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Australia hosts IECEx Annual Meetings

The 2009 annual meetings of IECEx, the IEC System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmospheres, took place on 31 August to 4 September 2009 in Melbourne, Australia.

In addition to IECEx Officers, delegates from 29 countries attended the several management meetings and participated in the workshops that were part of the week-long programme. The industry symposium alone had more than 200 participants.



Melbourne, Australia, was the venue for the 2009 annual meetings of IECEx

ExTAG workshop and meeting

The first day was dedicated to an ExTAG (Ex Testing and Assessment Group) workshop divided into two sessions. The morning session consisted of specific training for ExCBs (Ex Certification Bodies) and ExTLs (Ex Testing Laboratories), while the afternoon session was reserved for the training of IECEx Assessors. The workshop was a good opportunity for participants to discuss issues of interest and to exchange views and experiences – all aimed at ensuring cooperation among ExCBs and a common approach by all. Use and control over testing at manufacturer's premises was one of the main points addressed.

The workshop was followed the next day by the ExTAG meeting, where specific technical issues of concern for ExCBs and ExTLs were on the agenda. Michel Brenon from France was reappointed as Secretary of ExTAG.

IECEx Industry Symposium

The second event organized in conjunction with the annual meetings was the IECEx Industry Symposium that took place on 2 September. Entitled "Hazardous Area Compliance at minimal cost", it focused largely on the Australian market and issues, while retaining the global aspect of the IECEx System.

The Symposium began with a global review of the current situation for industries dealing with HAE (Hazardous Area Equipment) in the Australian market, and then progressed to more specific issues. After covering installation of Ex equipment and the competency certification within the HAE industry, two sessions were held on the practical use of the IECEx System and its schemes, and the benefits of involvement in IECEx. The final session addressed the issue of how to access the Australian and Asian markets. Two panel discussions gave participants the opportunity to ask questions and share experiences with their peers.

ExMC meeting

The IECEx Management Committee took up the last two days of the week. In his opening remarks, IECEx Chairman Kerry McManama especially welcomed and congratulated IECEx immediate past Chairman Uwe Klausmeyer on receiving the [IEC Lord Kelvin Award 2009](#).

The meeting itself went through a tight agenda. Items under scrutiny included:

- Overview of IECEx activities since the 2008 meeting
- The 2008 IEC CAB (Conformity Assessment Board) approved extension of the IECEx scope to include Personnel Certification
- Possible new country membership (Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Ireland and Mexico have expressed interest in joining IECEx)
- Amendments and revisions of several IECEx documents such as the Basic Rules, IECEx 02, *Equipment Certification Program covering equipment for use in explosive atmospheres*, and IECEx 03, *IECEx Certified Service Facilities Program covering repair and overhaul of Ex equipment*
- Reports from several WGs (Working Groups): WG 1: Review of Scheme Rules, WG 5: Management of Quality System Assessments, WG 13: Business Development and WG 14: Good Working Practice.

The delegates also examined issues pertaining to the ExMarkCo (IECEx Conformity Mark Committee):

- Membership and terms of office for members of the committee
- Expansion of terms of reference to include the IECEx logo and development of a guidance document on how to how and where the IECEx logo may be used.
- Notifications of misuse of the IECEx Conformity Mark. (No misuses have been reported so far, but the CAB makes it a requirement to be vigilant)

One major item on the agenda was the new IECEx Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme. The new Scheme is now operational and assessment of ExCBs should start very soon with the first CoPCs (Certificates of Personnel Competency) expected to be issued in early 2010.

Five documents related to the new Scheme were approved for publication:

- First edition of IECEx 05, *Rules of Procedure for the IECEx Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme*
- Four Operational Documents (OD 501 to OD 504)

WG 12: Ex Competencies, which worked on the establishment of the new Scheme, then submitted its report. Under discussion was the assessment of Ex Certification Bodies, to be undertaken first by assessors belonging to WG 12 because of their involvement and complete knowledge of the Scheme, and the set of criteria to be used for selecting future assessors.

Now that the Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme is up and running, the terms of reference of WG 12 will be updated to cover the ongoing maintenance of the Rules of Procedure.

Finally, the ExMC was extremely pleased to confirm the endorsement by [UNECE](#) (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) of the IECEx as the recommended International Conformity Assessment System within the Ex field.

The 2010 annual meetings will be held on 29 August to 3 September 2010 in Berlin, Germany.

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