

Accreditation:
a tool to facilitate the free movement of
goods and services and to ensure
the safety of consumers

More information about accreditation and services of BELAC?

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Publisher: N. Meurée-Vanlaethem
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Legal deposit: D/2015/2295/55

“Creating the conditions for a competitive, sustainable and balanced operation of the goods and services market in Belgium.”

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What is accreditation?



The increasing number of specified standards has seen a corresponding growth in the number of organizations providing third-party evaluation of conformity and compliance with these standards.

The **accreditation process** determines the technical competence and integrity of organizations that offer testing, verification, inspection, calibration and certification services (collectively known as **conformity assessment**). Accreditation operates across all market sectors, providing a transparent and impartial assessment of these services against internationally recognized standards and other national or sectorial requirements.

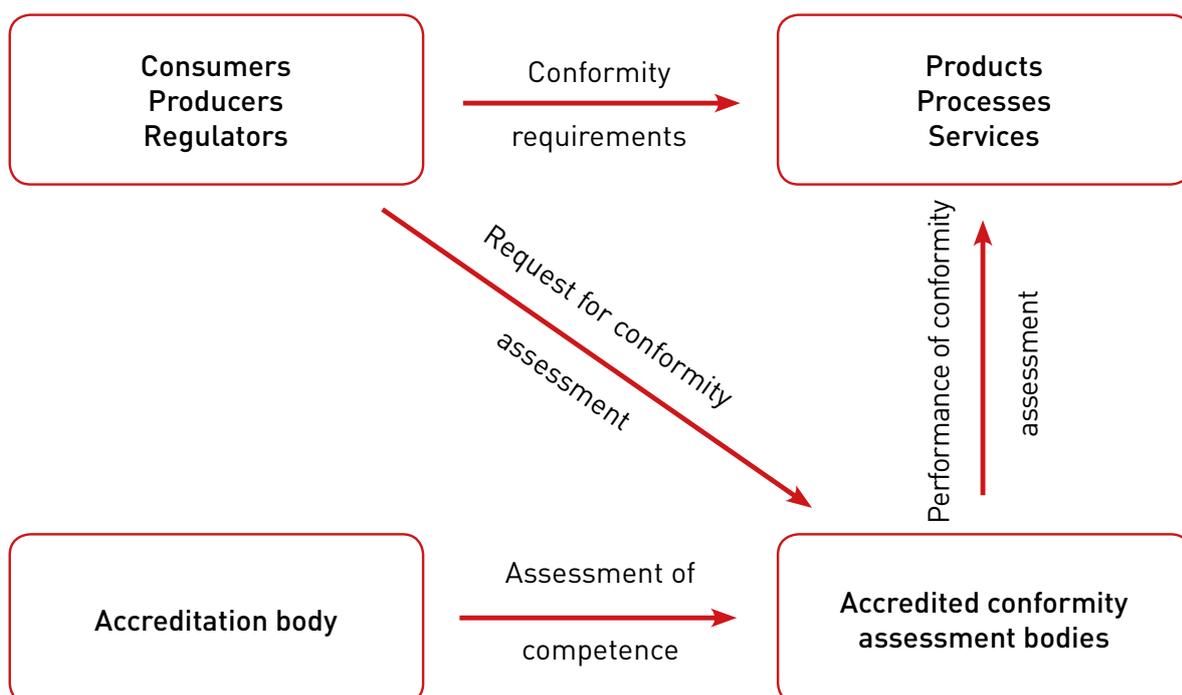
Together, conformity assessment and accreditation are important parts of a nation's quality infrastructure, along with metrology and standardization. They reinforce confidence that goods and services, processes and management systems comply with national and international standards and regulations. They also facilitate the risk management and decision making of manufacturers and regulators.



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The importance of accreditation

- For **businesses**, accurate calibration, measurement and testing, inspection and certification, performed in accordance with best practice, can limit errors and product failure, control production costs and contribute to an innovative environment. Accreditation is therefore an essential tool for decision making, risk management and supplier selection. It can also provide a competitive advantage in domestic markets through access to public sector contracts, and also overseas with greater acceptance in export markets.
- For **regulators**, accreditation is the preferred mechanism for identifying competent bodies to implement government policies and regulations aimed at safeguarding the public and building public confidence in activities that have an impact on certain fields, such as health, welfare, security, the environment, education and financial services.
- For **consumers**, accreditation helps to increase access to goods and services of reliable quality and safety.



