



Every two months, SGS Baseefa Technical Manager Ron Sinclair MBE gives his perspective on the latest developments in the world of standards.

It seems we are still in Europe

been muttering to the EU Commission that it was taking too long for some standards to appear on the list. In particular, there was great concern that the older edition of EN ISO/IEC 80079-34, the standard for QA aspects of manufacture of all Ex-Equipment and Ex-Components, was remaining harmonised, despite an inability of manufacturers to continue using it, because it had mandatory references to requirements in ISO 9001:2008. ISO/IEC 80079-34:2018 solved the problem at the international level, by aligning the requirements with ISO 9001:2015, just as the ISO 9001:2008 was being withdrawn.

Despite remaining harmonised, the 2011 version, with mandatory references to clauses in ISO 9001:2008 was no longer usable, so ExNBG had already decided to use the ISO/IEC document along with the European additions in the draft versions of the EN version.

Despite being published in 2020, the EN version has still not been listed as harmonised.

The UKEX-ABG (UK Approved Bodies' Group) meeting in 2021 decided it would be appropriate for the UK to publish the current edition of EN ISO/IEC 80079-34 in the Designated Standards list, so that its use in the UK would be overtly sanctioned, rather than the covert use of the document as in the rest of Europe.

We asked BEIS about the necessary procedure to implement this and, although they were supportive, it seems that there had been no discussion on how to "designate" a standard, other than waiting for it to appear in the EU Harmonised Standards list. This would mean that standards would always be designated in the UK, after being harmonised in the rest of Europe, with a potential delay of a few months.

Further discussion with BEIS led to the conclusion that BSI had to nominate such a standard to BEIS for designation.

Accordingly, the topic was raised at BSI Committee EXL/31, but it seems that BSI also did not have a procedure. As I write this, BSI is working out what such a procedure may entail. It seems that Brexit is yet to work for us!

In a previous article, I mentioned that UKEX-ABG was creating a website and that it would post useful information which was relevant to the hazardous area community in the UK and also to other parts of the world which had an interest.

That website is now up and running and is accessible by searching UKEX-ABG. There is access to all the latest UK government information including information related to UKCA marking and when CE marking is still permitted.

Using the Publication tab, you can download the first three UKEX-ABG Decision Sheets. Like IECEx, we have decided that any decisions made by UKEX-ABG should be made transparently open to users of our services. The first of these decision sheets will be of direct interest to UK manufacturers of Ex-Equipment, where that equipment has to include Ex-Components that are only available with an ATEX Certificate.

More Decision Sheets will be added in the future, possibly including a British version of some of the ATEX Clarification Sheets from ExNBG that we believe to be of direct interest to our customers in the UK. ■

Back in June, the CEN and CENELEC General Assemblies agreed to revise membership criteria, to reflect Brexit, and create a new class of membership for BSI. We had been working on the assumption that it would be business as usual, but the wording of the statement inserted an element of doubt.

However, at their meeting on November 25, the General Assemblies voted overwhelmingly to support BSI's continued membership, with almost no change in the detail. There will be some changes how BSI will be represented on the governing bodies, but it retains its seat on the Technical Boards. At the practical level, BSI can still appoint experts to working groups, can propose new work items, hold committee secretariats and nominate committee chairs.

Thus, at the grass roots level of standards development and adoption, it really is "business as usual."

When the BEIS department of the UK Government put the documentation in position ready for Brexit on 1 January 2020, they decided to publish a list of UK Designated Standards, to mimic the EU Harmonised Standards lists for each directive. Logically, they made a great thing about the two lists being initially identical, to try and suggest that it would be business as usual in the short term.

The European group of Notified Bodies for the ATEX Directive (ExNBG) had already

About the author

SGS Baseefa's Technical Manager Ron Sinclair MBE will continue to attend the European Notified Bodies Group for ATEX (ExNBG), although representing SGS Firmko, their partner EU Notified Body, now that the UK bodies are excluded. He is Chair of the IECEx Service Facility Certification Committee and a member of the IECEx Executive. He is chair of the UK Standards Committee operating in this area for electrical equipment, and recently retired as chair of the European committee.