

11TH SEPTEMBER 2008

**3rd EUROSHNET CONFERENCE ON STANDARDISATION,
TESTING AND CERTIFICATION – SAFER PRODUCTS FOR
COMPETITIVE WORKPLACES.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the French Ministry of Labour, allow me to say how delighted I am at how far the Euroshnet Network has come since the Conference of Dresden in 2001, and then the Conference of Paris in 2005. The circle has broadened over the years. New milestones have been reached. The players have got to know one another and have learnt to exchange with one another, and to share their issues, questions, and above all experience on an everyday basis.

The “New Approach” took on a new dimension as from 1985, with its two other essential and complementary components constituted by certification and accreditation, in the quest for increased safety, endeavouring to promote a “protective Europe” that it is up to us all to make an everyday reality, be we public authorities, OSH specialists, manufacturers, purchasers, users, workers, or citizens.

The “New Approach” is part of a landscape that is undergoing major regeneration and that is characterised by:

- an acceleration of trade, be it intra-European, within an enlarged Europe, or extra-European;
- a change in the scope of standardisation which, in the sectors that concern us, is tending to become a pillar of product safety, and thus of health and safety in the workplace; and
- the publication of three new texts this summer in the Official Journal of the European Union that have deepened this transformation and seek to take these changes into account.

For the French authorities in charge of occupational health and safety, namely the Directorate-General for Labour, we are trying to take up the slogan of the French Presidency of the European Union: “A Europe in action facing up to the challenges of today”. For us, these challenges are:

- To consolidate the work begun in the field of standardisation: although mechanical risks are being taken into account and grasped increasingly well in standardisation work, other risks are more difficult to combat because they cannot be seen with the naked eye. It can be difficult to measure them, even though their consequences are known and often tragic for those who are victims of them. These risks should be among our priorities. I am thinking, in particular about:

- vibration and noise;
- dust;
- substances; and
- musculoskeletal disorders.

- To reinforce the market surveillance actions. In this field, much remains to be done and the number of subjects is infinite. Market surveillance should be exercised in concerted and consulted manner between the various authorities of the Member States, and concerted efforts

and consultation should also take place within each Member State. I am thinking very particularly about enriching the actions conducted in recent years and the pipeline action on noise from machinery through instruction manuals. It is a collective action and we would be happy to involve the Member States who are interested by incorporating as well as possible their experiences and their concerns.

- A third challenge in the short and medium terms is for us to honour the obligation that we have to put in place a mechanism for information exchange, within the framework of the new European regulation on market surveillance. Some States have their own systems. France is one of them. In parallel, a model exists and operates within a distinct framework between certain Member States.

Thinking remains to be done between OSH specialists and public authorities in the context of the new regulation in order to appropriate the requirements and adapt to this context:

- ***by improving the legal aspects.*** It is through our common legal framework constituted by the new European regulation and the “machinery” Directive 2006/42 that our remarks and our actions on market surveillance find their basis. The efforts that we are, all together, attempting to deploy find therein both their effects and their scope;
- ***by focusing our fields of intervention.*** This presupposes clearly identifying from amongst this voluminous base of machinery, toys, personal protective equipment, etc. those fields that are ours and that concern us today.

The discussion is open.

But I think the schedule for our two days is very full.

Thank you for your attention and I hope your exchanges are fruitful.

Laure Ginesty