

## EUROPE

## International meeting on “New challenges to legal metrology in Europe”

Berlin, 7–8 November 2001

HARTMUT APEL, PTB, Braunschweig, Germany



On November 7 and 8, 2001, an international meeting on metrology was held at the Congress Centre of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. The topic was *New challenges to legal metrology in Europe*, and the event was jointly organized by the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi).

Globalization, deregulation and harmonization of the European measuring instrument market on the basis of a separate Measuring Instruments Directive (MID) will lead to changes in the classical structures of legal metrology, which have up to now largely been tailored to suit domestic needs.

Measures such as “accreditation” and “certification of quality management systems” go hand in hand with the growing requirement for the free circulation of goods. Activities of legal metrology, e.g. initial verification, which have to date been the task of government agencies, are to be entrusted also to manufacturers and private test laboratories. The harmonization of European standards and the requirements of international standards in the field of QM systems also increasingly determine the area regulated by law. In view of the liberalization of trade, new regulatory mechanisms must be developed for market surveillance in order to ensure consumer protection.

In view of these structural changes, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the changes in metrology and legal metrology services resulting from these

developments on the international level, to exchange information and know-how, and to map out possible strategies to be applied in the future.

The meeting was opened by Prof. Dr. E. Göbel, PTB President. In his speech Dr. A. Tacke, Undersecretary of the BMWi, set out the basic principles of legal metrology and its importance for consumer protection and fair competition. Another fourteen speakers spoke about “Metrology and politics”, “Metrology and international standardization”, “Metrology and international development”, and expressed their points of view as regards the new legal bases and the challenges of verification technology. Attila Szilvássy, BIML Assistant Director, reported on “International developments in legal metrology and the OIML”.

The meeting was attended by 230 persons, filling the meeting room to capacity. Over 50 participants were from outside Germany and came from 26 different countries. All the presentations were given in German, even by the six speakers invited from abroad, amongst whom a guest from China. For the members of the “Legal Metrology” working group within the framework of the regional organization “European-Asian Cooperation of National Metrological Institutions” (COOMET) who had come to Berlin, the presentations were simultaneously translated into Russian.

All the presentations given will be compiled into separate conference proceedings. ■

