support the new Cyber Resilience Act; the next step will be to consider the implementation of it.

Another important sector is sustainability: a specific TFG including recognised stakeholders is looking now at how to implement the regulation and promote accreditation of CABs.

All these high-level activities are faced with the serious challenge of capacity building and resources in many sectors.

B. McGill pointed out that the biggest challenge was actually to involve notified bodies because they were not addressed by EA.

A. Steinhorst replied that draft letters to be used for communication with national authorities were sent to EA NABs; but the responsibility lies with the national authorities at the end. M. Logghe added that EA and its member NABs also promote and explain accreditation to the national authorities.

B. McGill made reference, as an example, to a Batteries Regulation application to SWEDAC, for modules D1 and G: when would EA-2/17 be updated to include the preferred accreditation standard?

M. Logghe in reply, update that EA-2/17 is being considered by the HHC and would be updated and issued in early January 2024.

In M. Stadler's view, the problem lies in the risk of uneven levels of conformity assessment resulting from uneven levels of notification, at least in the cybersecurity field. The alternative way of national public authorities notifying conformity assessment bodies create a transparency issue. This is a real political issue, which is not however for EA to tackle. He called for an equal level of competences of notified bodies in the field of cybersecurity across Europe. In particular, notified bodies are required to have the necessary competences to perform assessments even in the absence of harmonised standards or where such standards have not been applied by the manufacturers. However, it is unclear whether and to what extent these competences have been assessed by the national notifying authorities.

N. Kolibová confirmed that NAs had to solve this issue, reporting that the Czech national authorities had been trying to use the best alternative, i.e. accreditation.

M. Ottmann claimed that, while there were no German notifying authorities yet for batteries, there was no transparency issue in the cybersecurity sector.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz pointed out that the basic issue was not related to different sectors, but to the incapacity of delivering accreditation in a specific sector. Certification might be provided without accreditation because NBs have no assessors for this or that sector and accreditation is not underpinned by the competences of NABs. This issue may differ from one country to another one, of course, but this so-called "challenge" may actually be a serious problem.

M. Logghe replied that this should not be a problem since, according to Regulation 765, CABs can apply to another NAB when accreditation is not provided in their own country. So if a NAB does not have capacity/competence, the notifying authority can still rely on accreditation provided by another NAB (from another MS).

B. McGill confirmed that this was actually a common practice.

A. Steinhorst asked A. Safarik-Pstrosz to give concrete examples of his too general statements.

M. Stadler referred to the Commission Staff Working Document published on 11 November 2022 about the Evaluation of the New Legislative Framework, pages 13 and 14:

2.2.3. Strengthening the quality of conformity assessment services through improved accreditation of notified bodies

Notified bodies' "competence and capacity to carry out their tasks correctly has always been crucial. The Impact Assessment of 2007, however, identified a lack of confidence in notified bodies and in the whole notification system. The main issues were the following:

- ***Uneven level of conformity assessment services provided by notified bodies***

The interpretation of safety and procedural requirements often varied significantly from body to body. Problems experienced with notified bodies were also relevant in an environmental context.

- ***Lack of transparency and different approaches in the competence assessment and monitoring of notified bodies***

Industry, public authorities and notified bodies themselves doubted that all notified bodies actually possessed the required competence to carry out the tasks for which they are notified. 60% of participants in the public consultation supporting the IA 2007 considered that notified bodies were not sufficiently monitored."

B. McGill tempered those individual and subjective opinions, asserting that there were actually two levels of expectations, also depending on costs.

M. Logghe argued for accreditation as a basis for assessment.

N. Kolibová said that NAs would not be able to solve on their own this difficult issue which depends on each country.

A. Van Cutsem underlined there is not yet any evidence that difference in quality or performance of NBs is due to the ways of notification. Moreover notification procedures have to be published in national regulation and on Nando website. And the NAs receive all documented proposals of notification for comment. With accreditation, there is the same basis for assessment for notification, but the point is how to have the same level of assessment by all NABs. Therefore the legislation needs to be quite clear on the requirements and the objectives, the terminology and the risks, so that the CABs and the assessors from the NABs know what and how to assess the products or services.

A. Evans stressed the need to demonstrate stakeholders' confidence in the system.

A. Steinhorst reported that EA has been supporting ENISA in the elaboration of the candidate schemes under the Cybersecurity Act. The first draft scheme EUCC had been published recently as a draft implementing regulation for public consultation. Other schemes on 5G (EU5G) and cloud services (EUCS) are in preparation. An EA TFG on the EUCS scheme will support ENISA regarding the elaboration of the EUCS scheme, mainly regarding accreditation and conformity assessment issues. He underlined that no issue with those notified bodies involved had been reported so far, which is a clear encouragement to look ahead with confidence.

