



Brussels, 21 June 2006

The 12th ASEM/TFAP Meeting on standards and Conformity Assessment

Vienna, Austria, 21-23 May 2006

CONCLUSIONS

1. Mutual Understanding

1.1 The Standards and Conformity Assessment (SCA) Working Group noted the action points already taken since the last meeting in Tokyo on 2-3 February 2005. A brief summary was also made of relevant issues for the SCA group raised in the last Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tokyo on 6-7 May 2005 and the High Level Meeting in Rotterdam on 16-17 September 2005.

The European Commission (EC) agreed to prepare a similar summary at the next meeting of the SCA working group from the high level meetings taking place between now and until then.

Action Point: The EC to prepare a summary for the next meeting on issues raised by the high level meetings taking place which are relevant for the SCA working group. The EC will do this work in collaboration with Finland, hosting the next ASEM Summit on 10-11 September 2006.

1.2 The Korean delegation presented the new ASEM/TFAP/SCA website <http://www.asemsca.org> that is now on line. The working group expressed appreciation for the efforts made by Korea in designing and upholding this website. The members gave several preliminary suggestions on further developments of the website.

Action Point: Members to present suggestions directly to Korea on, for example: confidentiality of information; extended uses of the website; links with other websites and list of updates of contact points. Korea will make a summary of the suggestions and send it to the members for further consideration and for feedback, well before the next SCA working group meeting. Members are also

encouraged to assist Korea in updating the website with earlier ASEM documents.

1.3 The members thanked Thailand for its presentation which highlighted the importance of the standards and conformity assessment infrastructure to assist Small and Micro Enterprises. The meeting agreed that further exchange of views on the issue is necessary.

Action point: Members are encouraged to look into the issue further and to discuss it at the next meeting.

1.4 The EC gave a presentation of its Helpdesk for developing countries <http://export-help.cec.eu.int>. This is a free internet database and online service to assist exporters in developing countries with necessary information to access the EU market. The aim of the presentation was to inform about the uses of the services and also show the site as one example on how to assist exporters from developing countries.

2. Technical Cooperation

2.1 Indonesia gave a summary of the ASEM Seminar on Automobile Construction Regulations in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 8-9 May 2006.

The seminar was held as a Technical Cooperation project activity agreed at the SCA working group meeting in Tokyo, 2-3 February 2005.

Action point: It was agreed that should members have proposals for future project activities, they would send them to Thailand for compilation and for consideration at the next meeting.

2.2 France presented a report on technical cooperation activities among ASEM members that could be of interest for other ASEM members.

Action Point: It was agreed the chart on technical cooperation activities would be updated by France for the next meeting. It was also suggested that more information on regional technical cooperation activities would be provided at the next meeting.

3. Best Regulatory Practice (BRP)

3.1 Japan gave a presentation of the BRP survey, which had been updated with information submitted by members since the meeting in Tokyo in February 2005. However, the updating was not complete due to some pending responses. The report on the complete BRP survey is therefore expected at the next SCA meeting.

Action Points: Members which have not completed their responses are asked to submit them to Japan by end September 2006, so the complete work can be presented on the SCA website and at the next SCA meeting.

4. Specific issues in standardisation

4.1 Standards education

Several presentations, from Japan, Korea and Austria, were made under this agenda point. According to these members, the educational projects, directed both to industry, the general public and to academia, to raise the awareness of standardization and conformity assessment activities are becoming increasingly important. It was stressed that industry must be involved all the way up to the boardroom level as standardization and conformity assessment activities also have economic consequences. The number of students enrolling in education courses on standards is increasing. Electronic media are used increasingly and E-learning is being developed by ISO.

Japan gave another separate presentation on accessible design and highlighted the need to consider the special needs of certain categories of people, such as the elderly or the disabled, when drafting standards.

Action Points: The meeting agrees to further share information and experiences on this issue in future meetings.

4.2 Social Responsibility

Two presentations were made, by Japan and Austria. Japan gave an update on the progress in drafting standard for CSR in ISO/SR WG, referring to the basic design for the drafting and the structure of ISO/WD26000. The meeting expressed interest in being informed on this issue at future SCA meetings, as social responsibility becomes increasingly relevant in standardisation.

