

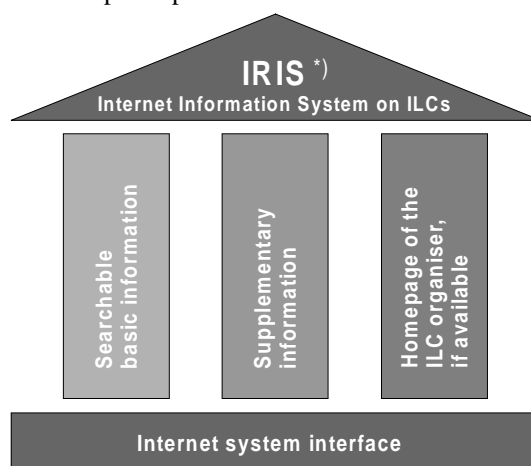
## *IRIS - Internet Information System on Interlaboratory Comparisons*

In its document DAR-EM17 the DAR formulates the need for an information office at the Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung (Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, BAM) on interlaboratory comparisons (ILCs), which are performed in the field of testing in the German-speaking countries Austria, Switzerland and Germany. In the beginning of 1996 the BAM set up a project with the object to establish an information system, which provides via INTERNET cost-free information on ILCs performed in the field of testing. Since June 1998 this information is available on INTERNET via the so-called **Internet-RingversuchsInformationsSystem** (INTERNET Information System on Interlaboratory Comparisons) accessible at [http://www.bam.de/a\\_s/iris](http://www.bam.de/a_s/iris). The objectives of the ILCs are given according to the following classification:

1. as certification of materials in the common sense, not only within the frame of a BCR certification
2. as characterisation or validation of test methods
3. as external measure for internal quality assurance
4. as proficiency test during an accreditation or recognition by the Authority responsible for the respective testing laboratory's area of activity

IRIS provides help to different kinds of users: The testing laboratory can choose the ILC most appropriate for its different purposes on the basis of contained information on participation conditions, aim of the ILC, test items and test methods (when prescribed) and evaluation methods. The assessor of an accreditation body is able to assess the "quality" of an ILC on the

basis of information on documentation, management, characterisation of the test item, evaluation of the results and consequent proficiency of the testing laboratories as well as on eventual discussion forum between organiser and participant.



\*) Legend:  
IRIS = INTERNET-RingversuchsInformationsSystem  
ILC = Interlaboratory comparisons

This knowledge provides the assessor with better possibilities to determine the competence of the laboratory to be assessed, which has participated in this specific ILC. The Authorities can include existing ILCs, about which no information is currently available, in certain test fields for their recognition or approval methods for testing laboratories.

Furthermore, IRIS has been designed to give an overview of the state-of-the-art of the current practice in organising ILCs. The concept to develop "quality criteria" for organisers of ILCs is not new and took its shape in the ISO/IEC Guide 43:1997. The ISO/IEC Guide 43 reflects the fundamental requirements for organisers of proficiency testing schemes, which are performed as interlaboratory comparisons between laboratories. These requirements for organisers of ILCs have been taken as a basis for the information given in IRIS.

A step towards the aim of recognition of test performance from laboratories is to compare design as well as evaluation and assessment methods for different ILCs on the same object. A repeated participation of laboratories in ILCs of the same kind, but from different Federal Laenders, which till now was necessary to recognise the activities of these laboratories in these Federal Laenders, would be dropped.

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The resulting available time can then be used to the benefit of customer-oriented services, which are nowadays urgently necessary to hold their position on the market.