M. Stadler added that the challenge was even bigger in the Artificial Intelligence sector, where technical issues are far from being harmonised.

For B. McGill, the major problem is that modules do not fit the issues. A. Steinhorst replied that better modules might be considered and partly revised in the future for them to fit exactly.

Finally, L. B. Hammer asked for the peer-evaluation process and document (EA-2/02) to consider and validate also smaller schemes in light of the risk-based approach.

Decision

The Board:

- shares the concerns raised in the marketplace about the growing risk of uneven levels of competence of notified bodies resulting in uneven levels of conformity assessment, in particular regarding regulations addressing new technologies;
- partially attributed this risk to the different routes for conformity assessment as well as, in particular, to the varying routes for competence assessment and monitoring of notified bodies applied by the Member States' notifying authorities;
- acknowledged the concerns expressed by the Industry College which called for the peer-evaluation system to take account also of smaller schemes within the risk-based approach, and asked EA to give feedback on how this risk is mitigated.

Action EAAB MAC Observer to communicate EAAB concern at next MAC meeting.

3.2 Implementation of revised EA-2/17

A. Steinhorst provided an update on the status of EA-2/17: *EA Document on Accreditation for Notification Purposes* based on the presentation (Document EAAB(23)01) made by Kristina Hallman, the HHC Vice-Chair, at the IMP meeting held on 27 March 2023. The fourth revision of EA-2/17 was published on 14 April 2020, and NABs had to comply with the new revision of the document by April 2021, whereas CABs have to comply with it by 17 April 2023. The HHC WG Accreditation for Notification (AfN) has run a second survey among members to collect information on the implementation process of EA-2/17 which seems to be well on track.

Based on a proposal from the WG AfN and after endorsement by the HHC, the TMB has approved two binding resolutions aimed to support harmonised implementation of EA-2/17 about:

- suspension of non-compliant accreditations after April 2023 (TMB Resolution 2022 (10) 01);

- correct performance of witnessing after conditional accreditation has been granted (TMB Resolution 2022 (10) 02).

In short, “NABs shall withdraw (if necessary, after a suspension) any accreditation for those conformity assessment activities not based on the preferred standard after the deadline established by EA-2/17 (17 April 2023) – this also applies in the case when the notifying and/or regulatory authority’s published requirement (see EA-2/17 § 4.2) includes more harmonized standards than the preferred standard, because the NAB can implement the preferred standard for each regulation/directive and module; the only case when no sanction is required to be applied for the CABs accredited by a different standard is when the notifying and/or regulatory authority has published a requirement (see EA-2/17 §4.2), binding to the CAB, not to accept the preferred standard, but a different one...” (TMB Resolution 2022 (10) 01).

Full details are provided in EAAB(23)01.

A. Steinhorst added that WG AfN was looking at whether there is a need to revise EA-2/17 with regard to new regulations.

N. Kolibová reported that at the last IMP meeting, there had been a question about whether notifying authorities could join the WG AfN. A. Steinhorst replied that not only notifying authorities, but also recognised stakeholders, have been and still are of course invited to provide comments.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz expressed the CAB College’s view that the problem lies in the non-harmonised approach of notifying authorities and notified bodies which, contrary to EA NABs, are not obliged to apply EA-2/17.

N. Kolibová pinpointed that the problem is much broader than the application of EA-2/17.

M. Ottmann asked why EA had to restrict accreditation to certain standards, at least regarding product certification.

A. Steinhorst replied that EA’s aim is not to restrict the use of standards, but to meet the huge expectation from the EC and notified bodies requesting harmonisation of conformity assessment practices, which should follow the same standards.

B. McGill pointed out that a number of guidance documents advocate some deviation from harmonised standards. The aim should be to ensure a level playing field for the whole of CABs.

M. Logghe argued that an accreditation body cannot go beyond what it is supposed to do.

For M. Stadler, the survey carried out by EA on the application of EA-2/17 is a good example of transparency which also shows a large variety of uses; this is a basis to look at any further need for harmonisation.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz clarified that harmonisation of notified bodies is not subject to EA-2/17 and EA, but is a matter for notifying authorities.

