

EA formally recognised as official European accreditation infrastructure.

April 1st 2009, BRUSSELS - The European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) has signed a set of general guidelines with the European Commission, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and national authorities, which set out the defining principles and objectives for future co-operation. The signing is part of the formal recognition of EA as the official accreditation infrastructure within Europe.

These guidelines have been produced following the adoption of the EU Regulation 765/2008 on Accreditation and Market Surveillance, which will establish a legal framework for the provision of accreditation services across Europe. The Regulation, which will come into force on 1st January 2010, lays down rules on the organisation and operation of accreditation of conformity assessment bodies in both the voluntary and regulated sectors.

The guidelines demonstrate the policy commitment of the Commission, EFTA and EA to harmonise, strengthen and improve transparency of accreditation practices across Europe. This will enhance trust in an open market with fair trade, meanwhile ensuring better protection of the fundamental rights of the European citizens.

Lorenzo Thione, EA Chair, said “These guidelines represent a major step forward in the development of the European accreditation at the service of the European economy and society. They set the criteria for the effective and timely implementation of the reinforced role of EA in its public mission of being the official guardian of European accreditation, fostering, as well, the promotion of the European accreditation model at international level and providing a route for supporting candidate countries and countries falling within the European Neighbourhood Policy in their development processes”.

Jacques McMillan, from DG Enterprise, European Commission, stated “These guidelines for cooperation link EA not only to the Commission and EFTA, but also to all EA major stakeholders, including the national authorities. They set out a clear route for the implementation and reinforcement of the peer evaluation process, which represents the major pillar of the European accreditation infrastructure”.

For further information on EA and the role of accreditation, go to www.european-accreditation.org or contact: secretariat@european-accreditation.org
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Notes for Editors

The adopted texts of the Regulation and Decision were published in the Official Journal of the European Union Ref L218 of the 13th July 2008 as Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 and Decision No 768/2008. Copies can be downloaded from the Official Journal website.