To put this cross-border recognition of results gained in ILCs also from different countries into action, the BAM submitted a project proposal to the European Commission as "Concerted Action" within the IVth Framework Program "Standards, Measurement and Testing" (SMT) with the aim to establish an Information Network System on ILCs in sixteen European countries. The costs of this Project amount to 350 kECU. The European Commission fully provides

the funding for this Project, which will probably start under the coordination of BAM in October 1998 with a term of two years. Aim of this Project is also to develop European minimum requirements for a reliable quality of an ILC, in order to achieve acceptance of results gained in such ILCs throughout Europe. Right from the beginning this Project has strongly been supported by EA, EUROLAB and EURACHEM. The "Joint EA-EUROLAB-EURACHEM Working Group" on "Proficiency Testing in Accreditation Procedures" (EEE-PT) has committed itself to discussing the project results and to striving for their realistic application in the respective organisations. u

N. Presser, BAM-S.42

## News from the DAR

### DASMIN surveillance measures: FAM interlaboratory comparisons

In their "Accreditation Contract" the DASMIN accredited laboratories commit themselves to meeting the DASMIN criteria as well as requirements set out in the DIN EN 45001 standard and to participating in interlaboratory comparisons prescribed by DASMIN covering their scope of accreditation. In the field of petroleum analytics interlaboratory comparisons are organised by the Fachausschuß Mineralöl- und Brennstoffanalytik (FAM, Technical Standardisation Committee Petroleum and Fuel) of the Normungsausschuß Materialprüfung (NMP, Standardisation Committee Materials Testing) of the DIN Deutsches Institut für Normung GmbH (German Institute for Standardisation). They enable to verify, whether the accredited testing laboratory operates according to the respective standards and meets the required testing precision. The mathematical analysis of the FAM interlaboratory comparisons is performed on the basis of the DIN EN ISO 4259 standard.

Samples and test methods are laid down by the respective FAM Committees. DASMIN is involved in the selection of the test methods performed on the recommendation of the Sectoral Committees and assessors.

Sample delivery and analysis are performed by the Petro Lab GmbH (Speyer) in agreement with the FAM Secretariat (Hamburg) and the responsible representatives. Petro Lab GmbH (Speyer) provides the participants of the interlaboratory comparisons with the overall evaluation including the list of testing laboratories.

The results gained by the accredited testing laboratories shall meet the requirements for interlaboratory comparisons set out by FAM/DASMIN. DASMIN assessors are charged to check how these requirements are met and send a "surveillance report" to the testing laboratory, which is asked to comment on this report and to submit performed and/or planned corrective actions. If the results do not meet the criteria set out by DASMIN, the Accreditation Committee may review the maintenance of the accreditation considering the assessor's recommendation.

The accredited testing laboratories, FAM and DASMIN regard the interlaboratory comparisons as efficient and cost-effective traceable surveillance measures, which allow a measurable evaluation of the laboratory. u G. J. Mechelke, DASMIN

### Recognition of DAP accreditations according to the US American Fastener Quality Act (FQA) by NIST

On 23 March 1998 the Deutsches Akkreditierungssystem Prüfwesen GmbH (DAP German Accreditation System for Testing) has been officially recognised by the American Authority *National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)* as accreditation body for testing laboratories operating according to the Fastener Quality Act (FQA).

This enables the DAP to act as independent accreditation body covering an additional activity in the mandatory area, namely the field of fasteners. The evaluation by NIST means therefore a fundamental extension of the DAP's activities.



Before this, DAP has passed through a two-week evaluation by NIST representatives.

Both through its integration into the Multilateral Agreement of the European accreditation bodies of EAL and EAC (now EA) and its diverse activities abroad, the DAP has gained sufficient experiences at international level. Nevertheless, the NIST evaluation gave a lot of new impressions.

For the FQA accreditations by DAP three laboratories have been visited during the evaluation and assessed by the evaluators (witness audit). Three laboratories operating in the concerned fields - manufacturer of steel, manufacturer of screws and screw traders - have been therefor chosen. In the opinion of the evaluators, these assessments sufficiently proved the DAP's competence.

Everyone of the technical and system assessors involved in the FQA accreditations participated in a special training course and had to pass a final examination. The technical assessors are selected in particular considering their practical professional experience. The monitoring of all FQA assessors has been improved and tightened up considerably.

FQA accreditations include interlaboratory comparisons (ILCs) for proving the test competence of accredited laboratories in a way unusual till now. This requires special measures for supporting the testing laboratories in this specific field. According to the example of US American FQA-accreditation bodies, the DAP supports the testing laboratories when participating in FQA ILCs. The maintenance of the accreditation depends on the successful participation in a half-yearly ILC. If a testing laboratory does not successfully pass this ILC, the DAP offers a whole set of corrective measures, in order to detect and eliminate the reasons for this failure.

