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1. EA Membership

At its last General Assembly in Budapest on November 21-22, EA accepted PCA, the Polish accreditation body as a full member.

EA now has 36 full members and 2 associate members.

LA, the Lituianian accreditation body, signed the MLA for testing, calibration and product certification and Israc from Israel was accepted as a signatory of a bilateral agreement for testing and calibration.

2. Election of the Executive Committee

It was also time to renew the Executive Committee. All members of the new Executive Committee have been elected or re-elected unanimously for a mandate of two years.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ○ Chairman | Daniel Pierre |
| ○ Vice Chairman | Thomas Facklam |
| ○ MLA Committee | Jos Leferink |
| ○ Publication, Promotion&Legal Affairs Committee | Tom Dempsey |
| ○ Certification Committee | Roger Brockway |
| ○ Inspection Committee | Lars Ettarp |
| ○ Laboratory Committee | Hanspeter Ischi |
| ○ Vice-Chair | Samo Kopac |

3. 2002 Budget and Future of EA

The 2002 budget was approved with a slight decrease in the fees.

The General Assembly agreed that EA should partly finance the secretariat of the MLA committee.

During the discussion about the budget, the issue of a need for a permanent secretariat in EA was raised. It was decided that the Executive Committee would draft a strategic plan, addressing this issue in the wider context of having a more professional service in the secretariat and considering the secretariat of the MLA committee as an activity of the central secretariat.

Continuation of the project on an **EA database** on accreditation was accepted : the Executive Committee will follow up the project.

The next stage will enable to implement for a test a database grouping the data on accredited calibration laboratories from 5 countries : Germany, France, United Kingdom, Belgium, and Danak. The system will enable selection of accredited laboratories according to several criteria such as country, region, scope.

4. Response to Stakeholders' Expectations

It was decided at the last meeting of the EA Advisory Board that EA should run a survey to evaluate its direct customers' satisfaction. The General Assembly decided that EA members would circulate a harmonised questionnaire among their customers, the accredited bodies.

The results will be processed at the EA level.

In parallel, the Board will set up a task force to think about evaluation of indirect customers: industry, public authorities.



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The survey in EA should be launched before June 2002. The EA Board should define the task force terms of reference at its meeting in May.

The EA Advisory Board also decided to reorganise its work. Agendas of the meeting have been restructured and a list of key topics has been drafted and will be submitted to the Board in May. In addition, an action plan will be followed up.

The board considered it necessary to reinforce the definition of accreditation and to enhance the criteria for membership in EA addressing in particular that accreditation shall be a non profit distributing activity, that accreditation bodies shall be nationally recognised and that accreditation bodies shall not compete, either with other accreditation bodies or with accredited bodies.

An EA draft policy for membership was elaborated by the Executive, it will be submitted to the Board in May.

5. Co-Operation between EA, Eurolab, Eurachem and Euromet

At the meeting of the chairperson group in January, there were discussions about restructuring of the common work and improvement of the distribution of tasks between the chairperson group, the Permanent Liaison Group and the Joint Working Group.

Good process was made and basic principles were approved unanimously.

A draft proposal about co-operation was submitted to each organisation, to be discussed at their General assemblies. After discussion at the General Assembly, Eurolab declared they were in favour of the proposal with minor amendments.

6. Sector Schemes

AEMCLRP for recognition of EMC tests in the automotive sector and Blue Tooth for recognition of tests on hardware used in wireless networks are negotiating with EA.

They are willing to rely on laboratories accredited by an EA MLA signatory to perform the tests according to their specific requirements. A pool of a limited number of technical assessors have now been qualified after having successfully attended specific training courses. They are available to all EA members to carry out the evaluations within the frame of these schemes. They are listed in the following table.

Negotiations with Blue Tooth and AEMCLRP aim to agree on a MoU; only shall EA members interested in participating in the schemes sign up .

In addition, the General Assembly agreed that there was now a real need in EA to have a policy to deal with such schemes. The approach would be for EA to define the limiting factors without undermining the MLA or the accreditation bodies' services.