Accreditation in Belgium: BELAC

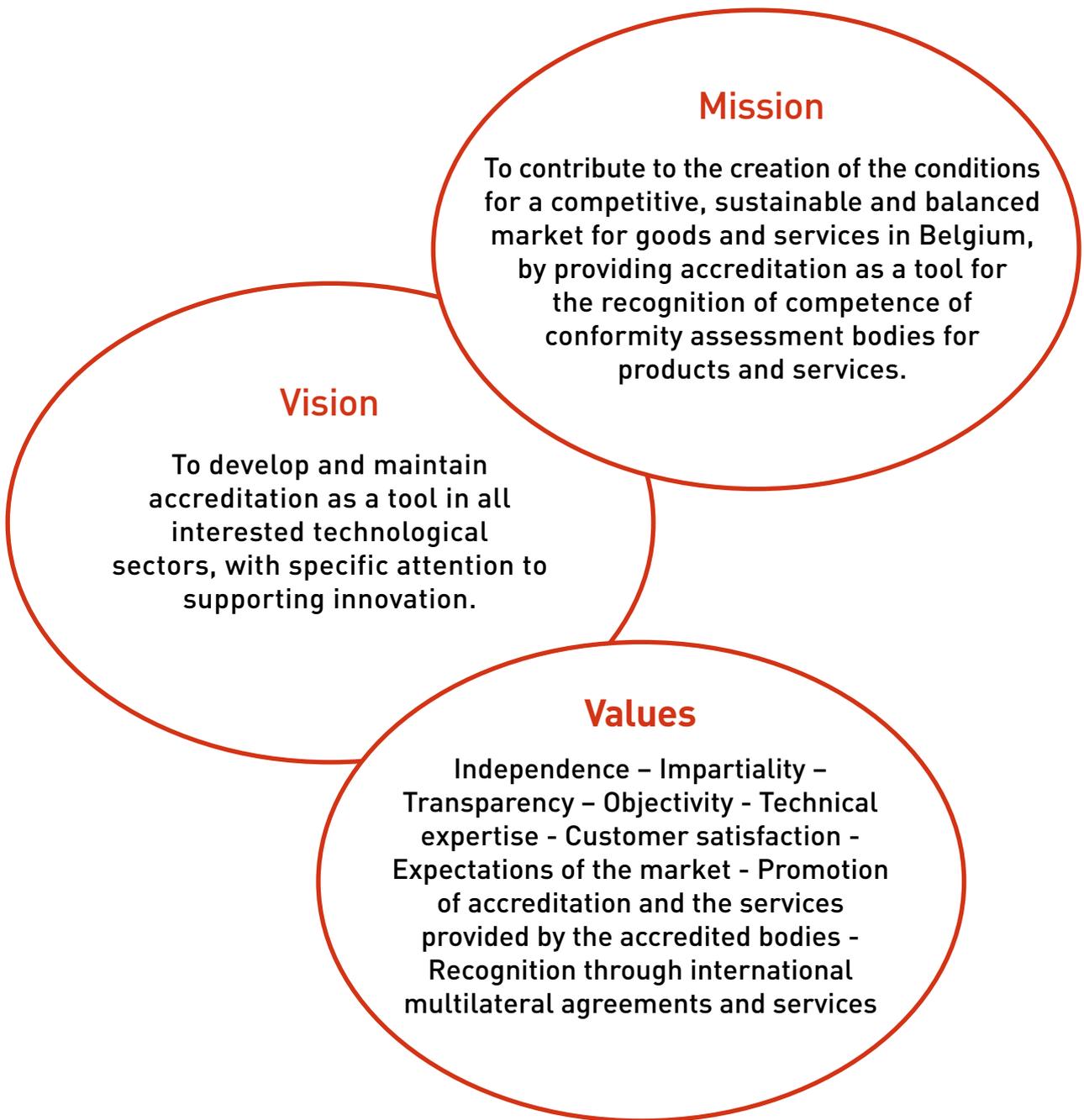
Since 1 January 2010 and the entry into force of regulation (EC) No 765/2008, it has been a requirement that every EU member state should formally appoint a single national accreditation body to be the sole provider of accreditation services for that country. Each national accreditation body works in the public's interest, ensuring that organizations supplying conformity assessment services such as testing, verification, inspection, calibration and certification are fit to do so. In this way, the certificates, reports and other conformity assessment results that they issue benefit from an increased level of reliability. This supports the provision of products, processes and services across all sectors of the free as well as regulated markets.



