



ACTIVITY REPORT 2019 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL QUALITY AND SAFETY



FPS Economy, S.M.E.s, Self-employed and Energy

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Foreword

Dear reader,

On the following pages, we would like to show you once again the scope of the missions and activities of the Directorate-General Quality and Safety. It is an opportunity to underline the importance for all economic operators - from ordinary citizens, who as consumers, can choose from an almost limitless range of products and services, to the vast array of producers and distributors in a market that is developing at an ever-increasing pace.

New products and technological innovations are giving a new face to this huge market every day and they challenge our administration, responsible for monitoring it. Our course of action does not change and continues to closely follow the prescriptions of the basic missions entrusted to us by the legislator and the executive branch; namely "creating the conditions for a competitive, sustainable and balanced operation of the technical goods and services market by regulating, enforcing, investigating and coordinating". Over the years, taking up this challenge has become less and less self-evident, with the simultaneous freezing of budgetary resources and recruitment. That is why I would like to start by thanking all our employees who succeed in this every day. Our quality system is an almost unique model within the federal public service and our process management methods are important assets in this respect.

Of course, we also need to prioritize our inspection campaigns and our investments in research and development. Thereby, you will see that this year we have focused on the safety of children, leisure items, elevators and fireworks in the product area. In metrology, our campaigns led us to control the scales in slaughterhouses and meat cutting plants, weighing instruments (hospitals, household waste, fruit and vegetables), measuring instruments in car maintenance centres, LPG pumps and prepackages (fruit and vegetables for sale at producers, ice cream, etc.).

We also work towards policy preparation and application of solid regulations that take the current state of the technique into account. We make sure that all stakeholders, such as manufacturers, importers, distributors, laboratories, inspection bodies.... are aware of this regulation. In some areas, we also carry out research or play a coordinating role. So, we are working on the development of a better normative framework.

Through this reading you will discover that our activities go beyond products safety and metrology services. Indeed, our activities also include nanotechnology, trust services, standardization and accreditation, sand mining on the continental shelf, contractors and building products.

I hope you enjoy reading!

Chris Van der Cruyssen
Director General a.i.

1. Our mission within the FPS Economy

Our directorate-general defined its mission on the basis of the mission and vision of the FPS Economy. In all of our daily activities, we should ask ourselves continually: are we assisting the companies and in particular the SMEs? Are we protecting consumers and is our action as efficient and effective as possible? Companies should do their utmost to respect the regulations with regard to consumer protection. Nevertheless, we are fully aware that there is no such thing as zero risk and that all regulatory and executive measures should be based on the principle of proportionality.

The mission of the directorate-general can, therefore, be summarized as follows: “**Ensuring a competitive and balanced operation of the technical goods and services market, by regulating, authorizing, enforcing, investigating and coordinating.**”

1.1. Vision

The Directorate-General Quality and Safety strives to be a **reliable partner** for all its stakeholders. It communicates in a transparent way with all parties involved. In its actions, it pays **specific attention to consumers and businesses, particularly SMEs**. Its initiatives must be supported by all parties involved and should be as simple and practical as possible. Its employees excel by their technical and scientific knowledge; their impartiality makes them the ideal reference for questions concerning the application of legislation.



1.2. Goals

On the basis of the mission and vision of the directorate-general, the main objectives can be defined by **three strategic axes** that match perfectly with the strategic matrix of the FPS Economy:

1. **Guaranteeing consumer safety** by supervising the domains that run the greatest risks;
2. **Promoting a sustainable and competitive economy** by supporting innovative companies in producing high-quality products and services, through conformity assessment, knowledge transfer and an efficient and effective standardization policy;
3. Developing the directorate-general into a **knowledge centre**: installing a “**level playing field**”, so that companies can operate competitively and consumers can buy reliable products and services. This is why the Directorate-General is also involved in applied research (e.g. in scientific metrology, marine environment and nanometrology).

These three strategic axes can be translated into **six strategic goals**:

1. Ensuring an efficient protection of the users (consumers) with regard to the quality and safety of products and services, by directing the available resources at those products and services that run the greatest risk to consumers/users;
2. Strengthening the role of the FPS Economy as Belgian key player within the European framework of technical regulations;
3. Standing out by its technical and scientific knowledge;
4. Increasing the confidence that economic operators, users (consumers) and organizations place in the unified goods and services market;
5. Developing a policy that benefits competitiveness and innovation;
6. Implementing the policy within an organisation that respects the values of the FPS Economy, with highly motivated personnel, in line with the concept of the “new working practices”.



2. An overview of our activities and statistics

2.1. Promoting a sustainable and competitive economy

We support companies in their innovation efforts, so that they can deliver high-quality products and services. For this purpose, we use conformity assessments, knowledge transfer and an efficient and effective standardization policy.