On the basis of existing agreements the DAP accredits testing laboratories according to FQA also in Switzerland and Austria.

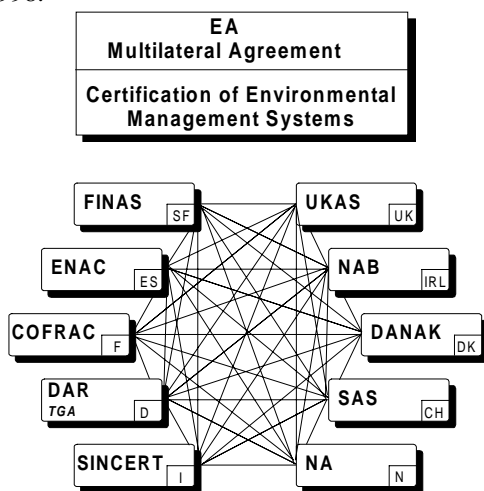
The successful evaluation of the DAP for FQA accreditations can also serve as a stimulus for other fields of accreditation. The support of the testing laboratories when participating in ILCs and the extended monitoring of the assessors can thus be taken over. <sup>u</sup>

*R. Brinkmann, FMFA*

## News from international organisations

### European Agreement on Certification of Environmental Management Systems

The National Accreditation bodies of ten European countries signed an agreement to recognise each other's accreditation in the field of certification of environmental management systems in Oslo/Norway on 24 June 1998.



Since the publication of ISO 14001 as the international standard for environmental management systems in 1996, organisations all over Europe have been gaining certificates for conformity under their national accreditation systems. About 2300 certificates have so far been issued to European companies.

The national accreditation bodies working in the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) have developed common criteria for this environmental work, and over the last ten months have undergone a peer evaluation process to ensure that they implement these requirements in a consistent manner. This now has led to opening the EA Multilateral Agreement to the environmental management field. This Agreement already exists between fifteen accreditation bodies for the mutual recognition of the accreditation of certification of products, quality systems and personnel, and of cali-

bration and testing. The ceremony in Oslo represents formal extension of the Agreement into the environmental field. It is expected that other accreditation bodies will soon qualify to join this aspect of the Agreement.

The accreditation bodies that have signed the Agreement to recognise each other's accreditation for environmental management as equivalent to their own are those shown in the graphics.

It is anticipated that the Agreement will be formally extended to cover accreditation of Environmental Verifiers under the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme Regulation (1836/93). Most of the signatory accreditation bodies are designated by their governments under this Regulation, and the accreditation is similar to that for certification bodies in the ISO 14001 field. <sup>u</sup>

*EA Press Release*

### NATA inspects ZLS and Reg TP

Since the 30th calendar week a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) has been in force between Australia and New-Zealand on the one hand and the European Union on the other hand with the aim of a mutual recognition of conformity assessments. Thus technical tests and approvals performed according to the rules of each signatory to this MRA are recognised by the other ones.

Due to legal reasons the German accreditation bodies operating in the mandatory area did not take part till now in the EA evaluation procedures in Europe, therefore mutual inspections between Australia and Germany have been agreed to create a basis of confidence for the mutual recognition.

From 19.06. to 24.06.1998 an inspection visit of an Australian-New Zealand delegation took place at the ZLS in Munich and at Reg TP in Mainz. The DAR Chairman represented the German accreditation system and referred to the different conditions of the accredi-

tation bodies operating in the mandatory and voluntary area. Aside from the Quality Management System with all its accompanying documentation, object of this inspection was the way of performing accreditation, employment of competent assessors as well as other technical issues such as the requirements for traceability of calibrations.

The leader of the delegation, Mr. Rob Oke, referred

to the high technical competence of the German and to the great similarity with the Australian accreditation system, in particular for Reg TP. Differences which have been found, are irrelevant to the mutual recognition. The policy of Reg TP concerning ILCs and proficiency tests was also approved. A closer cooperation in this field could be highly appreciated.