N. Kolibová agreed on the need for transparency. She insisted on the need for national authorities to cooperate much more with EA and be more involved in the next revisions of EA-2/17 so as to clearly define which “preferred” standards are the best ones. Closer discussions could only be beneficial to all the conformity assessment community in the future.

Decision

The Board:

- thanked EA for having carried out the survey and harmonisation work concerning the revised EA-2/17: *EA Document on Accreditation for Notification Purposes* published in April 2020 which is a good example of transparency, and looked forward to any further update with regard to new regulations;
- would welcome any feedback on the usage and deviations of accreditation standards for notification in national notifying authorities for transparency purposes;

- would recommend stronger cooperation between the EC, notifying authorities and EA in a future update of the list of “preferred standards” to be provided for in the different sectors.

3.3 Accreditation policy developments: effective EC communication strategy

N. Kolibová reported on the last meeting held on 5 June 2023 regarding to the New Legislative Framework: Results of Evaluation and Way Forward, which gathered the national authorities, the EC and EA. In particular, a workshop was dedicated to the outcome of the evaluation of the NLF. The meeting also included a presentation of the national authorities themselves.

It is regrettable that no minutes of, or report on the meeting and workshop have been received.

N. Kolibová asked the EC whether this kind of workshop had brought some added value and was beneficial or not. Will it be continued? She argued that there is still room for improvement and stressed the need for an increased communication with the EC in the future.

L. Karbauskaite replied that the meeting was a pilot experience which had been a good occasion for cooperating and sharing views. However there is no intention so far to continue this kind of meeting on regular basis; a sectoral meeting with lifts sector was hold on 11.10.23.

The Chair insisted on the need for an effective EC communication strategy, and asked whether the EAAB was the right forum to tackle this issue. L. Karbauskaite confirmed that the issue was right, and indicated that the EC would keep the Board informed of any other issues.

For M. Stadler, the issue is about national authorities and the implementation of the entire conformity assessment system, and whether the IMP ACA is the suitable forum for this.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz was very surprised at the answer given by the EC, which should not be satisfied with the problems and challenges clearly identified regarding the need for improved harmonisation, competences, etc. He also regretted that no minutes of the 5 June meeting had been provided. He wondered about the composition of IMP meetings, stressing the increasing importance to improve communication for CABs. For him, this is not a sectoral but a horizontal issue, which would need more attention and understanding from the EC. Communication between the EC and EA, at least the concrete outcome of it, should be made more visible.

L. Karbauskaite agreed on the importance of and need for communication, while mentioning time and budget constraints. She reminded that a large number of meetings are organised with Member States.

N. Kolibová highlighted the need for the EC’s help to improve communication, and would appreciate that workshops could continue. L. Karbauskaite replied that work was going on, and could not give any timeframe for now.

L. Karbauskaite was surprised to hear a lack of communication between EA and the EC.

M. Logghe and A. Steinhorst disagreed with A. Safarik-Pstrosz. They confirmed that EA and the EC have bilateral meetings, and ensured that they appreciated having an open line with the EC.

B. McGill asserted that an open discussion and reinforced communication on accreditation policy developments were necessary for transparency and understanding purposes. Actually there is a need to increase the frequency of communication, because a good communication is already in place.

M. Stadler agreed on the need to strengthen and have more regular communication between the EC, EA and the stakeholders. For instance, he asked about the outcome of the evaluation exercise on the NLF.

The Industry College has strong concerns over the readiness of all infrastructures to ensure the proper implementation of new regulations.

A. Van Cutsem asked about the EC's strategy and the aim of all existing meetings, whose objectives should be clarified. It is a good idea that the EC organises meetings dedicated to different sectors in order to show the EC how national authorities proceed. But what are the results of these meetings? What is the EC's intention? Will there be other meetings?

L. Karbauskaite replied that the minutes of all these meetings (expert groups) covering a large variety of sectors are available on the EC website. DG Grow is in charge of Movement of safe goods, so all actions are guided by this.

The Board:

- acknowledged the communication channels established by the EC, including those put in place more recently, but would like to see them used in a more frequent and consistent way so as to reflect a global communication strategy;
- agreed to collect the EAAB Colleges' main concerns, expectations and suggestions for improvement and to put them together in a paper to be drafted at the next EAAB-EA Chairs' in-between communication meeting and to be brought to the attention of the EC.
Action EAAB Colleges by next EAAB-EA Chairs' in-between communication meeting.

