

WELMEC 1,
2016

WELMEC

European Cooperation in Legal Metrology

WELMEC An introduction



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Published by:
WELMEC Secretariat

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Introduction

WELMEC is the European cooperation in the field of legal metrology. Its Members are representative national authorities responsible for legal metrology in European Union and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states.

WELMEC was created by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at a meeting in Bern in June 1990. Eighteen countries in the European Community and EFTA signed the original MoU, which set out objectives and tasks for WELMEC and identified rights and obligations arising from membership. Since 1990, several countries have joined WELMEC as Associate Members, one of a number of developments not foreseen when WELMEC was formed. To reflect these changes, and following extensive discussion during 1998 and 1999, a number of amendments to the MoU were agreed by the WELMEC Committee at its meeting in Warsaw in September 1999.

In May 2004 the ten new EU member countries Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia signed the MoU during the 20th Committee meeting in Casta-Papiernicka, Slovakia. In 2005 Turkey was unanimously accepted as Associate Member and a year later Croatia was welcomed. In 2007 Romania and Bulgaria became Full Members due to their change of status in the European Union. In 2008 and 2009 six European countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) which have signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union and its Member States have been accepted as WELMEC Associate Members. In May 2014 Croatia signed the MoU and became a full member after joining the European Union.

In April 2016 the SAA between the European Union and Kosovo* entered into force and in May 2016 Kosovo has been accepted as WELMEC Associate Member.

WELMEC has at present 31 Members and 7 Associate Members.

The MoU is of an exclusively recommendatory nature and does not in any way bind its signatories. WELMEC remains a free cooperation in which agreement is sought on a range of issues of mutual interest and wide importance. The full text of the MoU is given in Annex 1.

Over the years WELMEC has grown in recognition to become an important platform where members, stakeholders, both internal and external, identify, address and act on issues in legal metrology.

* The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the opinion by the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Strategy

In January 2015 a new strategy was accepted for the period 2015 to 2020. In this strategy WELMEC sets out its priorities for action for the coming years to maximize its impact in the field of legal metrology. Looking forward to 2020 WELMEC concentrates its efforts by providing focus for members who now share a large volume of common legislation, primarily by providing a discussion platform for all stakeholders, production of guidance and developing common support for authorities in implementing the directives.

The metrology directives of greatest interest are those relating to measuring instruments, non-automatic weighing instruments, prepackaged products and units of measurement. In addition, account must also be taken of other internal market policies and legislation governing aspects such as market surveillance and mutual recognition.

In order to have an effective strategy it was useful to reinterpret and regroup the original objectives of WELMEC as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding. However these original objectives are still applicable. WELMEC's vision, mission and objectives are:

Vision (what we aim to be)

WELMEC's vision is to be the primary source for trusted advice on legal metrology issues in Europe.

Mission (what we aspire to achieve)

WELMEC's mission is to develop and maintain confidence in European legal metrology.

Objectives

1. Driving further harmonization and improve common understanding across members.
2. Adapting to new developments (i.e. new desires, insights, technologies, legislation).
3. Effectively exchanging information across members and with stakeholders.

The Strategy document is available on the WELMEC website: www.welmec.org.

The WELMEC Committee

The WELMEC Committee is the central controlling and decision-taking body in the cooperation. Each WELMEC Member and Associate Member is entitled to nominate one representative in WELMEC Committee.

The role of WELMEC Committee is to:

- evaluate and approve strategy documents and associated action plans, as well as all the other documents which create obligations for WELMEC;
- review the finances, approve the yearly financial report and decide on the annual membership contributions;
- evaluate and approve WELMEC guides, annual reports and programmes of WGs;
- provide clear guidance to the convenors of Working Groups (functioning rules, terms of reference, working programme including deadlines and eventually the life time of the WG in connection with the outcome of the feedback information);
- follow the work of WGs to be prepared to vote on a guide;
- survey the usefulness of all WELMEC documents.

WELMEC Committee meetings are held at least once a year.

The Committee elects a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for a period of three years (with the possibility of one re-election). The Chair is supported by a secretariat. A small group, called "Chairperson's Group" provides advice to the Chairperson on strategic matters.

More detailed information on WELMEC procedures is available on the WELMEC website: www.welmec.org.