Accreditation of conformity assessment bodies

BELAC, the Belgian national accreditation institution for conformity assessment bodies, continued to work on its legal basis, in accordance with the recognized criteria at European and international level (Regulation EC 765/2008, standard ISO/IEC 17011:2017 and the related documents of EA, ILAC, IAF and FALB). BELAC was, thus, able to maintain its status as signatory of the international recognition agreements between accreditation bodies of EA, ILAC, IAF and FALB (EMAS) - it also participates actively in the activities of these organizations.

The total number of **active accreditation certificates** amounted to **585** at the end of 2019. About **24,500 audit days** were performed with the assistance of some **220 external auditors** in 2019, i.e. an increase of more than 6 % compared to the end of 2018. BELAC also continued to make considerable investments in the introduction of a training programme adapted to its needs.

A better framework for standardization activities

The management agreement signed in 2018 between the Bureau for Standardization (NBN) and the FPS Economy, its supervisory authority, enabled a better follow-up of the management of the annual grant received by the NBN from the FPS Economy for the execution of its tasks of general interest. After a first year of implementation, we see that the allocated resources are put to better use and more clearly justified.

Additionally, the FPS Economy also provided financial support for 27 prestandardization projects in order to contribute to the development of standards for which scientific knowledge must be developed. Moreover, an in-depth analysis was carried out of the system of standards antennas, which raise awareness among SMEs and inform them about the importance of standards and standardization. It will lead to a reform of the system to better justify the grants awarded and to better meet the expectations of SMEs. The first phase of the reform, which concerns reporting, will enter into force from 2020.

Status quo in the number of applications for recognition as a contractor

The number of **applications for recognition as a contractor** did not increase in 2019. It amounted to **3,418**, which is an average of 285 requests for advice per month. 3,299 applications were submitted by Belgian companies and 119 by foreign companies, mainly from neighboring countries (51 from the Netherlands, 14 from Germany, 18 from France and 9 from Luxembourg). The **total number of accredited contractors** remained stable in 2019 and still amounts to **10,500**.

Building products: intensive consultation and increasing number of inspections

The Building Regulations Department is the competent authority for implementing the European regulation (EU) 305/2011, which stipulates harmonised conditions for the placing on the market of construction products.

So far, the scope of some 400 harmonised standards has been studied, some 300 of which have already been reviewed in recent years, and as a result 30 product lists with the corresponding harmonized standards were published on the [website](#) of the FPS Economy (You can find them under the question "How can I check the compatibility of the product with the scope of the harmonised standard?").

The service is also in charge of the notification of notified bodies to the European Commission. In 2019, three of these bodies requested an extension of their scope. These were BCCA, WOOD. BE and the fire testing laboratory of l'Université de Liège. Five bodies (AIB Vinçotte, ANPI, INISMa, OCAB-OCBS, PROBETON) had their scope updated as a result of the release of a new version of the standard and part of the scope of one body, namely VITO, department CERTIPRO, was withdrawn.

The Building Regulations department also takes part in the market surveillance for construction products covered by a harmonised technical regulation. It carries out checks either on the basis of complaints or proactively. In 2018, 10 formal complaints were registered, 1 of which was the subject of a warning report, 4 were closed following an exchange of information by mail and 5 are still being processed. The proactive market surveillance campaigns reflect to what extent regulations are followed in a certain sector. A total of 283 companies were visited.

Table 1. Market surveillance campaigns for building products

Proactive checks	Number
Smoke detectors	36
Electric cables	56
Individual heating appliances	34
Load bearing structures	101
Floor coverings	84
Natural stone	68
EPDM membranes	28
Facades : insulation elements	77
Facades : vapour barriers	22
Facades : cladding elements	81
Fire detection and fire alarm systems EN 54-12	9
Preparations and mixtures art. 31 and 33 Reach	63
Reactive checks	6
Market analysis – product codes (*)	85

(*) Market analysis for the purpose of developing lists of harmonised standards for each product area, to be published subsequently on the website of the FPS Economy.

Source: FPS Economy.

This brings the total of

- products checked to 750,
- companies visited to 283
- man-days worked to 181.5.

The innovation bonus, a support for innovative processes

The innovation bonus gives companies the opportunity to reward their creative employees with a bonus that is completely exempt both from taxes and social security contributions. The FPS Economy approves applications from companies based on the innovative nature of the projects. In 2019, the FPS Economy assessed 1,185 applications within an average period of 5 working days, of which approximately 95 % were approved - in 15 % of the cases additional information was requested. In 2019, more than 300 companies benefited from the exemption of innovation bonuses.

Optimisation of the supervision of sand mining at sea

Major steps were taken in 2019 in the management of sand mining at sea. Indeed, a new reference surface was defined for the vertical boundary of the sand mining in each of the extraction sectors. This reference surface is based on scientific criteria (geology and bathymetry) and was validated by a report on the impact on coastal safety. This reference area combines the sustainable management of the raw material and the limitation of the environmental impact of sand mining on the marine habitats, in accordance with the existing regulations.

For more information, please consult the page relating to [the activities of the Continental Shelf Service](#).

