

# World Scene



The EXPRESS expert panel.

Photo, courtesy of EFTA

## EXPRESS action for Europe

The European Commission wants to ensure that standardization in Europe is responsive to market demands and continues to support public policy needs. The European Commission has asked key players to review standardization in Europe and to make strategic recommendations for its development during the decade to come.

The Expert Panel for the Review of the European Standardization System (EXPRESS) began its work in January 2009 and comprises representatives from member states' public authorities, industry, European and national standards bodies, consumer and environmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

Several CEOs from ISO member bodies take part, as well as Alan Bryden, former ISO Secretary-General, who contributes by bringing an international perspective and outlining global challenges. The EXPRESS Group will deliver its final report in December 2009.

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards\\_policy/review\\_of\\_standardisation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards_policy/review_of_standardisation/index_en.htm)

## ISO standards help to ease trade tensions

The importance of ISO standards in facilitating world trade was underlined at the beginning of March 2009 when they helped relax a ban on the import of Chinese toys into India.

The Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry imposed a six-month ban in January 2009 on grounds of public health and safety. Chinese toys are reported to account for about 60 % of the toy market in India.

The deadlock was eased when India announced on 2 March that it would allow the import of Chinese toys conforming to the specifications of International Standards for toy safety, such as ISO 8124, and accompanied by certificates of conformity issued by laboratories and testing bodies accredited under the Multilateral Agreement of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).

ILAC bases its accreditation activities on conformity assessment standards developed by ISO and its partner, the International Electrotechnical Commission, with the participation of ILAC and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

These standards include ISO/IEC 17025 which gives the requirements for competence for testing and calibration laboratories. An estimated 40 000 laboratories worldwide are accredited to the standard.

ISO, ILAC and IAF recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen their cooperation.

courtesy of Fairplay Shipping Weekly

## Maritime transport to fight climate change

"Maritime transport and the climate change challenge" was the theme of this year's expert meeting on transport and trade facilitation organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in February 2009.

Experts from 33 countries and 10 organizations reviewed the impact of maritime transport on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the consequences of global warming, and measures to mitigate GHG emissions from international shipping.

Presentations were made by academia, research institutions, international organizations, governments, the shipping and port industries, as well as the private sector.

In his keynote address, the Secretary-General of the *Club de Rome*, Mr. Martin Lee (see photo below), highlighted the connection between maritime transport, climate change and the global economic and financial context, and underlined the importance of getting the maritime industry involved for meeting development and sustainability objectives.

Several experts agreed that future initiatives to reduce GHG emissions due to shipping should fall within the auspices of the International Maritime Organization. It was also noted that ISO could be an important contributor based on its experience in developing management standards applied in the field of maritime transport.

The ISO delegation agreed that ISO/TC 8, *Ships and*

*marine technology*, should continue to collaborate with IMO on this subject.

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## Shared waters, shared opportunities

The theme of this year's World Water Day, a UN initiative celebrated on 22 March, was "Transboundary waters: shared waters, shared opportunities." An objective directly and indirectly supported by over 430 ISO International Standards.

World Water Day highlighted the challenges raised by the world's 263 trans-boundary lake and river basins, which include the territory of 145 countries and cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface.

ISO's standards provide practical tools for developing common understanding and cooperation between countries on aspects such as water quality (ISO/TC 147) and measurement (ISO/TC 113), and the management of water supply services (ISO/TC 224), including under crisis conditions (IWA 6:2008). ISO also develops water-related standards for irrigation, plastics piping systems and much more.

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele comments: "As with so many other global challenges, the ISO system has a proven track record of distilling international expertise into globally relevant standards that provide concrete help for achieving public policy goals and objectives, such as those of World Water Day."