Working Groups

Working Groups provide technical and other expertise for the work in WELMEC. The working groups are the mechanism for discussion between stakeholders and for the production of draft guides for approval by the Committee. Great care is taken that the composition of each Working Group is well balanced in order to have all relevant stakeholders involved in the working groups as far as possible (legal metrology authorities, market surveillance authorities, notified bodies, industry, European Commission and consumer organizations).

WELMEC Working Groups meet regularly to discuss a range of important issues in order to find a common view and understanding on these issues. All participants in WELMEC Working Groups either participate actively and share their knowledge and experiences with other members or participate to obtain a more in-depth knowledge. Often the outcome of these discussions is laid down in guides on technical issues in order to facilitate correct and harmonized implementation of the directives

An important role of the Working groups is (in collaboration with OIML) to identify those OIML-Recommendations which presumption of conformity with the essential requirements of the Measuring Instruments Directive (MID) (in the MID, these are known as normative documents). WELMEC also develops guidance documents to explain in more detail how the normative documents should be interpreted in the context of the MID.

WELMEC operates the following Working Groups:

- WG 2 Weighing instruments
- WG 5 Metrological Supervision
- WG 6 Prepackages
- WG 7 Software
- WG 8 Measuring Instruments Directive
- WG 10 Measuring equipment for liquids other than water
- WG 11 Utility meters
- WG 12 Taximeters

Detailed information about Working Groups and their guidelines is available at the WELMEC website: www.welmec.org.

Links with other organisations

The European Commission

In developing a strategy to achieve its declared objectives, WELMEC has forged a close link with the European Commission.

At the 20th Meeting (2004) of the WELMEC Committee, the European Commission acknowledged that through WELMEC national authorities have set up an effective networking system, active in a number of fields that are directly relevant for the implementation of the MID and the NAWI directive. Therefore, in organizing work at the level of the Commission services, WELMEC will be taken into consideration as effective means of cooperation between Commission and national authorities in the field of legal metrology.

There are a number of areas where such cooperation can take place, such as

- market surveillance,
- cooperation regarding conformity assessment, including the operation of Notified Bodies,
- identification of relevant OIML documents,
- development of guidance documents,
- the wider area of administrative cooperation.

Good communication with the European Commission is very important and fruitful for both parties. WELMEC certainly will maintain a close communication with the European Commission.

OIML (Organisation Internationale de Métrologie Légale)

All WELMEC members and associated members are also members of OIML and many representative of the WELMEC (associated) members participate actively at the international level in the OIML's technical work. From the OIML's side there is a keen interest in WELMEC activities especially in the field of normative documents linked with the MID. In this way there is a useful and fruitful exchange of knowledge and expertise at European and international level. WELMEC is recognised by OIML as a regional legal metrology organization.

EURAMET e.V. (European Association of National Metrology Institutes)

EURAMET and WELMEC realised the importance of increased collaboration within the field of metrology in Europe. As a result WELMEC and EURAMET Memorandum of Understanding was signed on the occasion of 20th Anniversary of WELMEC in May 2010 in Bled, Slovenia. The MoU recognises the role played by each organisation in European metrology and the intention to collaborate closely in the future for the benefit of European metrology.

EA (European co-operation for Accreditation)

The Memorandum of Understanding between EA and WELMEC was signed in Luxembourg in May 2009. WELMEC has a status of "Recognized Stakeholder", is a member of EA Advisory Board (EAAB) and participate in the Horizontal Harmonization Committee.

Other WELMEC Observers

In developing to achieve its declared objectives, WELMEC has forged in addition close links with other bodies interested in metrology and quality infrastructure: European Standardisation Bodies (CEN/ CENELEC) and regional legal metrology organisations (RLMOs) with an interest in legal metrology e.g. AFRIMETS, APLMF, COOMET. They are invited to attend WELMEC Committee meetings.

WELMEC Corresponding Organisations

WELMEC particularly welcomes close contacts with European trade associations representing manufacturers of measuring instruments or users of measuring instruments and consumer association e.g. CECIP, CECOD, ESMIG, AQUA, MARCOGAZ, FARECOGAZ, CEO, ORGALIME, EURELECTRIC, EDG.

Publications

WELMEC has published a number of important information and guidance documents. These are all available free of charge on the WELMEC website (<http://www.welmec.org>).

Annex 1: WELMEC Memorandum of Understanding

(As amended and agreed on 24 September 1999)

SECTION 1 – CONSTITUTION

(A) The Members of WELMEC (the European cooperation in legal metrology) are the representative national legal metrology authorities (in European Union and EFTA member States) on behalf of whom this Memorandum of Understanding has been signed. They declare their common intention to participate in the work and activities of WELMEC.