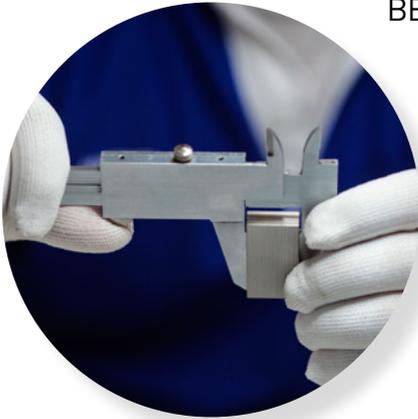
BELAC is the sole Belgian national accreditation body and is responsible for the accreditation of all types of conformity assessment bodies.

BELAC is established according to legal stipulations and is placed under the responsibility of the Federal Public Service Economy, S.M.E.'s, Self-employed and Energy. The legal stipulations provide a management structure and operational rules that safeguard the objectivity, impartiality and autonomy of the accreditation body. Accreditations issued by BELAC are recognized by the Belgian State.

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The requirements that form the basis for accreditation



BELAC itself operates according to the international requirements with regard to the management of accreditation bodies, which includes regulation (EC) No 765/2008, ISO/IEC 17011 and the complementary mandatory or guidance provisions issued at Belgian, European and international levels. The competence of the conformity assessment bodies is assessed according to the requirements of the relevant international accreditation standards.

The whole set of requirements provides for a consistent framework agreed at international level (ISO CASCO) and European level (CEN/CENELEC).

Accreditation body BELAC (ISO/IEC 17011) + regulation (EC) No 765/2008

Proficiency testing providers
ISO/IEC 17043

Verification bodies for greenhouse gas emissions
ISO/IEC 14065 and Regulation (EU) No 600/2012

EMAS verifiers
ISO/IEC 17021 + Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009

Certification bodies for products
ISO/IEC 17065

Certification bodies for management systems
ISO/IEC 17021

Certification bodies for persons
ISO/IEC 17024

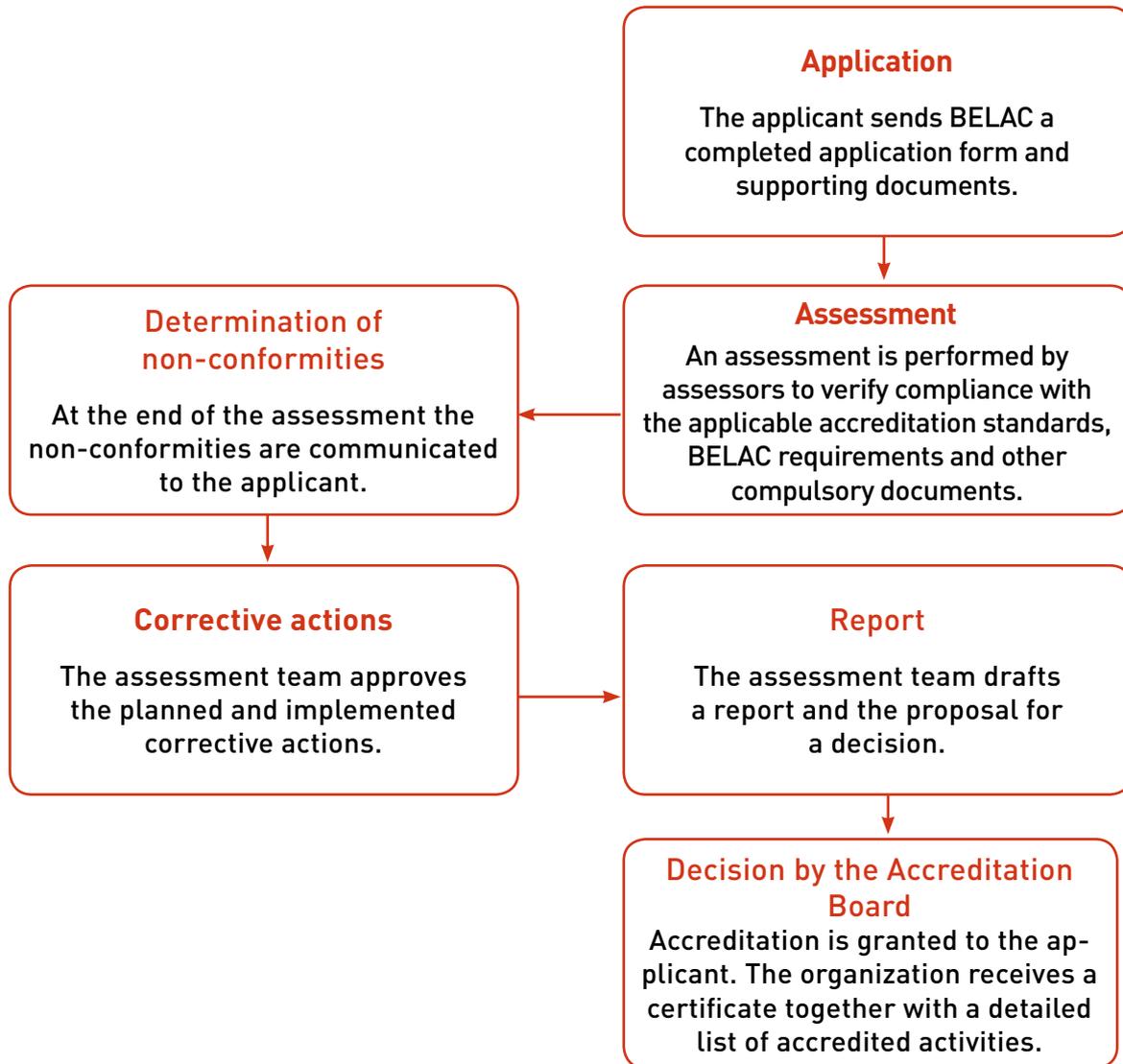
Test and calibration laboratories	ISO/IEC 17025
Medical laboratories	ISO 15189

