

■ Editorial

Market surveillance

The OIML Certificate System now has over 900 certificates registered, but this alone is not sufficient to ensure free circulation of measuring instruments and worldwide acceptance of measurement results. The final goal of the OIML is the establishment of a worldwide global measurement system as described in the Birkeland Report, and calls for further developments:

- To develop confidence in the certificates and test reports,
- To establish a system for assessing the conformity of instruments to the certified type in order to develop confidence in individual instruments, and
- To establish a system for assessing the instruments in service and their use in order to develop confidence in measurement results.

The first issue is covered by the work on the MAA, which will facilitate type approvals. The second issue calls for a system of product certification which would facilitate initial verification. But in all cases these three issues need to establish principles and procedures for the follow-up to the systems, for supervision and surveillance.

A mutual acceptance agreement is based on initial evaluation of the confidence which may be granted to

issuing authorities, but also necessitates constant attention from each participant to the certificates issued in order to maintain the level of confidence and to avoid deviations in the implementation of the Recommendations. Mutual information and intercomparisons are important tools for this.

Conformity to type cannot be fully assessed by simple tests and necessitates random examinations on various specific features of the instruments, as well as a follow-up to the manufacturing processes. This issue is partially addressed by the work in the European Union on *market surveillance*. The OIML should start a more general reflection on the ways to ensure and survey conformity to type in production.

Assessment of instruments in service may be partially answered by formal reverification procedures, but more generally for this third issue, surveillance of the repairers, owners and users of instruments is of major importance.

This issue of the Bulletin presents different contributions to these reflections: surveillance of instruments in service, intercomparisons and quality management, and gives details of a forthcoming conference on market surveillance. ■