(A1) National legal metrology authorities in those countries which are in transition to membership of the European Union may become Associate Members of WELMEC, subject to criteria established by the WELMEC Committee.

(B) The WELMEC Committee is charged with ensuring that specific tasks are pursued in accordance with the objectives of WELMEC. The Committee consists of:

- one Delegate representing each of the Member and Associate Member authorities;
- representatives of the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Secretariat;
- observers from:
EUROMET;
the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA);
the Organisation Internationale de Métrologie Légale (OIML); and
other regional cooperations with an interest in legal metrology.

Each Delegate, with the agreement of the Chairman, may be accompanied at Committee meetings by one or more observers. The Chairman may also invite observers from other appropriate organizations.

(C) The WELMEC Committee shall meet at least once each year. The Committee shall decide its own rules of procedure. The Committee shall elect its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from its Member Delegates for a period of three years. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman may be re-elected for one further period of three years. The authority of which the Chairperson is a delegate may, if it so wishes, appoint an additional delegate to WELMEC Committee meetings.

(C1) The WELMEC Secretariat is responsible for carrying out or monitoring (as appropriate) the decisions of the Committee. The authority of which the Chairman is a delegate will normally supply the Secretariat. The Committee may approve alternative arrangements for the maintenance of a Secretariat following a recommendation from the Chairman.

(D) An authority on behalf of whom this Memorandum has been signed may invite other relevant bodies from its country to participate in the activities of WELMEC and shall monitor their participation.

(E) WELMEC also recognises European trade associations (of manufacturers or users of measuring instruments) as Corresponding Organisations. These organisations are kept informed of all WELMEC discussions, decisions, and activities, but are not entitled to attend WELMEC Committee meetings.

SECTION 2 - OBJECTIVES

- (i) to develop and maintain mutual confidence between legal metrology services in Europe,
- (ii) to achieve and maintain the equivalence and harmonisation of legal metrology activities taking into account the relevant guidelines,

- (iii) to identify any special features of legal metrology which need to be reflected in the European metrology, certification and testing framework,
- (iv) to organise the exchange of information for legal metrology applied at national and local level,
- (v) to identify, and promote the removal of, technical or administrative barriers to trade in the field of measuring instruments,
- (vi) to promote consistency of interpretation and application of normative documents and propose actions to facilitate implementation,
- (vii) to identify specific technical problems which might form the subject of collaborative projects,
- (viii) to maintain working links with all relevant bodies and promote the infrastructure relating to harmonisation of legal metrology,
- (ix) to debate trends and establish criteria for the scope of legal metrology and maintain channels for a continuous flow of knowledge.

SECTION 3- RIGHTS

In order to achieve the objectives of WELMEC, each Member and Associate Member shall have the following rights:

- (A) to request information on the operation of the other participating authorities,
- (B) to participate in expert working group meetings organised on behalf of WELMEC (only representatives of full Members may chair Working Groups),
- (C) to participate in WELMEC interlaboratory test comparisons and if appropriate to organise such exercises,
- (D) to request reports and results of pattern evaluation, compliance assessment and verification relating to measuring instruments.

SECTION 4 - OBLIGATIONS

Each Member and Associate Member commits itself to the pursuance of the objectives of WELMEC. In particular the obligations of each of these authorities are:

- (A) to make available to other participants in WELMEC activities on reasonable request its current non-confidential working documents, details of new improvements introduced and its annual report,
- (B) to promote the acceptance of recognised styles of certificate:
- (C) to preserve the confidentiality of type approval reports, test results, and other confidential information supplied by another Member or Associate Member.

SECTION 5 - VALIDITY OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- (A) The Memorandum of Understanding shall immediately come into operation. It shall remain open for signature on behalf of national legal metrology authorities of other states within the European Union and the European Free Trade Association.
- (B) This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended at any time by arrangement between the Members, subject to there being dissent by no more than one fourth of them.
- (C) If an authority on behalf of whom this Memorandum has been signed, for any reason whatever, intends to terminate its participation in this Memorandum of Understanding, the authority shall notify the Chairman of the WELMEC Committee of its intention not later than three months beforehand.
- (D) This Memorandum of Understanding is of an exclusively recommendatory nature. It does not create any binding legal effect on the authorities on behalf of whom this Memorandum has been signed.