Electronic trust services

The eIDAS Regulation of the European Union (Regulation (EU) N° 910/1014) on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions entered into force on 1 July 2016. The regulation aims to support the online economy by allowing the cross-border use of a number of essential electronic trust services – such as electronic signatures, electronic seals and electronic time stamps – within the European Union. The eIDAS cell of the Metrological Regulations Departement was designated to monitor the providers of electronic trust services in Belgium and in order to reinforce the confidence of users of such services. With the aim of being included on the list of qualified trust service providers (the so-called “Trusted List”), they must submit a conformity assessment report and a corresponding certificate of compliance with the eIDAS regulation to the supervisory authority. Since the entry into force of the eIDAS Regulation, 9 Belgian companies have been included on this trusted list of qualified providers of electronic trust services.



2.2. Guaranteeing consumer safety by monitoring high-risk domains

Market surveillance campaigns: safety of children, leisure items, lifts and fireworks as the main focal points in 2019

In order to guarantee user safety while ensuring fair competition between the economic operators, we conduct proactive inspection campaigns every year. In addition to our national campaigns, we also participate in European surveillance campaigns to monitor a broader market segment.

In 2019, the safety of fireworks, children and leisure items figured among the priorities. The Safety Division was active in the inspection campaigns on fireworks, climbing equipment, hoverboards, sun blinds, CO detectors, anchor points, cream whippers, child bicycle seats, batteries, personal (motorized) transporters and toys (toy drones, soft stuffed toys and slimes).

The safety of lifts also remains a primary concern. The inspection campaign on the modernisation of lifts continues to have a positive impact on the safety of the targeted lifts. In addition, more than 230 questions were answered from owners, managers and companies on that theme.

In 2019, a total of 974 case files on product safety were handled. 556 of these were opened following a request for advice from the customs service. Half of those files (277) concerned toys.

Table 2. Number of case files handled in relation to product safety in 2019

Regulation	Number of cases
General product safety	117
Pressure equipment	19
Products appearing to be other than they are	1
New lifts	22
Machines	176
Personal protective equipment	115
Pyrotechnic articles	58
Toys	390
Playground equipment	2
Aerosol dispensers	2
Other	74
Total	974

Source: FPS Economy.

Table 3. Cases related to product safety, opened in 2019 at the request of the Customs services

Regulation	Number of customs case files
Personal protective equipment	56
Toys	277
Machines	96
General product safety	54
Other	73
Total	556

Source: FPS Economy.

The Central Contact Point checks dangerous products. Producers and distributors are required to immediately inform it by mail or through the European Business Alert Gateway¹, if they have information on the dangerousness of products or services that they put on the market, or in case of an accident caused by such an unsafe product or service. The Central Contact Point also receives complaints from consumers/users regarding a dangerous product. In addition, it is the Belgian point of contact within the Rapid Alert System, the European system for the exchange of information on products posing a serious risk.

Table 4. Notifications treated by the Central Contact Point in 2019

		Safety	Mobility	Energy	Public Health	Construction	Explosives	Justice	Total	Belgium	Customs
RAPEX	Art. 12*	692	524	245	569	0	9	0	2,039	49	778
	Art. 11*	48	4	26	4	0	0	0	82	0	43
	For information*	70	1	12	73	1	0	0	157	0	64
Complaints		33	0	9	6	0	1	0	49	0	0
Recalls		157	149	63	11	0	0	0	380	0	0
Total		1,000	678	355	663	1	10	0	2,707	49	885
Total number of notifications											
Total number of RAPEX									2,278		

* Art. 11 and art. 12 of the General Product Safety Directive (2001/95/EC): art. 12: serious risk, art. 11 non-serious risk, for information: no risk identified but lack of information.

Source: FPS Economy.

1 The online platform where producers can notify to the authorities of all member states the voluntary measures they have taken regarding a dangerous product.

Supervision of the services market

The following routine checks were performed in:

- 470 playgrounds;
- 5 amusement parks;
- 26 fairground attractions;
- 20 active and extreme leisure activities.

Moreover, 16 complaints and reports were investigated. Complaints related to, among other things, the safety of playgrounds, active leisure activities and lifts. Finally, 39 reports of accidents and incidents were investigated.

Explosives and gases: safe use and transport

Explosives

Table 5. Activities and inspections in the field of explosives for civil use and pyrotechnic articles

Description	Number
Complaints Investigations of accidents, incidents	7
Commissioning inspections	21
Routine inspections of storage sites for fireworks	229
Routine inspections of storage sites for explosives	191
Inspections of ADR vehicles	276
Inspections of the setting off of fireworks	11
Inspections of blasting works in quarries	47
Inspections of blasting works other than in quarries (open cast mines etc.)	3
Seveso inspections	19
Shipping-related cases	40
Exams for ADR drivers (mainly of the Ministry of Defence)	209
Tests for approved co-drivers	61
Tests for authorized blasters (quarries)	28
Permits, derogations	3
Product approval	27
Transport	25
Checks in distribution centres of parcel delivery services using sniffer dogs – number of parcels checked	867

Source: FPS Economy.