A visit by the accreditation bodies of Reg TP, ZLS and ZLG (Central Body of the Laender for Safety) will take place in the 48th/49th calendar week. u

O. Stibitz, Reg TP

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## News from standardisation

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### New drafts of the ISO 9000 standards series issued

The ISO 9000 standards series is currently being revised within the frame of the so-called "Phase-2-Revision". This revision shall be completed until the end of the year 2000. Its aim is a better coordination of the standards among each other (consistency, compatibility) as well as a prevention of a proliferation within different substandards (partial standards) with respective validity for special fields of application. In future it is planned to apply only one standard, i. e. ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems - Requirements) as a replacement of the standards ISO 9001, 9002 and 9003, which are valid since 1994.

The draft of the new ISO 9004 (Quality Management Systems - Guidelines) is fundamentally based on the ISO 9004-1 (Quality management and quality system elements - Part 1: Guidelines) and shall be applied at the same time to other fields, e.g. services. Both standards Committee Drafts (ISO/CD) have already been published in September 1998 by the German Institute for Standardisation (DIN, as *Pink Copy*). They are available via the Beuth Verlag as **ISO/CD1 9001:1998** and **ISO/CD1 9004:1998**.

The cooperation of Germany in the international standards committee ISO TC 176, including the coordination of comments for the German position, is arranged by the German mirror committee NQSZ-1. It will discuss the German comments in its Subcommittee NQSZ-1.2 in Frankfurt/Main on the 11th/12th November 1998 and will then submit them to ISO TC 176. Individual objections can be turned over to the NQSZ-1 or directly to the DIN until the 31st October 1998. On the basis of all submitted comments the revision of the standard will be completed by ISO/TC 176. Until the issue of the *White Copy* the existing standards of the ISO 9000 standards series are still valid. Further standards

being currently revised are: The single standards of ISO 9000 (Quality Management Systems - Concepts and Vocabulary), up to now issued as ISO/CD 1 9000 under the title ISO TC 176/SC 1 N 185, as well as the "Guidelines for auditing quality systems" (present title), issued under the title ISO TC 176/SC 3/WG 7 N 94, and intended to replace the ISO 10011. u

R. Schmidt, BAM-S.41

### New edition of EN 45020

In July 1998 the Beuth Verlag issued the EN 45020 "Standardisation and related activities - General vocabulary" as a substitute for the edition of 1994-04. It has been elaborated on the basis of the ISO/IEC Guide 2. Aside from terms defined in English, French and German languages, this standard contains also the terms in Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Swedish. u

S. Stobbe, BAM-S.42

### Prospects

#### **18.-23. Oct. '98 ILAC Conference and General Assembly** in Sydney, Australia

The ILAC'98 Conference is dedicated to the 21st year of ILAC's foundation and will work out a programme for the year 2000.

The aim of the ILAC'98 Conference is to provide information to laboratories, accreditation bodies, authorities as well as to the industry on current aspects in the field of testing, metrology and accreditation. A broad spectrum of topics, which will be represented on Workshops by technical experts, are on the agenda. Furthermore, two forum discussions will be dedicated to topics, which in future will be in need of more intensive consideration and development. Programmes are still available via the DAR Secretariat. u

S. Stobbe, BAM - S.42

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**Central e-mail-address: The DAR Secretariat can now be contacted via a central e-mail-address: [dar@bam.de](mailto:dar@bam.de).**

All your enquiries received at this address, will be turned over to the responsible persons dealing with your problem.

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### **IMPORTANT !**

### **TO ALL ACCREDITED BODIES**

**The DAR Secretariat requests all accredited bodies for sending their Internet coordinates (e-mail, Homepage addresses), if available. Links in the DAR Homepage (in particular within the database of accredited bodies) will be arranged in order to facilitate a quick access for your clients. Thank you for your assistance.**

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<http://www.dar.bam.de>

E-mail: [dar@bam.de](mailto:dar@bam.de)