



## **Enlarged Europe – Existing structures for cooperation**

David BUCHANAN

Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL)

Harpur Hill, Buxton, UK-Derbyshire SK17 9JN

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the first technical session of our conference. In this session we will look at existing structures for cooperation.

In a single market it is essential that there is a level playing field for these companies which are in competition. A major plank in implementing this strategy is standardisation with its associated testing and certification. A CE mark on a product indicates to the customer that the article in question may be purchased with confidence that it will function correctly. Provided the standard is reached, competing organisations are free to introduce their ideas as they wish. Competition takes place on a level playing field.

It is essential that the standards are agreed following co-operative discussion, that much is obvious. What is not so obvious is that all parties' interests are served by extending that co-operation to research, testing and certification. These latter activities are becoming ever more expensive and it is essential to avoid any unnecessary duplication. We need to share facilities and share the workload. The key to doing this successfully is good networking. Structures such as EUROSHNET and PEROSH are excellent examples of networks which add significant value. The European Agency has a key role to play in information exchange. This morning we will hear from speakers who play major parts in these exchanges.