In the field of explosives, the manufacture, storage, sale, transport and use are covered by a legal framework and subject to supervision. In 2019, the Safety Division issued 654 national and 58 European permits for the transport of explosives and carried out technical inspections of the vehicles transporting these products.

147 technical opinions were given to local authorities issuing permits to explosives manufacturers and economic operators requesting permission to store explosives and fireworks, as well as 64 opinions on folkloric marches. For the appealed storage permits, a Royal decree was published in 2019 and 3 other procedures are, currently, ongoing.

A first draft revision of the explosives legislation was proposed in 2018. The project includes a draft Royal decree on the storage, manufacture, transport, delivery and use of explosives and four ministerial implementing decrees. The project was developed further in 2019. In parallel to this revision, technical meetings were organized in order to develop technical notes on retail fireworks storage, retail ammunition storage, the loading of cartridges for personal use and the storage of gunpowder for use during folkloric marches.

The FPS Economy took samples of CE marked fireworks (cat. F1 and F2) and P1 articles on the Belgian market for inspection purposes. These were articles that were stored in wholesale depots during the period October - November 2019. A total of 28 types of articles were sampled. And they were tested by an accredited laboratory. The follow-up and possible measures are scheduled for 2020. The [inspection report](#) is available on the website of the FPS Economy.

As in 2018, an investigation was also carried out in 2019 into illegal sending of fireworks by means of postal parcels. Such shipments are of great concern, partly because unauthorised persons are able to obtain relatively powerful explosives through this channel, partly because those packages of explosive goods are not correctly marked at the time of dispatch. And so, in the event of an accident during transport, the emergency services are not aware of the dangerous cargo on board. Sniffer dogs that can detect fireworks were used to check postal parcels. The tracking dogs sniffed 867 parcels at 16 postal and courier companies. No illegal shipments were found. However, it does not mean that the problem disappeared. Recently a parcel with fireworks was found by the customs services. The experience gained will be useful for future checks.

20 checks on internet sales were carried out. In the case of 17 checks of websites and social media channels (Facebook...), it was found that fireworks were delivered by mail or sold illegally on the street.



Gas

The Directorate-General Quality and Safety monitors public safety in the context of underground gas storage, gas transport through pipelines and gas distribution.

Table 6. Checks of underground gas storage, gas transport and gas distribution in 2019

Type of check	Number
Underground gas storage	2
Gas transport through pipelines	25
Gas distribution through pipelines	100
Works in proximity to pipelines	63
Total	190

Source: FPS Economy.

Table 7. Investigation of gas incidents involving underground gas storage, gas transport and gas distribution

Type	Number
Underground gas storage	1
Gas transport through pipelines	1
Gas distribution through pipelines	55
Total	57

Source: FPS Economy.

Table 8. Investigation of complaints in relation to underground gas storage, gas transport and gas distribution

Type	Number
Underground gas storage	0
Gas transport through pipelines	34
Gas distribution through pipelines	3
Total	37

Source: FPS Economy.

Routine checks and inspection campaigns in metrology

The Metrology division is in charge of the supervision of measuring instruments and conditioned products (such as prepackages).

In 2016, the inspection services of the Metrology Division obtained the ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation as an inspection body for the inspections of automatic and non-automatic weighing instruments, in 2017 for the inspections of fuel pumps.

In 2019, the Metrology Division's inspection services inspected 10,123 non-automatic weighing instruments (scales), 685 automatic weighing instruments and 3,760 fuel pumps (petrol / diesel / gas oil). A limited number of instruments were decommissioned.

Table 9. Global overview of the checks of measuring instruments performed by the units Inspection Metrology North and Inspection Metrology South

	Type of check						Grand total	Result of the check				
	Administrative check	Technical check initiated by the Metrology Department	Technical check requested by the client	Initial verification	Periodical verification	Surveillance		Conform	Rejected	Decision deferred	Warning	Out-of-court settlement or police report
Weights M1	0	0	0	333	12,200	0	12,533	12,527	6	0	0	0
Weights in verification room	11	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	0	0	0	0
Masses	0	0	0	0	1,188	0	1,188	1,188	0	0	0	0
Water meters	0	0	364	0	8,637	0	9,001	8,906	95	0	0	0
Gas meters	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	7	0	0	0	0
Automatic gauges	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	0	0
Fixed storage tanks	12	0	0	70	156	0	238	235	3	0	0	0
Pumps for CNG	10	0	0	69	173	0	252	251	0	0	1	0
Pumps for LPG	32	105	0	0	0	0	137	112	7	0	16	2
Two-stroke pumps	17	6	0	0	27	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
Fuel pumps (gasoline/diesel/gas oil)	2,999	761	0	0	0	0	3,760	3,176	62	0	406	116
Measuring equipment on tank trucks	16	1	0	2	5	0	24	21	0	0	2	1
Dipstick volume measurement systems on tank trucks	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	0	0
Additive pumps on tank trucks	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Loading stations for liquids	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-automatic weighing instruments	9,368	755	0	0	0	0	10,123	8,817	52	45	1,180	29
Automatic weighing instruments	909	11	0	0	764	1	1,685	1,537	32	25	87	4
Grand total	13,394	1,639	371	475	23,150	1	39,030	36,859	257	70	1,692	152

Source: FPS Economy.

