THE EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION FOR ACCREDITATION

Who we are
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1. About EA
EA is an association of national accreditation bodies in Europe.

EA’s members are officially recognised by their national Governments to assess and verify conformity assessment bodies (CABs).

CAB are organisations that carry out — against international standards — evaluation services such as certification, verification, inspection, testing and calibration.

EA is responsible for harmonising accreditation within Europe, with the aim of reducing barriers to trade and protecting health, safety and the environment.
ABOUT EA - BASIC FACTS

- Appointed by the EC to manage the accreditation infrastructure within the EU, EFTA and candidate countries.
- **Not-for-profit** association of nationally recognised accreditation bodies
- **Established** in 1997 and registered in NL in 2000
- 36 **full members** representing 36 EU/EFTA Member States
- 13 **associate members**
- 34 **full members** are signatory to the EA MLA
- 4 **Associate members** are signatory to the MLA through a bilateral agreement with EA
- Permanent **EA-Secretariat** of 7 persons
The EA Strategy 2025, adopted at the EA General Assembly in November 2016 and implemented as from 2017, defines EA’s mission as follows:

“To ensure confidence in accredited conformity assessments results through harmonized operation of accreditation activities in support of European and global economies”.
ABOUT EA – EA’S MISSION (2)

- Defining, harmonising and building consistency in accreditation in Europe, by ensuring common interpretation and application of the standards used by its members;

- Ensuring transparency of the operations (including assessments) performed and results provided by its members;

- Maintaining a multilateral agreement on mutual recognition between accreditation activities and reciprocal acceptance of accredited conformity assessment services and results;
ABOUT EA – EA’S MISSION (3)

- Managing a peer evaluation system consistent with international practices;

- Acting as a technical resource on matters related to the implementation and operation of the European policies on accreditation;

- Cooperate with the European Commission and other European and international stakeholders;

- Develop accreditation criteria and guidelines supporting harmonisation of practices;
The **EA Strategy 2025** defines EA’s vision as being “a reference in the world for accreditation that enables an open and global market for competitive business and providing reassurance to consumers in a sustainable society”.

To achieve EA’s vision, **3 strategic objectives** are set out in the Strategy:

- good governance to deliver consistent and sustainable results;
- close cooperation with regulators and stakeholders to strengthen accreditation at the European and international level;
- continue to develop accreditation to support innovation and growth in existing and new areas.
EA’s core values are developed out of EA’s mission and vision, highlighting the expected behaviours and skills on which all work of EA is based. The core values support the implementation of the strategy and the basis of EA, enabling the membership organization to speak with one voice and to reach the desired position 2025.

- We are harmonized: by being transparent in our rules and actions, by being coordinated in word and deed, by being accessible both internally and externally, by having and promoting a common understanding of NABs promise to the market and society.

- We are responsible: by involving and listening to regulators, industry and other stakeholders, by being loyal and dedicated and work for the public interest, by being proactive, by maintaining our integrity.

- We provide confidence: by establishing consistent deliverables, by being open, impartial and independent, by being non-discriminants, by practicing what we preach, by being democratic.

- We are competent: by being efficient and professional, by using our resources, by exercising leadership, by supporting development and innovation, by continuously improving.
EA was created in 1997 but its origins extend back further. EA was established as a legal entity on 26/06/2000.

- WEMC (1973-1982)
- WECC (1976-1994)
- WELAC (1987-1994)
- EAL (1994-1997)

EA was established as a legal entity on 26/06/2000.
2.

EA Organisational Structure
The General Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the association, supervises the management and the general course of affairs in the association and takes decisions about strategy and general policies.
EA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EA EX)

- EA EX is responsible for implementing EA policies and managing the association.

- Members of the EA Executive Committee (Mandate starting on the 1st January 2016)

- Thomas Facklam, Chairman
- Geir Samuelsen, Vice-Chairman (Mandate ended on 31/01/2017)
- Paulo Tavares, MAC Chair
- Peter Kronvall, CPC Chair
- Ignacio Pina, HHC Chair
- Rolf Straub, IC Chair
- Kevin Belson, CC Chair
- Laurent Vinson, LC Chair
- Jan van der Poel, Additional Member
- Emanuele Riva, Additional Member
- Maria Papatzikou, Additional Member
- Lucyna Olborska, Additional Member
EA ADVISORY BOARD (EAAB) - 1

- EAAB constitutes the primary organ within EA to ensure the effective and balanced involvement of all interested parties in European accreditation regarding policy and strategy issues.

