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Newsletter
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EEE Joint Working Groups Proficiency Testing and Reference Materials

Joint Working Groups of EAL, EUROLAB and EURACHEM (EEE) on the topics:
„Proficiency Testing in Accreditation Procedures“
„Selection and Use of Reference Materials“

The EAL member bodies realised that a uniform handling of the evaluation of proficiency tests and the use of reference materials became necessary. Because of the common interests with EUROLAB and EURACHEM the initial EAL Working Groups turned into two EAL-EUROLAB-EURACHEM (EEE) Joint Working Groups on the following topics: „Proficiency Testing in Accreditation Procedures“ (PT) and „Selection and Use of Reference Materials“ (RM).

Excerpt of the Terms of Reference of the EEE PT Working Group are:

1. Determination of the different types of proficiency tests used in accreditation.
2. Harmonisation of the use of proficiency tests and in particular to favour the cost-effective types. To this belongs the development of evaluation criteria for proficiency tests according to their use.
3. Study of the needs and the feasibility of EEE PT programmes.

In October 1995 the Terms of Reference of both PT and RM Groups were worked out in an own EEE Drafting Group and endorsed afterwards by the General Assemblies of the respective organisations: EAL, EUROLAB and EURACHEM. The EEE Joint PT Working Group began its activities in June 1996.

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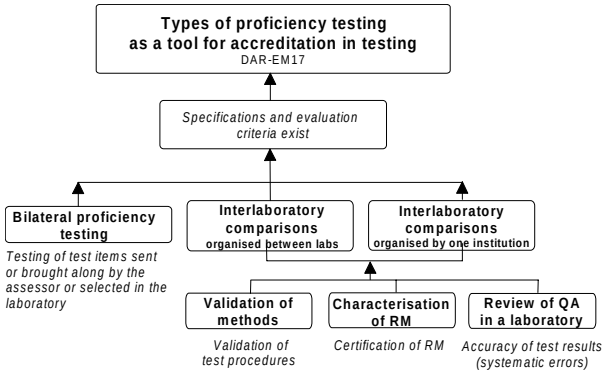
A document is being completed at the moment describing different types of proficiency testing in accreditation on the basis of the DAR document DAR-EM17 "Guideline for Proficiency Testing as a Tool for Accreditation in Testing" and the definitions laid down in ISO Guide 43 (see Table p. 2). The use of different types of proficiency tests depends from the different situations found in the testing laboratories. It is principally right that the results of the laboratory gained from interlaboratory comparisons should be evaluated by the assessor on the basis of his own criteria. These interlaboratory comparisons may be carried out as (see also Figure below):

1. bilateral proficiency testing or bilateral interlaboratory comparisons,
2. multilateral interlaboratory comparisons directly organised between several laboratories or officially offered by an organiser of proficiency tests.



The EEE Joint PT Working Group took the ISO/IEC Guide 43 (see also p. 4) as a basis for the criteria to be fulfilled by the organisers of interlaboratory comparisons. Unfortunately this Guide does not offer any guidance for bilateral interlaboratory comparisons (or bilateral proficiency testing), as often used by assessors in accreditation without having a uniform practice.
A "Guideline for Assessors", which also enables the assessment of interlaboratory comparisons with initially other objectives (as e. g. validation of test methods) as proficiency testing, shall close this gap. As a result of a first survey initiated by the EEE PT Working Group it turned out that the interest of testing laboratories in participating in cross-border multilateral PT programmes is great.

For the first time in this connection the EAL General Assembly decided in November 1996 to carry out on a trial basis two EAL interlaboratory comparisons in the fields "Water testing" and "Brewing Analytes" with the European testing laboratories. The results gained from these pilot interlaboratory comparisons shall contribute to an elaboration of uniform conditions for the establishment of "Proficiency Testing Programmes, recommended by EEE".

A further point of discussion of the EEE Joint PT Working Group is the lack of information for testing laboratories on continuous proficiency testing schemes. This lack of knowledge should be eliminated by an information network.

In the field of the EEE Joint Working Group Reference Materials the following trends are showing up:

1. A common paper of understanding is being drawn up.
2. A classification and definition of "reference objects" and "reference materials" is being discussed.
3. Fundamental requirements for reference materials are being established.

According to the European model, i. e. DAR/EUROLAB-D/EURACHEM/D, and parallel to the European Working Groups German mirror groups have been founded on the topics "Proficiency testing in accreditation" and "Selection and use of reference materials", in order to nationally harmonise the German interests and to reach a common European strategy.