The EC informed the meeting about its work in this field and invited members to visit its website (DG Enterprise and Industry) http://www.europa.eu/pol/enter/index_en.htm, for further information. The aim is to set up a network, including all stakeholders. Social responsibility and standards will, however, not be a substitute for social legislation.

Action Point: ASEM Members which are actively involved in the work on Social Responsibility are requested to update the future SCA meetings on the progress development on the issue.

5. Environmental Standards and Regulations

5.1 The meeting thanked Malaysia and Japan for their presentations. They raised in particular, ECO-labelling, Ecodesign and Promotion of Chemical Management. Japan gave an introduction to its "3Rs" policy to realize a sustainable society by constructing "new" supply chains based on the concept of "Lifecycle Thinking"

Action Points: It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda for future SCA meetings. Members were encouraged to give presentations, sharing their own experiences in this field. Material and presentations could be made available on the SCA website. Interest was expressed, in particular, on sharing experiences on ECO-labelling. Other proposals are welcome and should in that case be sent to France by end September 2006. France will report to the members on other proposals, if any.

6. Alignment with international Standards

6.1 The UNECE (WP 6 on standards and regulatory cooperation) presented its UNECE Standardization and Regulatory List which contains a list of sectors and areas where governments see the need for future international standardization work and where governments might be interested in initiating a transboundary regulatory convergence dialogue.

The ASEM partners were invited, on a voluntary basis, to submit such information to UNECE WP6 secretariat and to participate in WP6 meeting.

Action Point: It was agreed that current and updated UNECE Standardization and Regulatory List will be provided by UNECE WP6 to the SCA group for information.

Thailand agreed to make a survey among members on this issue. The survey will concern areas where standards are required by members but international standards do not exist, as well as areas where international standards exist but are not applicable in the member countries. A summary would be presented for discussions at the next SCA meeting (Thailand will consult with China on possible cooperation on the work regarding this issue).

6-2 France raised the issue of possible follow up of the work already done by the group on alignment on international standards in the fields of safety of machinery, medical devices, telecoms and electromagnetic compatibility.

7. Regulatory Cooperation

7.1 Members took note of the UNECE presentation of its regulatory cooperation activities which are based on UNECE Recommendation "L" ("International model for Technical Harmonisation"). It was explained by UNECE that this "Model" is built around a "New Approach" concept which was adapted by UNECE so that it can also be used by non-EU countries. Among sectoral projects which were initiated by industry attention was attracted to the latest project "safety of gas and oil pipelines" and to a new proposal regarding equipment to be used in explosive atmosphere.

One member noted that the UNECE "Model" provides a good example of standards-receptive regulatory approaches.

It was recalled that interested ASEM members can, on a voluntary basis, participate in UNECE regulatory projects of interest to them.

Action Point: It was agreed to keep this point on the agenda for future SCA meeting.

7.2 France suggested that an update of regional, bilateral and unilateral recognition agreements related to conformity assessment and technical regulations, which have been negotiated at the governmental level, could be presented at the next at the next SCA meeting.

8. Any other business

8.1. A numbering system for working documents of this group was presented by Thailand and the EC and discussed by the members.

Action Point: The EC, Thailand and Indonesia will propose a numbering system applicable for working documents of the next meeting.

8.2. The members agreed to hold a workshop in conjunction with the next meeting. Better Regulatory Practice was proposed as a topic for the workshop. However, it was agreed to give members more time to consider priorities. Consensus was reached that industry should take part, however, the exact format for such participation is still to be agreed.

Action Point: Members are invited to propose topics for the workshop to the EC with a copy to Thailand and Indonesia. EC, Thailand and Indonesia will circulate proposals among members for their agreement on the topic chosen for the workshop to be held in conjunction with the next meeting.

9. Date and place of the next meeting:

Indonesia offered to host the next meeting of the SCA working group. Proposed dates are 16-17 or 23-24 April 2007.