4. Topics for information

EAAB Matters

4.1 Report from the EAAB MAC observer: 4-5 October 2023 meeting Report from the EAAB HHC observer: 13-14 September 2023 meeting

- A report on the last **MAC** meeting held on 4-5 October 2023 in Brussels, Belgium, had been drafted by Sezen Leventoglu, the EAAB MAC observer, and distributed among the papers (EAAB(23)16).

S. Leventoglu went through her report, which gave rise to neither comment nor question.

The Chair and M. Stadler thanked S. Leventoglu for her report which was greatly appreciated by the Board.

- The Decision List of the last **HHC** meeting held on 13-14 September 2023 in Brussels had been distributed among the papers.

No report could be drafted by Benny De Blaere, the EAAB HHC observer, who could not attend the HHC meeting for health reasons.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz reported that a new EUROLAB representative, Leif Madsen, had been registered in the HHC membership and will participate in the HHC meetings from now onwards.

Some members of the Board complained to have no access to the HHC papers on the EA intranet. M. Stadler pointed out that EAAB Members as recognised stakeholders "*of right*", as mentioned in EA-1/15, should get access to the HHC-related section on the intranet. He asked the Secretariat to ensure all EAAB Members have access to the HHC folders.

Decision

The Board:

- took note of the information contained in the EAAB MAC Observer's report published as EAAB(23)16, and thanked the observer for her comprehensive report;

- asked the Secretariat to ensure that every EAAB Member as a recognised stakeholder “*of right*” (see EA-1/15) has access to the EA intranet folders, especially to the HHC documents.
Action Secretariat together with EA Executive Secretary and Head of Administration.

4.2 Stakeholders’ representation in EA; interaction between EAAB and EA

- **Feedback from in-between chairs meeting on 12 October 2023**

The Chair presented the conclusions, as noted in Document EAAB(23)17, of the in-between meeting which had been held online the week before.

Regarding his request to amend the following sentence about the IAF CertSearch database mentioned in Section 8 of the EA Annual Report 2022: “*EA, supported by the EA Advisory Board, was not in favour of these new mandatory principles.*”, M. Long remained very concerned about the decision not to amend the EA annual report nor the EAAB minutes. He reiterated that nothing in any EAAB minutes could demonstrate that the Board shared and supported the EA position.

M. Stadler disagreed with M. Long, pointing out that the sentence in the EA annual report does not mean consensus and as such is perfectly correct: a large majority of EAAB Members did support EA’s position.

When M. Long added that the EAAB had not actually given EA its support, B. McGill clarified that the Industry and CAB Colleges, respectively, gave their full and half support to the EA position, which resulted in the clear fact that a majority of the Board was in favour of it.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz found it strange that the EAAB position was mentioned in the EA annual report. For him, such supporting references are not appropriate and important in the EA reports which should stick to EA positions only. He argued that, as a matter of principle, EAAB positions are only internal and advisory positions.

The Chair disagreed, and is very pleased that EA acknowledges the EAAB support. She decided to further discuss the point at the next meeting.

Decision

The Board agreed to discuss at the next meeting whether EAAB positions should support EA positions or remain only internal positions as a matter of principle.

Action EAAB Chair for next agenda

- **Revision of EA-1/15: update**

M. Stadler reported that the Industry College had no comment on this editorial revision, awaiting the upcoming, more thorough revision of the document.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz reported that EUROLAB had sent some comments which were not so editorial, such as the replacement of “may” with “should”. He proposed distributing them to the EAAB.

4.3 IAF CertSearch database: Update

A. Steinhorst reported that the mandatory document for application of the database principles had just been approved the week before. The IAF DMC organised several webinars to explain the practicalities, and A. Steinhorst thanked IAF for that. More regular webinars should be planned to assist CBs and ABs.

EC matters

4.4 Report from the EC

- **Conclusions of meeting on 5 June 2023 between the EC and NAs**
- **Evaluation of NLF: next steps**

The points were already discussed under Agenda Item 3.3.

EA Matters

4.5 Endorsement of EA new work items

- **Revision of EA-1/22: *EA Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members***
- **Revision of EA-4/20: *Assessment of Laboratories against ISO 15189 Performing Point-Of-Care Testing (POCT)***

Decision

The Board endorsed the new work items proposed for:

- the revision of EA-1/22: *EA Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members* according to the rationale set out in Document EAAB(23)12;
- the revision of EA-4/20: *Assessment of Laboratories against ISO 15189 Performing Point-Of-Care Testing (POCT)* according to the rationale set out in Document EAAB(23)13.