Apart from audit operations and routine checks, the Metrology Division carried out **9 specific inspection campaigns**:

- three specific inspection campaigns on prepacked goods: Prepackages of fruits and vegetables for sale from growers - including vending machines - of ice cream and mussels.

- six specific inspection campaigns on measuring instruments:
 - balances in slaughterhouses and meat cutting plants and reweighing of carcasses in slaughterhouses;
 - inspection of the periodic verification of weighing instruments used in hospitals;
 - weighing instruments in household waste collection systems;
 - weighing instruments at fruits and vegetable growers;
 - checking the calibration status of the measuring instruments used in vehicle maintenance centres;
 - LPG pumps in petrol stations.

Table 10. Checks of measuring instruments and conditioned products

Type	Number of checks
Weights and masses	13,732
Water meters	9,001
Gas meters	7
Automatic gauges	10
Fixed-storage tanks	238
Pumps for CNG	252
Pumps for LPG	137
Two-stroke pumps	50
Fuel pumps (gasoline/diesel/gas oil)	3,760
Measuring equipment and additive pumps on tank trucks	35
Loading stations for liquids	0
Non-automatic weighing instruments	10,123
Automatic weighing instruments	685
Taximeters	34
Batches of conditioned products	899

Source: FPS Economy.

2.3. Setting up a knowledge centre and a “level playing field”

A knowledge centre and a “level playing field” allow:

- companies to work competitively;
- consumers to buy reliable products and services.

In 2019, the National Standards and Continental Shelf services took part in the activities of the European Metrology Network (EMN), dedicated to the climate and the oceans. Scientists from both services work together in defining the European research strategy with a view to building confidence in the quality of environmental measurements. Emphasis is placed on in-situ temperature measurements for climate purposes and on the use of acoustic data in the marine environment to assess the impact of human activities. In 2019, the latter theme was the subject of a poster presentation at the International Conference on Metrology CIM2019.



World Metrology Day

World Metrology Day on 20 May was dedicated to the renewal of the definitions of the units of measurement on 20 May 2019. The National Standards Unit organised a study day on the subject that attracted a lot of interest. On this study day, presentations were given about the current and future definitions, the benefit of the change and its impact on our society.

The international definitions of our units of measurement changed on 20 May 2019. The 7 basic units for time (second), distance (meter), mass (kilogram), temperature (Kelvin), current (ampere), light intensity (candela) and amount of matter (mol) are now all based on natural constants. These constants are set out in the new definitions. More information about this can be found on the website of the Bureau International des Poids and Mesures (BIPM) : www.bipm.org.

Calibration activities

The National Standards Service offered calibrations in the following domains:

- nanometrology ;
- dimensional metrology ;
- electric measurements ;
- masses ;
- volumes ;
- thermometry ;
- time and frequencies.

In 2019, 1,308 instruments and references were calibrated by the National Standards Unit and 362 calibration certificates were issued containing 2,567 calibration results.

The National Standards Service manages and coordinates the Belmet network, i.e. the network of metrology laboratories that undertake the primary measurement standards and provide traceability for the measurement units for which the National Standards Service does not have the necessary infrastructure. The laboratories must have an ISO / IEC 17025 accreditation for those facilities and meet additional requirements. The approvals have a validity of 3 years and are renewable.

Developing a knowledge centre for metrology

In 2019, the National Standards Service continued to develop its nanometrology department. The nanometrology activities focus mainly on the dimensional characterization of nanoparticles and the concentration of these according to their dimensions. The measurements concentrate on the range of nanoparticles from 10 nanometers to 100 nanometers, the dimensions which are supposed to involve the most risks.

The operation of the cleanroom for nanometrology was perfected. The laboratory took part in a ring test of measurements of nanoparticles in a liquid medium using the instruments FFF-MALS-DLS in the framework of the French 'nanoclub', led by the French national metrology and testing laboratory LNE.

As part of the ISO / IEC 17025 accreditation of the nanometrology lab for determining the dimensions of spherical particles, a new method of uncertainty calculation has been introduced and is being further developed. The effect of air temperature and humidity during a measurement with atomic force microscopy was evaluated by the nanometrology laboratory as part of a European project of the EMPIR program, the 3DNano project: Traceable three-dimensional nanometrology.