- EAAB shall serve as the main stakeholder forum for EA to deal with issues pursuant to:
  - the requirements of Regulation (EC) 765/2008 and
  - the relevant provisions of the “General Guidelines for Co-operation between EA and the EC, EFTA and the competent national authorities.”
The EAAB composition constitutes a well-balanced representation of the parties which rely on and contribute to the European accreditation system:

- Conformity Assessment Bodies
- Industry, Services and Trade
- EU Member States' National Authorities
- Consumer Associations
- Metrological Institutions
- European Commission and EFTA
- European Standardisation Organisations
- EA Representatives
Learn more about the structure of EA on our website:
http://www.european-accreditation.org/structure
3. The EA Multilateral Agreement (EA MLA)
EA Multilateral Agreement (EA MLA) is a signed agreement between the EA full members.

The signatories recognise and accept:

- the equivalence of the accreditation systems operated by the signing members,

- and the reliability of the conformity assessment results provided by conformity assessment bodies accredited by the signing members.
The MLA provides a framework to realise the objective ‘Accredited once, accepted everywhere’.

The MLA creates confidence in, and acceptance of, accredited certifications, inspections and test reports.

The MLA eliminates the need for suppliers to be certified in each country where they sell their products or services.
EA Associate Members can enter into a **Bilateral Agreement (EA BLA)** with the EA signatories of the EA MLA with the aim of establishing mutual confidence in the respective accreditation systems and in their accredited attestations of conformity.

The **EA BLA** has the same purpose and bilateral signatories to the EA MLA shall comply with and meet the same requirements as EA Full Members.
The scope of the EA MLA covers the following activities (level 2) and standards (level 3):

- **Testing** (ISO/IEC 17025)
- **Calibration** (ISO/IEC 17025)
- **Medical Laboratories** (ISO 15189)
- **Inspection** (ISO/IEC 17020)
- **Certification of products, processes and services** (ISO/IEC 17065)
- **Certification of persons** (ISO/IEC 17024)
- **Verification of greenhouse gas emissions** (ISO 14065)
- **Certification of management systems** (ISO/IEC 17021)
- **Proficiency Testing Providers** (ISO/IEC 17043)
STATISTICS ON ACCREDITATION (AT 31.12.2016)

- 3246 accreditations in Calibration
- 18769 accreditations in Testing laboratories
- 3409 accreditations in Medical laboratories (ISO 15189)
- 1740 accreditations in Product Certification
- 1373 accreditations in Management System Certification
- 478 accreditations in Certification of Persons
- 5161 accreditations in Inspection
- 177 accreditations in Proficiency Testing Providers
- 43 accreditations in Reference Material Producers
- 133 accreditations in EU ETS Verifications
- 79 accreditations in EMAS Regulation
- 181 accreditations in Quality Management System for Medical Devices
- 197 accreditations for Information Security Management System (ISMS)
- 231 accreditations for Food Safety Management System (FSMS)
A search system enables everyone to seek out information about accredited conformity assessment bodies (CABs) directly on the websites of EA Members.

It is available from the EA webpage listing “MLA & BLA Signatories”: customers to CABs or third parties can click on “(search)” near the conformity assessment activity for which they would like to find a CAB accredited by one given NAB in one given country to have direct access to the NAB’s database of accredited CABs.

A similar system gives access to data on accredited EN ISO 14065 verifiers directly from “Quick Links” on the EA homepage.
EA MLA SIGNATORIES

- 34 EA MLA signatories
- 4 EA BLA signatories

(August 2016)

Full list of all MLA & BLA signatories and scopes on EA’s website:
http://www.european-accreditation.org/mla-and-bla-signatories
EA PEER EVALUATION SYSTEM

- EA and its member accreditation bodies invest significant effort and resource to maintain the integrity and robustness of the EA MLA through a peer evaluation process.

- The on-site evaluation is conducted by a peer evaluation team entrusted with the task to determine accreditation bodies’ compliance with the requirements laid down in:

  - ISO/IEC 17011: internationally accepted standard for accreditation bodies
  - Regulation (EC) No 765/2008
  - Relevant standards for conformity assessment bodies including any additional requirements (e.g. by the EC)
EA PEER EVALUATION SYSTEM

Learn more about the process of EA’s Peer Evaluation:
http://www.european-accreditation.org/peer-evaluation-process
4.

EA in the Global Network
EA members may also be members of the two organisations with worldwide representation:

- **ILAC**
  - International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

- **IAF**
  - International Accreditation Forum

EA is a **recognised region in ILAC and IAF** and a signatory to their mutual arrangements.
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK (updated August 2016)

**ILAC**
- 91 AB Full Members (signatories to the ILAC MRA)
- 15 AB Associate Members
- 13 AB Affiliate Members
- 3 Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies (EA, APLAC, IAAC)
- 3 Regional Cooperation Bodies (ARAC, AFRAC, SADCA)
- 26 Stakeholder Members

**IAF**
- 73 AB Members and 61 MLA signatories
- 18 Associate Members
- 3 Recognised Regional Accreditation Groups (EA, IAAC, PAC)
- 3 Regional Accreditation Groups (AFRAC, ARAC, SADCA)
- 1 Observer Organisation
EA MLA signatories and the accreditations they grant are internationally recognised through the ILAC and IAF Multilateral Agreements. The MLA/MRA marks can be used to demonstrate international recognition.