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AEMCLRP		Blue Tooth	
qualified assessors		qualified assessors	
M. Pariani	SINAL	M. Fisher	A2LA
M. Sissoko	COFRAC	M. Gradin	A2LA
M. Penfold	UKAS	M. Greg	A2LA
M. Carter			
M. Hansen	DA Tech-DAR	M. Walton	A2LA
M. Arcega	ENAC	M. Schaefer	A2LA
		M. Hansen	EA
		M. Penfold	EA
		M. Carter	EA
		M. Pariani	EA
		M. Malmqvist	EA

7. Co-operation with peer assessment schemes

EA Executive and representatives from Cenelec CCA scheme met in Brussels on 16 April 2002. The objective was to discuss basis for co-operation with a view to avoid multiple assessments. Cenelec representatives, Michel Nuyens and Gunther de Clercq, were invited to consider to rely on accredited results.

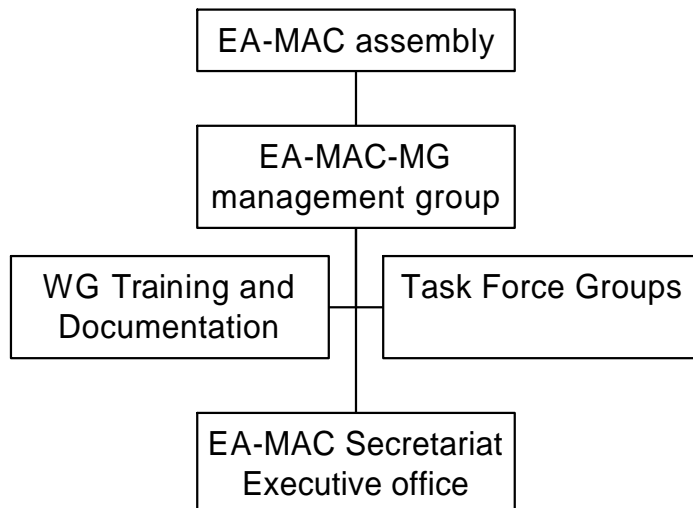
In addition, EA proposed to include Cenelec technical experts in the assessments teams. These two principles were agreed on. Discussions were open and fruitful. It was decided to set up a joint task force to build on the agreed proposals. The IEC counterparts will be kept informed.

8. Relations with the European Commission

There is a Eurolab initiative to set up a meeting with Mr Vardakas and the chairpersons from EA, Eurolab, Eurachem, and Euromet. Generally speaking, the EA Executive Committee stated that formal relation with the EC should be reinforced. The chair and the Vice Chair met Colette Cotter (head of Unit, Regulatory co-ordination & simplification; mutual recognition) and part of her team in April.



9. Multilateral Agreements Management



Continuous improvement...

The management system was subject to an internal audit and to a joint ILAC/IAF evaluation at the end of 2001.

Training of evaluators is a priority activity. Training courses prove to be very useful, exchanges of views and experience are very valuable to the participants.

Application of the KPIs is widely supported. There is now a need to extend the use of these indicators to the inspection and certification fields.

The reporting documents which have now been finalised would be officially introduced to EA Team Members during the next Training in Rome in June 2002.

Two documents are being discussed concerning respectively duration of assessments and sanctions applicable to MLA signatories.

10. Publications and Promotion

For the first time, the EA PC and its counterpart in ILAC held a joint meeting last March 21 in Stockholm. Discussion proved interesting. Items of common interest could be identified.

It was agreed to set up such meetings on a yearly basis.

Next step in Berlin : to elaborate more in details on potential common projects .

Objective : avoiding duplication of efforts and benefits from one another's achievements and experience.

The Executive agreed that withdrawn documents should be made available on the Web site. The list of Withdrawn documents is already available.



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EA Publication list : other documents

The chairman of the PC proposed to create a new category for “Advisory” documents. The proposal needs further discussion. Classification of publication will also be addressed. It will be revised and submitted to the EA General Assembly in June.

11. Laboratory

Accreditation in the field of reference materials

An EA draft policy was elaborated and distributed widely. It was agreed that the EA work could benefit to ILAC. Now, it is up to the EA-Eurolab-Euromet-Eurachem working group to collect comments and revise the draft.