N. Presser

The following definitions from the field of proficiency testing are taken partly from ISO/IEC Guide 43. Their German translations are currently being discussed at the time of redaction:

(Laboratorium) Eignungsprüfung *freie Übersetzung* Bestimmung der Leistung eines Laboratoriums anhand von Vergleichsprüfungen zwischen Laboratorien	(Laboratory) Proficiency testing *ISO/IEC Guide 43:Draft 1996* Determination of laboratory testing performance by means of interlaboratory test comparisons
Vergleichsprüfungen durch Laboratorien *freie Übersetzung* Organisation, Durchführung und Auswertung von Prüfungen gleicher oder gleichartiger Gegenstände durch zwei oder mehrere Prüflaboratorien unter vorgegebenen Bedingungen Anmerkung Für den Zweck dieser o.g. Aufgabenstellung können Vergleichsprüfungsprogramme eine Teilnehmerzahl ab zwei aufwärts haben.	Interlaboratory comparisons *ISO/IEC Guide 43:Draft 1996* Organisation, performance and evaluation of tests on the same or similar test items by two or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions
Vergleichsprüfungen durch Prüflaboratorien *EN 45020:1993* Organisation, Durchführung und Auswertung von Prüfungen gleicher oder gleichartiger Gegenstände oder Stoffe durch zwei oder mehrere Prüflaboratorien unter vorgegebenen Bedingungen	Interlaboratory test comparisons *EN 45020:1993* Organisation, performance and evaluation of tests on the same or similar test items or materials by two or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions
Einzel-Eignungsprüfung *freie Übersetzung* Die Laboratorien erhalten einmalig ein Prüfobjekt. Anmerkung Diese Definition betont den zeitlichen Aspekt der Einmaligkeit der Eignungsprüfung und beinhaltet zwei Möglichkeiten: 1. Es handelt sich um eine einmalige Teilnahme und Bestehen in einer Vergleichsprüfung. 2. Das Prüfobjekt wird vom Begutachter mitgebracht, vor Ort ausgewählt oder durch Dritte zur Verfügung gestellt. Für diesen Fall wurde bisher in Deutschland der Begriff "Eignungstest" verwendet. Um aber eine fehlerhafte Übersetzung ins Englische als "proficiency test" zu vermeiden, sollte der Begriff "Eignungstest" nicht mehr benutzt werden.	One-off exercise *ISO/IEC Guide 43:Draft 1996* where laboratories are provided with a test item on a single occasion
Eignungsprüfungsprogramme *freie Übersetzung* Die Laboratorien erhalten kontinuierlich Prüfobjekte in regelmäßigen Zeitintervallen.	Continuous schemes *ISO/IEC Guide 43:Draft 1996* where laboratories are provided with test items at regular intervals on a continuing basis

News from international organisations

Evaluation of third countries

The EAL document EAL-S2, which can be requested at the DAR-Secretariat, gives information about the current status of the EAL members, associate members, contracts of cooperation as well as observers.

European Accreditation (EA) - New developments

The foundation of European Accreditation (EA) is scheduled for the end of 1997. The chairpersons of EAL and EAC propose to turn EA into an incorporated institution with independent legal existence and with a permanent seat and secretariat.

A Working Group of EAL-C1 shall draw up a common evaluation procedure and the wording of the common MLA.

The EAL and EAC Working Groups "Publications" merged to a Joint Group.

EA founded a Joint Working Group „Certification of hospitals and accreditation of clinical laboratories". This Group shall discuss the request of hospitals for accreditation.

An EA Working Group "Technical Assessment of Bodies Seeking Notification" as well as a joint Working Group for the accreditation of inspection bodies have been founded.

S. Stobbe

News from DAR

DAR-ATF

The following new ad hoc groups have been founded:

* Accreditation for types of testing
* Screening.

The ad hoc Working Group "*Accreditation for types of testing*" will summarise the results of the trial of the Guideline "Accreditation for types of testing", drawn up by the DAR-Committee "Technical Questions" (DAR-ATF), and translate the conclusions into actions. For the time being this Guideline shall be tried and tested in practice for one year.

In Germany some laboratories have already been accredited for types of testing. Also other countries show great interest in an accreditation for types of testing, e. g. Austria in the fields of "Food" and "Clinical Chemistry". The aim is to draw up a suitable Guideline for assessors of such laboratories seeking an accreditation for types of testing.

In the ad hoc group "*Screening*" a draft of a Guideline "Screening" has been prepared, which deals with the practice of accreditation of shortened laboratory procedures, special screenings and field analyses. In comparison with "normal" test methods, the so-called "screenings" distinguish themselves by a reduced expenditure and therewith lower, often much more lower costs. For the time being this Guideline shall be limited to chemistry and related fields. The applicability of this paper to other fields shall be tested.

Furthermore the *recognition of calibration services of verification authorities* has been discussed in the DAR-Committee ATF. The aim is to recognise nationally and internationally the verification certificates as proofs of traceability. The Physikalisch-Technische Bundes-anstalt (PTB) and the verification authorities met to discuss this issue. The results were a declaration of intent "Recognition of verification and test certificates issued by the verification authorities of the mandatory area" and a common understanding about the preconditions for an international recognition.

