



INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION ORGANISATIONS

Annual Meeting and General Assembly 2006

CEOC International held its **46th General Assembly and Annual Meeting** at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Bucharest, Romania on **22-23 May 2006**.

The event was well attended by over 100 participants who enjoyed the excellent social programme organised by CEOC International's local member, ISCIR, and attended the two day business meetings. Two guest delegations attended the open session of the Annual Meeting, a delegation from China and a delegation from Moldavia, both potentially interested in becoming a member of our organisation.

The 22 May 2006 Open Session of Technical Commissions addressed the topical issue of "The Role of Standardisation in Today's Legislative Approach". The guest speaker Mr. Mario Wittner, chairman of ISO CASCO, delivered a presentation about "Conformity Assessment and Facilitation of Trade". He highlighted the increasing role of conformity assessment over the past years because of a.o. the increasing awareness about environmental issues, the role of ISO 9000, the new legislative trends based on standardisation etc. Mr. Wittner said that the ISO CASCO strategy consists in providing, maintaining and promoting a set of standards extensively used for the implementation, evaluation and recognition of good practices in Conformity Assessment.

Dr. Eberhardt introduced "Recent Trends in EU and International Legislation and Policy". He first addressed the global aspects of conformity assessment (WTO, ISO-CASCO) and said that the standardisation work has progressively moved from European to international level. The question as to whether legislation can be replaced by standards requires careful consideration, he said. He concluded that CEOC International needs a strong involvement in standardisation and legislative work because its members can bring their competence and experience of many years in the field of testing, inspection and the certification of products, persons and systems.

Guy Jacques, chairman of JTC PTC (CEOC-EUROLAB Joint Technical Committee on Product Testing and Certification) raised the question of "The Role of Independent Inspection Bodies". He said that the challenge is increasingly to demonstrate the added value of Independent Inspection Bodies in a world where "better regulation" and "legislative simplification" become key words which could be translated as "deregulation" and "priority to competitiveness". He presented some of the reasons why he feels that independent inspection bodies have a key role to play such as for example the questioned legitimacy of standardization as a regulatory tool, the lack of technical expertise/experience in public authorities and the outsourcing trend. On the other hand, however, some conformity assessment bodies give an image of declining competence which can deteriorate the global image of the activity. Globalisation of the activities also leads to an increasing competition between inspection bodies which could lead to a lowering of the technical level of assessment.

The presentations were followed by a lively debate as to the role of inspection and certification bodies and that of ISO and ISO-CASCO.

The CEOC International Technical Commissions met for short meetings and the CEOC International Board meeting took place alongside the General Assembly.