



Introduction

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Four years after the Dresden Conference where, recognizing the close relation between OSH and standardization, certification, testing, and related research, European OSH experts laid the groundwork for the creation of the EUROSHNET network, it is now time to take stock and to build on this successful experience in the context of EU enlargement and globalisation.

EUROSHNET is now fully operational and open to OSH experts from all EU and EFTA states. It is part of the structures and tools which allow the new Member States to become an integral part of the EU. Other structures, which also contribute to this objective, will be presented during the conference. It is desirable to build bridges between these different structures for communication and exchange between European OSH experts.

European OSH experts from different backgrounds do not always agree on the best way to be efficient in terms of occupational health and safety. It is therefore important to get to know each other better in order to understand each other better, to make better progress together, and to face the challenges of our time. Representatives from the new Member States will present their experiences and expectations in this regard.

Among the great challenges of our time, globalisation takes a prominent place. Europeans involved in international standardization activities face the challenge of convincing their partners to adopt the protection level assured by the New Approach, which closely links legislation and standardization. This task is far from being easy to fulfil, and there are numerous obstacles. This makes it all the more necessary that European OSH experts confront their views, forge common convictions and join forces in order to influence the orientations in international standardization.

These problems apply to standardization as well as to certification, research, and market surveillance: speakers at the conference will elaborate on the different stakeholders' viewpoints on these issues.

My wish is that this conference should be the occasion of open and fruitful exchange. May it contribute to giving European OSH institutions the strength that is necessary to invent together future solutions that, based in particular on the EUROSHNET network, permit to promote occupational health and safety in the socio-economic context resulting from globalisation.