S. Stobbe

Establishment of confidence in the German accreditation system

In DAR-aktuell 1/95 we reported in detail about the process of establishing confidence between the accreditation bodies in Europe. The aim is to harmonise the accreditation practice and the comparability of accreditations granted in Europe. As several accreditation bodies operate in the German accreditation system, one early thought about an internal evaluation system, so as to avoid that the European evaluation team has to visit the single German accreditation bodies each time. A further aim was to harmonise the procedures of each accreditation bodies.

In the Committee for Structure and Surveillance (ASTÜ) of the Trägergemeinschaft für Akkreditierung (TGA), in which all accreditation bodies of the voluntary area and some of the mandatory area cooperate, a procedure for establishing mutual confidence and harmonisation has been developed, on the basis of the evaluation procedures of EAL and EAC. According to this ASTÜ-procedure the single accreditation bodies are being evaluated by a German evaluation team with regard to the compliance with international standards and Guidelines. The present experiences show that this process promotes an intensive exchange of experience.

The whole internal ASTÜ-evaluation procedure together with the first report (evaluation of the German Accreditation Body Chemistry - DACH GmbH) were submitted for recognition to the EAL Committee 1 (MLA).

With the internal evaluation of DACH GmbH, its comparison with the TGA-ASTÜ results and a positive

relation it is expected that EAL will recognise the ASTÜ system and that these internal evaluation procedures will essentially facilitate the international recognition of accreditations performed by the German accreditation bodies. Several parties at EAL and EAC appreciated the development and the operation of such an internal evaluation procedure.

M. Wloka

News from standardisation

ISO Guide 25, 61, 62, 65 (identical with EN 45001, 45010, 45011, 45012)

The official draft of the German version of the ISO Guide 25 (identical with the draft of EN 45001) is expected at the beginning of 1997. The respective German Committees will then comment it and after a further discussion endorse it until the end of 1997.

The final drafts of prEN 45001, 45011, 45012 have been submitted to the NQSZ 3 of DIN (German Institute for Standardisation). The respective Guides have been endorsed by ISO as well as by DIN as a member of ISO. The early complete adoption of the standards will be expected.

M. Wloka

Status of discussion on ISO Guide 43

The members of ISO officially started with the formal voting of ISO Guide 43. It is scheduled for completion on 04.04.1997. *M. Golze*

The AMOS project - results and experiences in the first project half

The new year 1996/97 coincides with the "project half" of the AMOS project (Accreditation and Certification of the Middle and Eastern European Countries), jointly performed by BAM and the accreditation systems of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Besides the promotion of accreditation and certification structures of the accreditation bodies of the Middle and Eastern European countries (MOE), this project, which is scheduled for 3 years, has in particular the aim to train national experts, the so-called "multipliers", who - after having successfully passed a theoretical and practical training course - will then be acting as tutors and experts in the field of accreditation and certification in their countries. These training courses were performed by experts of German accreditation bodies operating under the aegis of the DAR as well as by experts from Switzerland and Austria. It was pleasant to actively integrate Romania and Croatia into the AMOS project in the second half of the year. Together with AFNOR (France) it has been furthermore agreed to perform joint training courses for Poland on selected subjects. These courses could be started already in 1996.

Till now more than 170 multipliers have been trained, whereby representatives from all 14 MOE/Russian Federation countries (including Belorussia, Ukraine and Russia) were considered. The education included a six week intensive training course and hospitation stay in Germany. In the meantime the detailed training documents have been translated into eight languages. After having finished this training course, these multipliers started - together with their accreditation bodies - to organise Workshops on the topics accreditation, certification and technical competence of testing laboratories. With the support of German speaking experts special topics, e. g. Eco-Audits, proficiency testing are dealt with in the next time. The success gained in this project should not only be compared with the numbers of measures performed till now (27 hospitations and 31 seminars within the frame of AMOS plus 50-70 independent seminars organised by the multipliers themselves), but above all with the fact that in connection with the AMOS project an intensive and long-term contact with the respective accreditation bodies in the MOE has been built up. A regular consultation of our project partners helped to intensively integrate the coordinators of BAM, responsible for the respective countries, into the process of establishment and reorganisation of the national accreditation and certification structures. A regular exchange of experience is not only important and necessary for the partners in the MOE, but also creates the necessary confidence in a later acceptance of these systems. Other measures creating confidence, as e. g. proficiency testing, have been requested by the partners and could be tackled in autumn 1996. The interest in the first three proficiency tests organised by AMOS (steel, PCB in oil and analysis of soil samples) was extraordinaryly high in the MOE, so that more than 50 laboratories from the MOE could be integrated. Further proficiency tests (as e. g. sewage analysis) are scheduled for the beginning of 1997. *G. Meier zu Köcker*

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