Inspection bodies
ISO/IEC 17020

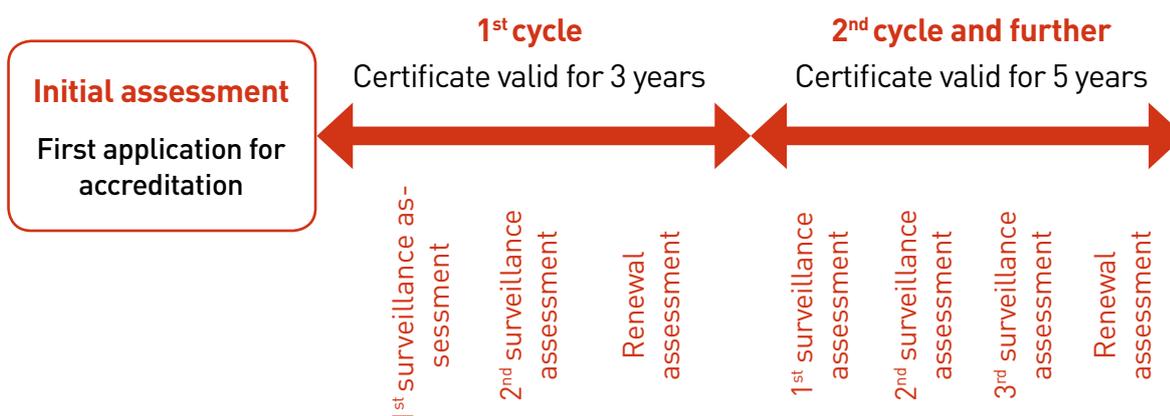
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Accreditation: how?