The National Standards Service actively participates in the European [EMPIR](#) program (European Metrology Program for Innovation and Research). The project is part of the European Horizon 2020 project. The aim is innovative metrology research and development in a coordinated collaboration between national metrology institutes, academies and the industry. The project coordinates research projects to address major challenges and at the same time support and develop the SI system for units of measurement.

Within the framework of this programme, the National Standards Service participated in the following projects in 2019:

- SIB01: FreeForm II: a project for the optimisation of the measurement uncertainties and of the mathematical models in the calibrations of free form surfaces;
- SIB09 3D Nano: Development of three-dimensional measurements with atomic force microscopes. The task of the laboratory is to determine the influence of environmental conditions on determining the dimensions of nanoparticles, by using its climate chamber;
- 17NRM05 EMUE: Development of calculation examples of measurement uncertainty for inclusion in the GUM (Guide for Uncertainty of Measurement);
- 17NRM04 NPSize: Normative progress in the establishment of a traceability chain for measuring the size of nanoparticles;
- 18NRM03 INCIPIT: Developing methods and calibration procedures for new techniques for measuring atmospheric precipitation.

On an international level, the National Standards Service works with national metrology institutes and other organisations to achieve the international time. It is done through our participation in the “key comparison in time, CCTF-K001.UTC”, the results of which are published monthly, and the realisation of UTCr, the results of which are published weekly. Since November 2016, our realisation of UTC (Coordinated Universal Time), UTC (SMD), is controlled by our hydrogen clock, type VREMYA.

In the field of time and frequency, the atomic clocks of the National Standards Service contribute to the international time and the necessary preparations have been started for the distribution of the legal time in Belgium.

At the beginning of 2019, the National Standards Department started a project for the distribution of the reference time scale UTC (SMD).

Since 2017, we have been a partner in a project with the ESA (European Space Agency), which includes a clock comparison via a transnational optical link between Brussels and Noordwijk in the Netherlands. The final part was presented on 13 September, 2019 in ESTEC (ESA) in Noordwijk. In the future, the results of this project can be used for testing on a larger scale.

The FPS Economy was also one of the organisers of the International Conference of Metrology CIM 2019 (<http://www.cim2019.com/home.html>). Members of the National Standards Service contributed to the scientific and organising committees and presented several papers.

In 2019, the National Standards Service, in collaboration with EURAMET, organised a workshop that brought together more than 30 representatives from European national metrology institutes. Each year, this initiative offers the opportunity to take stock jointly of the communication actions of each country and Euramet. 2019 was marked by the arrival of the new international system of units and was, thus, rich in communication. The specific theme of this year’s workshop was the impact of communication and its adaptation to the target audience.

In 2019, the National Standards Service started the refurbishment of its internet pages, as part of a general initiative at the Metrology Division. In the first phase, for example, the pages intended for consumers and companies were updated. The main goal of this effort is to communicate to our stakeholders the progress and focus of our projects (research activities, development of laboratory infrastructure, international cooperation, communication), which we perform in parallel with the routine calibrations. A third section, with the most detailed technical and scientific information, will follow in 2020. Our ambition is to provide the information best suited to the interests of each target group.



3. New regulations

In 2019, there were few new regulations. The ones which were adopted were mainly aimed at partially amending the existing regulations, including through the law of 2 May 2019 containing various provisions regarding the economy, which amended the regulations regarding accreditation and those relating to construction products.

3.1. Safety of products and services

Law of 2 May 2019 containing various provisions regarding the economy.

Royal decree of 29 July 2019 amending the Royal Decree of 19 January 2011 on the safety of toys, with regard to the migration limits for chromium (VI).

Royal decree of 2 September 2019 on the transport by road or rail of explosive substances to take into account scientific and technical progress.

Royal decree of 20 December, 2019 amending the Royal decree of 20 October, 2015 relating to the making available on the market of pyrotechnic articles.

3.2. Recognition of contractors

Ministerial decree of 3 May 2019 amending the Ministerial decree of 27 September 1991 regarding the documents to be submitted for the applications for recognition, provisional recognition, transfer of recognition or the assessment of the certificates required in application of Article 3, § 1, of the law of 20 March 1991, regulating the recognition of contractors.

3.3. Metrology

Royal decree of 29 July, 2019 amending the Royal decree of 6 July, 1981 on instruments used for measuring electrical energy.

4. Our quality policy to serve you better

The quality policy within an organisation can only be effective, if the management defends it and supports it fully and commits the necessary resources to it.

The DG Quality and Safety focuses on **four quality standards: ISO 9001:2015, ISO/IEC 17025:2017, ISO/IEC 17020:2012 and ISO/IEC 17011:2017**. Their application is not a goal in itself but rather a means of demonstrating that the output of our directorate-general fully supports its mission.

All our processes are conceived as simple as possible and optimised as much as possible. The objectives are defined in the management plan and operational plan of the director-general and are translated into objectives by division and by department.