Find more information on IAF/ILAC Recognition on EA’s website:
http://www.european-accreditation.org/iaf-and-ilac
5. EA’s role in Europe
As the official guardian of the European accreditation infrastructure, EA has the overall strategic objective to safeguard the value and credibility of accredited conformity assessment services delivered by its Members and accredited conformity assessment bodies within the European market.
EA’s role in supporting the effective operation of the Single Market is recognised by

- Regulation (EC) No 765/2008
- the General Guidelines for cooperation
- the Framework Partnership Agreement signed with the European Commission and EFTA.
EA AS THE EUROPEAN ACCREDITATION INFRASTRUCTURE

In accordance with Article 14, paragraph 2 in this Regulation, an agreement has been concluded between EA and the European Commission (EC) to specify, inter alia, EA’s detailed tasks as well as funding and supervision provisions.

This agreement includes:

**General Guidelines**

- **General Guidelines** for the Cooperation between the European co-operation for Accreditation and the European Commission, the European Free Trade Association and the competent national authorities.

**Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA)**

- 4-year FPA sets out the financial obligations and conditions between the EC and EA.
- provide for annual operational grants and specific action grants based on EA’s annual work programmes to be approved by the EC every year.
Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 provides a legal framework for the provision of accreditation services across Europe.

The Regulation:

- strengthens EA’s role in both voluntary and regulated sectors
- places an obligation on EU Member States to accept results issued by the conformity assessment bodies accredited by any of the EA MLA signatories
- strengthens the use of accreditation and the EA MLA as a basis for notification
THE EUROPEAN ACCREDITATION MODEL

- A service of general interest
- Public authority
- Last level of control of conformity assessment
- Voluntary and mandatory fields
- Mandate of the government
- Full compliance with applicable rules
- Accountability to stakeholders
- No predominance of any single interest group
- Non-profit distributing
- No competition
EA is enhancing its communications with the European Commission:

- EA is attending every meeting on accreditation held by the Senior Officials Group for the **Expert Group on the Internal Market for Product (IMP)**

- EA is attending meetings of the **EC Inter-Service Steering Group** for Accreditation

- For certain specific projects, the EA is also collaborating directly with **DGs** Environment, Climate Action, Transport, Health and Food Safety, Agriculture.

- EA offers workshops for EC DGs officers to raise awareness on accreditation as a tool for regulation.
6. Benefits of Accreditation

Learn more about Accreditation as a tool for Regulators
The **accreditation process** determines the technical competence and integrity of organisations that offer testing, examination, verification, inspection, calibration and certification services (collectively known as **conformity assessment**).

Accreditation operates in the **public interest** across all market sectors, providing a **transparent and impartial assessment** of these services against internationally recognised standards and other national or sectoral requirements.
## GENERAL BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

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<th>Delivers Public Confidence</th>
<th>Minimises product failure or recalls</th>
<th>Facilitates cross border trade</th>
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<td>• Despite a complex global marketplace, accreditation gives us confidence through ensuring consistently high standards in the quality of products or services purchased.</td>
<td>• Product testing carried out by a reliable independent organisation will minimise products failing or potential recalls.</td>
<td>• Accreditation is of major importance for the development of Europe’s internal market, as this facilitates cross border trade and eliminates barriers to trade</td>
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BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES

- **accurate** calibration, measurement and testing, performed in accordance with best practice, can
  - limit errors and product failure,
  - control production costs and
  - contribute to an innovative environment.

- **essential tool** for decision-making, risk management and supplier selection

- provides a **competitive advantage** in domestic markets through access to public sector contracts, and also overseas with greater acceptance in export markets
Accreditation...

- is the preferred **mechanism for identifying competent bodies** to implement government policies and regulations aimed at safeguarding the public and building public confidence in activities that impact on such fields as health, welfare, security, the environment, education, and financial services

- delivers a multi-discipline solution that can be applied to support or act as an **alternative to legislation**.

*EA Brochure – Accreditation, a tool to support regulators*
Accreditation...

- helps to increase access to goods and services of **consistent** and reliable quality and **safety**

- Increases confidence in certificated products and services, tests, examinations and measurements.
You want to learn more about EA and accreditation? Visit our website and check our promotional materials: [http://www.european-accreditation.org/promotional-information](http://www.european-accreditation.org/promotional-information)
CONTACT

EA Secretariat

75 avenue Parmentier
75011 Paris
France

Tel: + 33 (0)1 40 21 24 62
Email: secretariat@european-accreditation.org
Website: www.european-accreditation.org