4.6 EA reply to IIOC, IQNET, TIC Council questions dated May 2023 with reference to the Italian Council of State (Judgement No. 04089/2023 REG.PROV.COLL. N. 05072/2022 REG.RIC of 21 April 2023)

M. Logghe explained that EA had replied to a few questions asked by some stakeholders, i.e. IIOC, IQNet and TIC Council, about the issue of maintaining the EA MLA for those organisations having certificates with an accreditation from a non-EU-based AB.

B. McGill raised the point that UKAS where the mentioned non - EU AB by the Italian courts in this case, concerning the acceptance of issued certificates when being accepted for “public office” was perhaps taken in the wrong context.

M. Long advised to be careful because the legal procedure was still going on. He recapitulated that the biggest concern lies in the use of certificates in the marketplace. This is not a Brexit issue, but it concerns the use of certificates outside of the EU.

Decision

The Board acknowledged EA’s reply to the issue of maintaining the MLA for those organisations having certificates with an accreditation from a non-EU-based AB, and considered it to be in line with the EU Commission’s position and Regulation (EC) 765/2008.

4.7 Revision of EA-2/15 Flexible scopes: update

A. Steinhorst updated that EA-2/15, a HHC document, had been sent out for ballot until 3 November 2023.

4.8 MoU between the European Quality Infrastructure organisations

A. Steinhorst reported that the General Assembly in May 2023 had approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CEN, CENELEC, EA, EURAMET and WELMEC on the creation and implementation of a European Quality Infrastructure network, a partnership of regional quality infrastructure organisations that collaborate to strengthen the Quality Infrastructure in Europe. Every organisation has signed the MoU, and EUROLAB has already requested to join the network.

Further to a question by G. Rognvaldardottir, A. Steinhorst indicated that ETSI had been asked to take part in the network.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz wondered why this network of CABs includes neither ABs nor NBs.

4.9 International trade agreements

▪ CETA - Implementation of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with Canada/SCC

A. Steinhorst still regretted that there had been no real progress: except for the electrical equipment sector where there are a lot of recognised European CABs, there is still a lack of recognised CABs in the EU. Canada can easily put products in the EU market through their recognised CABs, but very few European CABs are recognised in the Canadian market. The EC is selectively looking at the obstacles that cause this situation. Besides the EC is continuing to carry out promotion activities towards the industry and the economy sectors: an event will be organised for notified bodies in order to promote the CETA protocol and increase the interest from the EU side. A. Steinhorst concluded that recognition was still an issue.

M. Stadler indicated that he would put this issue to ORGALIM, at least for the machinery sector.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz noticed that it was not an easy issue to be listed as a recognised EU notified body.

Decision

The Board:

- acknowledged that there are still very few recognised conformity assessment bodies in the EU for the machinery sector under the CETA protocol, and that the EC will organise another event targeted at notified bodies to promote the protocol and increase the interest herein from the EU side;
- noted that the Industry and CAB Colleges will discuss this issue further within their constituencies, and would be interested in receiving information on the obstacles to recognition in the EU. **Action Industry College and EC/EA**

▪ EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC)

A. Steinhorst reported that the situation was similar for the EU-US TTC. The EC will also organise an event with the NB group in specific sectors, such as the machinery one.

M. Stadler and A. Safarik-Pstrosz stated that the issue will remain the same, and Canadian or US manufacturers will benefit from the harmonised EU market.

4.10 Report from EA on various issues (BSCA, SMAS, EA-1/13, Report on complaint and appeals, EA Meeting on 12 November 2023 in Montreal, etc.)

A. Steinhorst reported that:

- a resolution was adopted at the General Assembly in May 2023 to terminate BSCA membership in EA (further to Belarus' suspension of partnership under the EU Neighborhood Policy (ENP);
- the General Assembly in May 2023 also welcomed San Marino Accreditation Service (SMAS) as a new EA Member. So far SMAS exclusively accredits certification bodies, especially for ISO/IEC 17024 (Persons certification);
- an informal EA meeting will take place on 12 November 2023 in Montreal during the ILAC/IAF meetings.

4.11 Agenda of EA General Assembly meeting on 22-23 November 2023 in Dublin, Ireland

Because of the Chair's unavailability, B. McGill informed that he would attend the General Assembly meeting on 23 November in order to represent the Board.

4.12 Relations with stakeholders

▪ Renewal of MoU with CEN-CENELEC

A. Steinhorst reported that the renewal process of MoU with CEN-CENELEC was going on.

A. Safarik-Pstrosz supported CEN-CENELEC's intention for harmonisation of European standards. He stressed the urgent need for harmonisation, and called for EA's support to improvement in this regard. A. Steinhorst agreed, and informed that this will be explicitly formalised in the cooperation agreement.

