

EA enters into a formal partnership with the Commission

The European Accreditation Co-operation (EA) and the European Commission signed a Framework Partnership Agreement in Brussels on June 30, 2010. The signing ceremony was attended by Graham Talbot, EA Chairman and Ms Liliana Brykman, Director on behalf of Mr Heinz Zourek, Director General Enterprise and Industry.

The agreement formalises the relationship between the two organisations that started with the adoption of the new European legislative package, in particular Regulation (EC) 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008, and the recognition of EA as the official European accreditation infrastructure.

Further progress was made with the signing of the *“General Guidelines for the Cooperation between the European co-operation for Accreditation and the European Commission, the European Free Trade Association and the competent National Authorities”* on 1 April 2009 in Brussels.



The partnership agreement sets out the terms and conditions of the relationship, with a view to achieving the common policy aims and objectives stated in the Cooperation Guidelines. It covers a period of four years commencing on 1 January 2010.

EA also signed a *Specific Agreement on an Operating Grant for 2010*, which details financial contributions from the Commission in the form of operating grants for EA to carry out elements of its work as the official accreditation infrastructure in Europe. A similar agreement should be signed with the EFTA countries by the end of the year.

There is still work to be completed, notably establishing the processes and procedures necessary to administer the Specific Agreement on the Operating Grant. The EA Executive Committee will therefore pursue its planned work programme and update stakeholders in due course.

On signing the agreements Graham Talbot commented: “This is a significant achievement for EA and I would like to thank those within EA and the Commission who contributed to reaching this important milestone. EA will strive to carry out its new role with diligence, impartiality, independence and professionalism to ensure that the trust that has been placed in EA is well-founded”.