

Ten Years of OIML Certification

Launched in 1991 following several years of reflection within the OIML culminating in a decision made by the International Committee of Legal Metrology, the *OIML Certificate System for Measuring Instruments* is now ten years old.

Initial developments were very slow and in fact the first certificate was not issued until 1992. Over the following two years, the number of certificates issued only just exceeded 20 (in 1993) and 40 (in 1994). However from 1995 on there was a significant acceleration and one decade later the number of certificates issued annually now exceeds 100, as may be seen from the bar chart on the front cover of this Bulletin.

A number of other key figures also illustrate the growing success of this activity:

- Some 20 OIML Member States (out of 57) have now established national authorities for issuing OIML certificates, and a number of other Member States are considering doing likewise.
- More than 30 categories of measuring instruments (weighing devices, fuel dispensers, clinical thermometers, breath analyzers, etc.), may receive OIML certificates and this number is progressively increasing with the issuing of new or revised Recommendations applicable within the System.
- Over 200 manufacturers or importers of measuring instruments from some 30 countries have successfully applied for OIML certificates.
- More and more countries accept OIML certificates and associated test results to accelerate and facilitate the granting of national or regional type approvals.

More detailed statistics concerning certificates issued, including information on those manufacturers that have

been granted such certificates, may be found on the OIML web site and information is also published in the *Assessment of OIML Activities* (see page 43).

However, major improvements still have to be made over the next few years, in particular:

- To simplify the certification of “families” of measuring instruments, i.e. instruments from the same manufacturer, based on the same technology and differing only in certain characteristics (e.g. the maximum capacity) in which case it is not necessary to repeat all the tests on all the instruments belonging to the family.
- To develop the certification of “modules”, e.g. indicating devices, sensors and electronic equipment, with a view to facilitating the certification of an instrument made up of certified modules.
- To develop the certification (in fact the initial verification) of mass-produced instruments, since up to now the OIML Certificate System applies to *types (patterns)* of instruments.
- Above all, the objective is to develop multilateral agreements of recognition of test results associated with OIML certificates in order to eliminate multiple testings and thus apply the WTO directives concerning testing in the legal metrology field.

This is the responsibility of the OIML Technical Subcommittee TC 3/SC 5 under a joint USA/BIML secretariat and significant progress in this field is expected to be made by the end of 2002. This activity is conducted taking due consideration of the views of certification bodies as well as those of manufacturers of measuring instruments, and in line with the general principles on conformity assessment, testing and accreditation developed within the WTO, ISO/CASCO, ILAC and IAF. ■