Every year, before the middle of February, a management review takes place at the highest level and subsequently at service level. During this review, a critical evaluation of past activities, possible improvements and future activities takes place. The long-term aim is to achieve an integrated management system that will not only serve as an example for other directorates-general of the FPS but also for other public organisations. It is the only way we can demonstrate our added value for the companies and consumers. All of this should be combined with professionalism and with the values of our FPS; namely, “At your service”, “Respect”, “Stand together” and “Excellence”.

Internal audits

Internal audits are undertaken to check the proper functioning of the quality system and to improve its effectiveness. These internal audits are imposed by four standards and play a major part in internal control (deontology, internal audit and budget control).

Every year, the activities of all of our services are subject to an internal audit. At each audit, a certain number of activities are thoroughly evaluated, so that fundamental improvements may be implemented on a sound basis. Since 2015, the directorate-general - in order to step up the frequency of these internal audits and their impartiality - has turned to external auditors and organised training sessions for interested staff members.

In 2019, 25 internal audits were performed in accordance with different standards. In addition, external audits took place for these different standards, which confirmed or even prolonged our certification and accreditation.

Since 2016, the Directorate-General Quality and Safety is accredited as a type A inspection body for its inspection activities in the field of automatic and non-automatic weighing instruments, as well as for passenger lifts. This competence was first extended in 2017 to the activities in the field of playgrounds and fuel pumps. In 2019, a further extension was obtained for the activities related to pre-packaging and tensile tests on toys as a laboratory activity.

5. Contacts and useful information

5.1. Contacts and useful addresses

Belspoc

Competences: Belspoc is the unique Belgian contact point created in the context of the information exchange systems set up by European regulations to facilitate the functioning of the internal market. It is involved in the notification of conformity assessment bodies and of draft national technical regulations, in information exchanges between foreign manufacturers and Belgian authorities through the Product Contact Points and also in the transfer of information related to dangerous products.

Tel.: 02 277 53 36 – Email: belspoc@economie.fgov.be

Safety Regulations Unit

Competences: general safety regulations with which the products and services listed in the Code of Economic Law, Book IX, must comply, Central Product Contact Point, RAPEX, explosives and fireworks, etc.

Tel.: 02 277 76 99 – Email: ensure@economie.fgov.be

Building products

Competences: supervises the market for construction products and the notified bodies in the building sector, ensures the follow-up and drafting of the technical regulations, provides the Belgian position internationally, etc.

Email: bocova@economie.fgov.be

Recognition of contractors

Competences: applies the regulations regarding the recognition of contractors and monitors their application (financial investigation, bankruptcy detection...), sector information ...

Email: agreation.entrepreneurs@economie.fgov.be

BELAC – Belgian Accreditation Body

Competences: accredits all types of conformity assessment bodies, develops and maintains the accreditation tool for all technological sectors requesting it, with special attention to the support of innovation, ensures that bodies providing services such as tests, calibrations, inspections and certifications have the competence required for their activities.

Tel.: 02 277 54 34 – Email: belac@economie.fgov.be

Standardization and Competitiveness

Competences: develops and supports the activities in the field of standardisation and protection of intellectual property developed by the collective centres, the standards antennas and the patent cells for the benefit of companies, awards the innovation bonus, manages the European systems for notification of technical regulations and notification of conformity assessment bodies ...

Tel.: 02 277 82 20 - Email: norcom@economie.fgov.be

Continental Shelf Service

Competences: responsible for sand and gravel mining in the Belgian part of the North Sea, its main tasks consist of granting concession permits, managing operating licenses, monitoring sand mining, mapping the zones, ...

Tel.: 02 277 72 77 - Email: copco@economie.fgov.be

Metrology – National Standards

Competences: national measurement standards, metrology, European research programs in the field of metrology (EMPIR and Euramet), nanometrology, inspections ...

Tel.: 02 277 63 23

National Standards: metrology.scientific@economie.fgov.be

Metrology regulations: metrology.regulation@economie.fgov.be

Electronic certification

Competences: supervises the providers of electronic trust services in order to strengthen the confidence of the users of such services.

Email: be.sign@economie.fgov.be

5.2. Our offices

The Directorate-General Quality and Safety has **eight offices**:

❶ [Brussels \(central administration\)](#)

North Gate III
Koning Albert II-laan 16
1000 Brussel

❷ [Antwerp](#)

Theaterbuilding
Italiëlei 124 – bus 85
2000 Antwerpen

❸ [Ghent](#)

Zuiderpoort Office Park
Gaston Crommenlaan 6
9050 Gent

❹ [Hasselt](#)

AC Verwilghen
Voorstraat 43
3500 Hasselt

❺ [Haren](#)

Haachtsesteenweg 1795
1130 Brussel

❻ [Liège](#)