The accreditation process

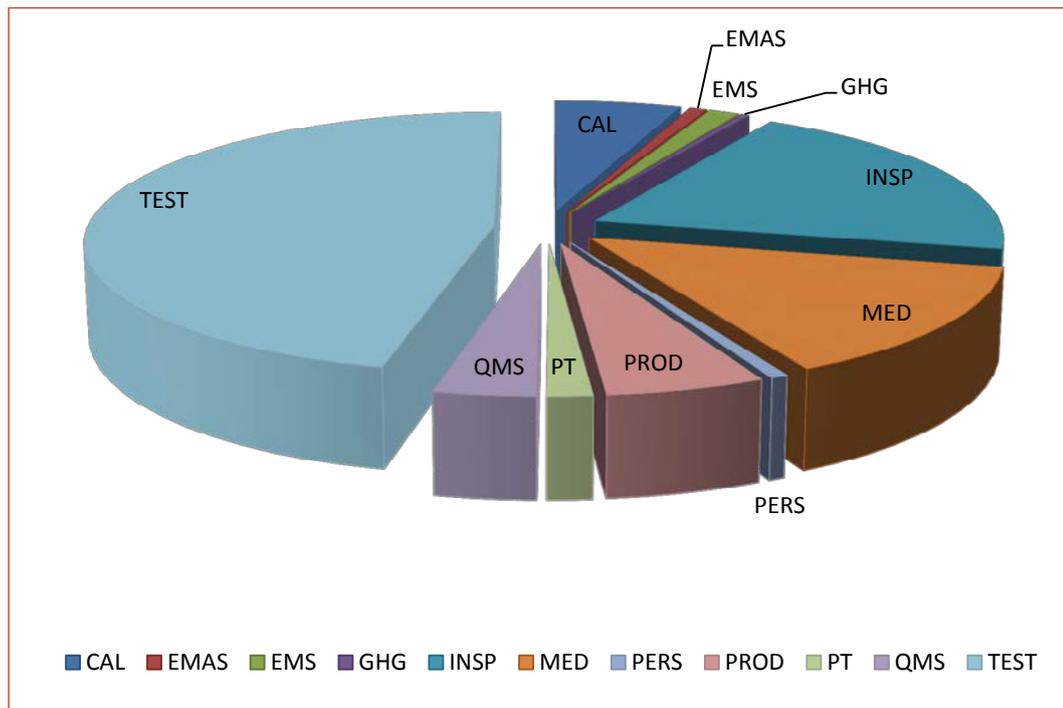


The accreditation cycle



BELAC in 2015: a survey of activities

The accreditation of laboratories



348 laboratories

33 calibration laboratories (CAL)

(ISO/IEC 17025)

Calibration of measuring instruments – different physical units (temperature, dimension, pressure, mass, dimensional and electrical quantities,...)

234 testing laboratories (TEST)

(ISO/IEC 17025)

Determination of composition or characteristics of products: food and feed, environment, construction products, textile, mechanical and electrical safety,...

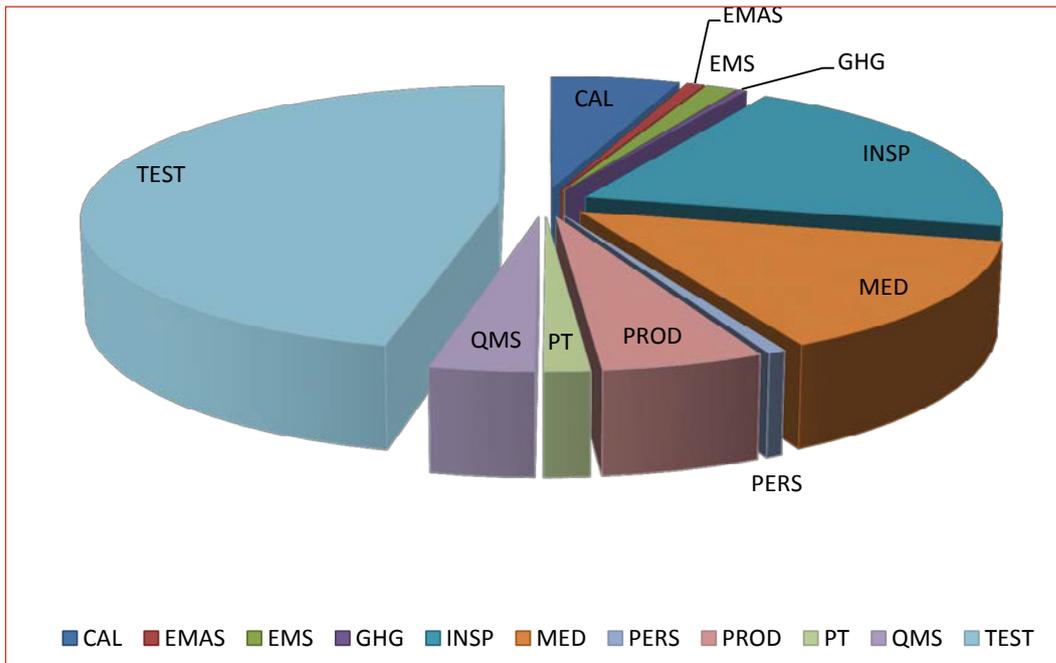
73 medical laboratories (MED) (ISO 15189)

Human samples – chemistry, microbiology, virology, haematology, serology, genetics, pathology,...