Accreditation of medical laboratories ISO 15189

The General Assembly unanimously endorsed the ILAC **resolutions no 5.41 and 5.42** :

“ILAC Decision 5.41

The General Assembly agrees that ILAC’s preferred requirements document for the accreditation of laboratories is ISO/IEC 17025. This may be supported by field-specific application documents developed in accordance with Annex B of ISO/IEC 17025.

For a sector-specific, stand-alone standard or other document to be considered by ILAC as an alternative to ISO/IEC 17025, and be considered for recognition within the ILAC Arrangement, it shall have support from the user market and should include as fully as possible the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025.”

“ILAC Decision 5.42

The General Assembly agrees that ILAC should continue its interaction with ISO TC 212 so that ISO 15189 requirements for laboratory accreditation are harmonised with those of ISO/IEC 17025. On publication with acceptable text, the decision regarding ISO 15189 made at the previous General Assembly in Washington in 2000 can be reconfirmed.”

It was agreed to give priority on a work on comparison of ISO 15189 and ISO/IEC 17025.

Acceptance of Traceability

The ILAC **policy for traceability** was endorsed by the General Assembly in November but with a 3-year transitional period during which the specific situation of Austria, Germany and Switzerland shall be sorted out. Reflections have started at the PLG. A working Group has been set up with Welmec

Nomination

N. Doley (LGC) has been appointed as convenor of the EA/Eurolab/Eurachem Proficiency Testing working group.



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Non-destructive Testing

The draft document has been discussed both at the Laboratory and Inspection committees. The consolidated version should now be circulated for last comments before distribution for voting.

The Laboratory committee decided to set up a management group to elaborate on the restructuring of works in the committee. Next meeting on May, 10.

EA revised 4/02 : Expression of Uncertainty of measurement in calibration should now be approved by EA and Eurachem.

12. Inspection

At the last EA Executive meeting, Lars Ettarp, chairman of the Committee, pointed out the good progress made on the drafting of the ILAC/IAF guidance document.

CITA's document on inspection of motor vehicle was accepted by the committee and should now be made available.

A subcommittee has been set up to review results of the peer evaluations being conducted in EA. The objective is to evaluate and to have an overview of the accreditation practices in inspection. It was reminded that the MLA would not be extended to the inspection field until there is agreement on key points such as independence of inspection bodies.

Impartiality issue

Not waiting for the peer reviews, which will be a long process, it was agreed to distribute a questionnaire to the EA members to check how the impartiality issue is implemented.

13 Certification

The General Assembly agreed to start a new work on developing a vertical sector document related to ISO guide 62 in the Health Care sector.

The General Assembly endorsed the IAF resolution "requiring accreditation bodies to require certification bodies to assure them access to their clients for witness assessment purpose."

Concerning new accreditation developments, the General Assembly also agreed that information on update about new initiatives in EA –as currently managed in the EA Certification committee – should be made available to the members, through the future EA "intranet" preferably.

Implementation of ISO 9001 : 2000

As pointed out by ISO, there is serious concern that certification bodies cannot properly handle the transition to ISO 9001 : 2000 because of the delayed demand by certified companies for upgrading their certificates.

As a consequence, certification bodies should inform their customers that the deadline will not be changed and that they need to plan their workload to respond to the demand.



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14. ISO/IEC 17025 for certification ?

The EA Executive Committee agreed that there is a real risk that ISO/IEC 17025 is used by certification bodies as a sector application of ISO 9001.

As a consequence, the Executive Committee agreed that there is a real need to influence the work at ISO, jointly with ILAC and the entire laboratory community.

The present discussions about the common elements in Casco standards should be followed up and influenced in this regard.

Revision of ISO/IEC 17025 to align with ISO 9001:2000 should be held up until things are clarified.

15. EA participates in International events

- Euromet General Assembly in Bratislava 15-17 May
Marian Weidlich from SNAS will represent EA
- Eurachem General Assembly in Cyprus 16-17 May
Martina Bednarova from CAI will represent EA
- EASC meeting in Minsk 28-30 May
Irena Mikelioniene from LA will represent EA
- Conference on Measurements and Testing in Warsaw 18-19 June
Hans Peter Ischi, from SAS, will represent EA
- NCSLI 4-8 August
EA will have a stand with ILAC. Jos Leferink will participate
in the panel on MRAs and Martine Simon will attend the stand

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