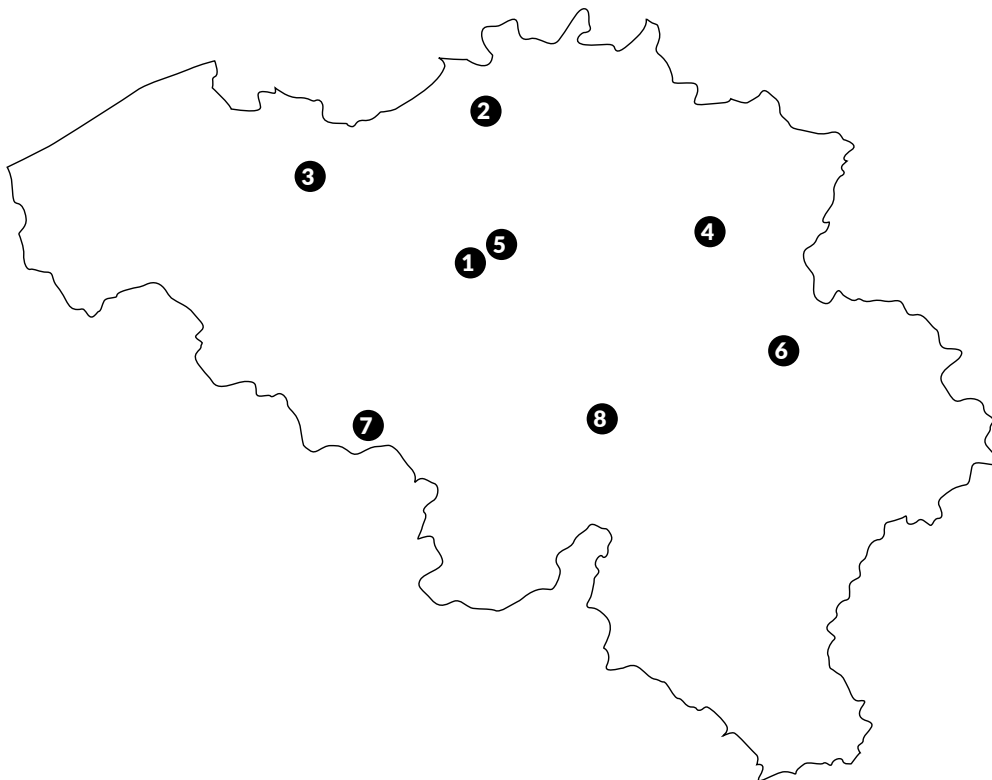
Saint Jean
Boulevard de la Sauvenière 73-75
4000 Liège

❼ [Mons](#)

Avenue Mélina Mercouri, bloc 10
7000 Mons

❽ [Namur \(Belgrade\)](#)

Business Center
Route de Louvain-la-Neuve 4 (bus 8, 9, 10)
5001 Belgrade



5.3. Follow the FPS Economy and our action on social media

Like our Facebook page and get advice on consumer rights, the safety of products and the activities of our FPS. Follow us on Twitter! You will get information about consumer rights, advice for companies and the self-employed.



<https://www.facebook.com/SPFEco>



<https://twitter.com/spfeconomie>



<https://linkedin.com/company/fod-economie>

5.4. Follow the actions of the Continental Shelf Service on Facebook

Through its Facebook page, the service keeps you informed about new research, its results and the scientific work of the FPS Economy.



<https://www.facebook.com/Service-Plateau-Continental-319506274818192/>

5.5. Our new publications in 2019

[Activity Report 2018 of the Directorate-General Quality and Safety](#)

[Activity Report 2018 of the Directorate-General Quality and Safety - Executive summary](#)

[Campagne de contrôle 2018-2019 Hoverboards](#) (French version)

[Ne gâchez pas votre fête - Utilisez les artifices en toute sécurité !](#) (French version)

[Produits d'apparence équivoque](#) (French version)

[Campagne de contrôle européenne JA2016 équipements d'escalade - Résultats belges 2018-2019](#) (French version)

[Rapport de la campagne de contrôle 2018-2019 Détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone](#) (French version)

[Metrology for the nanotechnologies](#)

[Événements pop-up avec des structures gonflables](#) (French version)

[Tableau de comparaison entre les différents arrêtés royaux relatifs à diverses activités de loisirs](#) (French version)

[Questions et réponses sur l'interprétation des dispositions relatives à la sécurité des produits et des services reprises dans le Code de droit économique](#) (French version)

[Campagne de contrôle européenne JA2016 - Porte-enfants & lits pour enfants - Résultats belges 2018-2019](#) (French version)

[Sécurité des espaces naturels de jeu d'aventure](#) (French version)

[Campagne européenne de contrôle JA2016 Jouets électriques - Résultats belges 2018-2019](#) (French version)

[Campagne de contrôle - Jouets pour enfants de moins de 3 ans - 2017-2018](#) (French version)

[Campagnes de contrôle des équipements routiers - Signaux fixes de signalisation routière & dispositifs routiers de retenue Illustration - Rapport final](#) (French version)

[National Standards](#)



FPS Economy, S.M.E.s, Self-employed and Energy

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