8 proficiency testing providers (PT) (ISO/IEC 17043)

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The accreditation of inspection, certification and verification bodies



106 inspection bodies (INSP) (ISO/IEC 17020)

Activities in the non-regulated and regulated sectors (periodical control or activities as notified bodies in the framework of European harmonized legislation) – lifts, pressure vessels, electrical installations, hygiene, production processes, ...

52 certification bodies: Activities in the non-regulated and regulated sectors (including activities as notified bodies in the framework of European harmonized legislation

18 management system certification bodies (MS)
(ISO/IEC 17021)

ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 22000, ISO 13485, Belgian regulated certification schemes,...

29 certification of products bodies (PROD)
(ISO/IEC 17065)

Product labels, regulatory and private certification schemes - food, industry equipment (lifts, pressure, machinery), transport, fire protection, ...

3 certification of persons bodies (PERS)
(ISO/IEC 17024)

Welders, industrial painters, installers of fire-resistant doors

2 verification and validation bodies GHG (ISO/IEC 14065 + regulation (EU) No 600/2012)

BELAC in the international framework



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In Europe, national accreditation bodies are organized under the auspices of the European co-operation of Accreditation (EA). EA members may also be members of the two organizations with worldwide representation – the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

About EA

EA is appointed by the European Commission via regulation (EC) No 765/2008, Article 14, to manage the accreditation infrastructure within the EU, EFTA and candidate countries.

Established in 1997, the organization is a non-profit association of nationally recognized accreditation bodies. It is responsible for harmonizing accreditation within Europe, with the aim of reducing barriers to trade and protecting health, safety and environment.

About ILAC

ILAC is the international authority in the field of laboratory and inspection accreditation, with its members consisting of accreditation bodies and affiliated organizations throughout the world.

About IAF

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is a global association of accreditation bodies, certification body associations and other organizations involved in conformity assessment activities in a variety of fields, including management systems, products, services and personnel.

EA, ILAC and IAF promote the increased use and acceptance by industry as well as regulators of the results from accredited conformity assessment bodies, including results from accredited organizations in other countries. EA, ILAC and IAF liaise with many international bodies and stakeholders to achieve shared objectives.

For more information: EA: www.european-accreditation.org

ILAC: www.ilac.org

IAF: www.iaf.nu

BELAC is a member of EA, ILAC and IAF and contributes actively to the international activities.



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BELAC in the Multilateral Agreement (MLA)

The members of EA may become signatories to the EA Multilateral Agreement (EA MLA) that promotes the recognition and acceptance of the equivalence and reliability of their individual accreditation services; this implies the recognition of the certificates and reports issued by the organizations they accredit (conformity assessment results).



The EA MLA is fully in line with the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade by the World Trade Organization (WTO). This agreement strongly encourages countries to recognize the results of other countries' conformity assessments such as testing, examination, inspection, calibration, verification and certification.

National accreditation bodies are admitted to the MLA only after stringent evaluation of their operations by a peer evaluation team to determine continued compliance with ISO/IEC 17011, the internationally recognized standard for accreditation bodies.

Market confidence in the EA MLA and the conformity assessment results provided by organizations accredited by EA MLA signatories support the free movement of goods and services in Europe and the rest of the world by acting as a "passport for trade" through elimination of the need for products and services to be retested, recalibrated, reinspected or recertified in each country which they are imported and sold.

The EA MLA is recognized at internationally level by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). Reports or certificates provided by organizations accredited by EA MLA signatories are also recognized by the signatories of the ILAC and IAF multilateral agreements.

BELAC is signatory of the:

- EA MLA for the accreditation of calibration, testing and medical laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies for management systems, products and persons, GHG verification bodies.
- ILAC MRA (Mutual Recognition Arrangement) for the accreditation of calibration, testing and medical laboratories and inspection bodies.
- IAF MLA for the accreditation of certification bodies for management systems (ISO 9001, ISO 14001) and products.

The EA Multilateral Agreement (MLA) reduces barriers to trade

The international recognition of accreditation facilitates the access to the markets, through the demonstration of the equivalence of the conformity assessment services and of the reliability of their results. Once tested or certified by an accredited conformity assessment body, products and services may be exported without the need for retesting or recertification for each new market.

“Tested, inspected, certified once... Accepted everywhere”

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