

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SEMINAR

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The first question that springs to mind at the outset of this Seminar is “Why choose the year 2020?” Well, one of the advantages of choosing such a date is that it is absolutely impossible to extrapolate from what we are doing now. It is really a matter of using our sense of logic based on past experience, and then develop this logic by using our *feeling* to identify the trends we notice in the evolution of society.

At the outset of this event I would like to say “For those of you who will be contributing to the Seminar as speakers or when you take part in discussions, please don’t simply voice your “official” opinion, but rather we would encourage you to listen to and express your *feeling*”. In the year 2020 we will doubtless have new governments, new policies, perhaps other kinds of organizations, nobody knows. But we all have a kind of *feeling* about the trends we observe in our daily lives. So that is why I hope that everybody will express his or her own *feeling* and not the official positions of countries or organizations.

I believe that what we are going to be discussing is a kind of mix between what is going to happen in 2020 and what we *hope* will happen. It is very difficult to distinguish between these two aspects and it is also true that most developments are not influenced by us. We have to be very realistic. Let me give you an example: when you look at the trends in, for instance, deregulation or privatization, very often the reason for entering into this kind of discussion is not a reason with a metrological background. It is very often part of a general policy discussion in a country; governments speak about the possibility of privatization and then say to metrologists “please take part in the discussion”. So very often, trends cannot be influenced by us; they just “happen” and we have to react.

However, sometimes we are able to influence the outcome. I feel that in the future, all of us involved in metrology should be active not only in listening to our colleagues and attending seminars like this one, but also in trying to influence what is happening in our governments and our ministries. But it is not only a question of *waiting* for trends, we can also try to be “trend-setters” just as the OIML is trying - and will continue to try in the future - to be a “trend-setting” organization.

Let me now offer you some remarks to start off the think process during these two days.

What will the importance of legal metrology be in 2020? My own feeling is that the importance of legal metrology is growing and that, for international trade in a global society and for reasons of public health, safety and the environment, the need will be much stronger than it is today for well organized and well documented legal metrology policies.

I believe that the role of the state in legal metrology will, in 2020, be different from what we see in general today. In my view, the state will have four responsibilities in legal metrology and metrology: (i) creating and maintaining a national metrology

system; (ii) drafting legislation and ensuring that it is implemented; (iii) defining a general policy for metrology and accreditation; and (iv) global and regional cooperation.

I mentioned the words “national metrology system”. In my view this is an official description of a coherent system of laws, regulations, organisms, structures, etc. with one mission: to improve and maintain credibility in measurements. I think that the trend in the future will be to speak less about measuring instruments and more in terms of *credibility* in measurement. Credibility in measurement is helpful for international trade, for protection of the environment, etc. and is therefore a key word for the future.

Concerning the responsibilities of states, let me add that in my view, in the future the state will increasingly act as the monitoring organism for a national metrology system, rather than actually itself carrying out all the technical work that has to be done. I strongly believe that in the future, within the state “machinery” there will be a small unit for metrology comprised of highly trained legal and technical specialists, with people also coming from industry and universities, to form a kind of think-tank for metrology and to monitor the national measurement system. Much practical work will be done by independent organizations, including industry itself. I also believe that this development is not a bad one. It is absolutely not necessary that verification, testing for type approval, and even maintaining national standards should by definition be done by people from government. The government and the state should monitor the system and ensure that everything is organized in the right way. My view is that in the future, type approval will be completely in the hands of independent laboratories and industry and that initial verification, as we know it today, will disappear.

This makes it necessary that in the coming years, we allocate much more attention to what we call “market surveillance”. Some time ago, we started discussions about this subject but we did not pursue these. However, in my opinion when we speak about credibility in measurement, the main thing to do in the future is to make sure that by organizing a good system of market surveillance, this credibility is there permanently and consistently.

I also hope to see that in the year 2020 we have one global organization for metrology and accreditation. You know that we already enjoy cooperation, we speak with each other from time to time, but this is only at an early stage, and we are not making much progress. My feeling is that the development of further cooperation culminating in the creation of a *world center for metrology and accreditation* under which each organization can do its own job is a logical goal and I feel that we should not be afraid of that.

I have made some remarks about the national metrology system; I feel that the job of the OIML is to further work on a global measurement system together, in my view, with our colleagues from the BIPM. At the regional level, people should work on regional measurement systems so that, in the end, there would be national measurement systems, regional measurement systems and a global measurement system, all fitting together.

So those were my remarks to set the scene for this Seminar. I will end my introduction here but I would like to note that over the last years - and I have tried to encourage this - the OIML has been changing gradually from an organization producing harmonization documents (called International Recommendations, which is still our core business of course) to one that is speaking more in terms of strategy and policy. I feel that this

Seminar is exactly fitting in the context of this development. We are increasingly able to produce very good documents and papers which can be used. We already have the *Birkeland Study*: my recommendation is for us all to read it again, as it is still very topical.

We are currently working on a study about the *Social and economic impact of legal metrology*, conducted by John Birch, which will be finished by the end of this year or perhaps early next year; it will also be a very helpful document. And in addition of course, we will work on the conclusions that arise out of this Seminar. I hope that it will be a challenging one, not only for our organization in order to define a modern metrology policy, but also for every individual country.

Thank you for listening to these opening remarks and may I wish you a very good Seminar.

Following this introduction, the floor was given to the various lecturers successively, starting with Mr. Thierry Gaudin, Member of the Conseil Général des Mines (France) and founder and chairperson of the association 2100 Odysée de ôl'Espèce.