▪ Renewal of EA-IFS Recognised Stakeholder agreement

A. Steinhorst reported that the EA-IFS Recognised Stakeholder agreement had been renewed by the EA Executive Board for a further 5-year period.

▪ Substitution of ETSI MoU for ETSI Recognised Stakeholder agreement: ongoing process

A. Steinhorst updated that the process for the MoU with ETSI to become a Recognised Stakeholder agreement was close to finalisation.

4.13 New single international accreditation organisation

A. Steinhorst reported that the merging process for ILAC and IAF to become a new single international organisation for accreditation was still going on. The decisions on the place (New Zealand) and the general rules (by-laws) of the new body should be made in November 2023 in Montreal.

Further to a question by A. Safarik-Pstrosz, A. Steinhorst added that there were still concerns about stakeholders' voting rights, the question still being who shall represent NABs - can NABs be represented by stakeholders?

The Board thanked EA for the oral and written reports provided under these items.

5. Any other business

5.1 Update of the EAAB Work Programme

5.2 Revision of document “EAAB Management Review of Role, Operations and Interaction with EA”

Discussions on both points were postponed until the next meeting.

Decision

The Board agreed to:

- remove the EAAB Work Programme (WP) from the EA website since it is considered as an internal document of the Board; **Action Secretariat**
- update the EAAB WP, dated November 2019, at the next meeting; **Action EAAB Chair for next meeting agenda**
- update the document entitled “EAAB Management review of role, operations and interaction with EA” (EAAB(16)01rev3), dated 2016, at the next meeting, and republish it on the EAAB web page. **Action EAAB Chair for next meeting agenda**

6. Selection of date and place of next meeting

Because of the large number of EAAB Members attending the meeting remotely, the Board discussed the way, either hybrid or physical, EAAB meetings should now take place.

Several members were strongly in favour of having both annual meetings in a hybrid form. It was finally decided to have one hybrid meeting (spring) and one purely online meeting (autumn).

Decision

The Board agreed to:

- hold the spring EAAB meetings in a hybrid manner in Brussels at the EFTA House (subject to room availability) and the autumn meetings exclusively remotely, from now onwards and until further notice; **Action Chair to include revision of EAAB Rules of Procedure into next meeting agenda.**
- schedule the next EAAB meeting for **Friday 3 May 2024** (hybrid format) and thanks EFTA for offering to host the meeting at the EFTA House in Brussels.

The Chair warmly thanked Gudrun Rognvaldardottir, who attended her last EAAB meeting, for her contribution as the EFTA representative to the Board, as well as for having kindly made possible that all the Board’s meetings could take place at the EFTA Secretariat, then at the EFTA House, for a long time. Gudrun was pleased to inform that EAAB meetings can still be hosted by EFTA in the coming years. All EAAB Members bid farewell to Gudrun, wishing her all the best for the future.

The Chair thanked the Board’s Members for their participation and closed the meeting.

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List of the abbreviations taken for granted in the minutes

AB: accreditation body
APAC: Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
ARAC: Arab Accreditation Cooperation
CAB: conformity assessment body
CAS: conformity assessment scheme
CB: certification body
CD: committee draft
CCMC : CEN-CENELEC Management Centre
EA BLA: EA Bilateral Agreement
(EA) **CC:** EA Certification Committee
(EA) **CPC:** EA Communications and Publications Committee
(EA) **HHC:** EA Horizontal Harmonisation Committee
(EA) **LC:** EA Laboratory Committee
(EA) **MAC:** EA Multilateral Agreement Council
EA MLA: EA Multilateral Agreement
EC: European Commission
ECOS: Environmental Council of the States
EFTA: European Free Trade Association
ENP: EU Neighbourhood Policy
EU ETS: European Union Emissions Trading System
FPA: Framework Partnership Agreement
IAF: International Accreditation Forum
ILAC: International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
IMP expert group: Internal Market of Products expert group
MoU: Memorandum of Understanding
NAs: national authorities
NAB: national accreditation body
NBs: notified bodies
NoBos: Group of Notified Bodies
NLF: New Legislative Framework
NWI: new work item
RoP: Rules of Procedure
RS: Recognised Stakeholder
TIC industry: testing, inspection and certification industry
SS: sector scheme
SO: scheme owner
TFG: task force group
ToR: Terms of Reference
WG: working group
WP: work programme