Dear Readers,

Last February has marked the one-year anniversary since the start of a global pandemic that impacted our lives in an unprecedented way. Much of our way of living and working was drastically altered during the last twelve months, and I would like to, once again, underline how proud I am of our members’ efforts and contributions in fighting the pandemic and preventing the spread of the virus.

For its part, TIC Council has continued to make its voice heard in external fora: at the start of February, we published a press release welcoming the latest screening of websites by the European Commission and national consumer authorities, which this year focused on ‘greenwashing’, and calling for more to be done in the future on this vital matter.

We have also been very active on the subject of remote assessments, which has lately gained a lot of visibility due to the extraordinary circumstances imposed by COVID-19: firstly, with our reaction to the European Commission’s Notice published earlier in January, in which we have asked the EC and the Member States to ensure an aligned approach by all the EU Member States; secondly with offsetting up our internal Horizontal Task Force, which will focus on analysing issues and developing guidance on this complex theme.

Last but not least, our 2021 season of webinars has started with new high level topics and notable panellists: on February 8th, TIC Council hosted a webinar in collaboration with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) to give guidance on the practicalities of the IP Enforcement Portal. On February 16th, we hosted one of our most successful webinars, comprising a distinguished panel focusing on the opportunities and challenges posed by remote conformity assessment activities to address today’s global and dynamic demands.

We would like to thank our 334 participants to this latest webinar for their support and appreciation towards our efforts to maintain a productive dialogue with all stakeholders in this industry. And finally, with Women’s International Day at the start of this week, we wish all women in the TIC sector and beyond 365 days of fulfilment, respect and inclusion.

Best regards,
Hanane Taidi
TIC Council General Director
TIC Market Trends and Developments

Business Developments

- ALS Limited has announced improvements to its tool ALS Compass, a sampling intelligence that integrates data management. Read more.
- ALS Limited has announced that its tool Portable XRF, used in mineral exploration and mining to acquire preliminary information on the site, is now available for ALS Geochemistry laboratories in Australia. Read more.
- AmSpec has opened a new branch and laboratory in Masai Johor Bahru (Kota Masai), as part of a strategy to reinforce its position in South-East Asia. Read more.
- AmSpec has opened a new branch and laboratory in Barcelona, which will join the other AmSpec facilities in the region (Algeciras, Cartagena, Huelva and Las Palmas). Read more.
- AmSpec Morocco has successfully obtained ISO 9001:2015 accreditation for a wide spectrum of testing services. Read more.
- Applus Italy has been awarded the accreditation for Industrial Products, according to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 as Inspection Body type “A” by the Italian Accreditation Body ACCREDIA. Read more.
- Bureau Veritas has published its results for the full year of 2020. Read more.
- Bureau Veritas has joined the Coalition for the Energy of the Future, gathering 14 international companies committed to accelerating the energy transition in transport and logistics. Read more.
- Bureau Veritas has won the S&P Global Gold Class and the Industry Mover Sustainability Awards. Read more.
- Control Union has been appointed as an approved Certification Body (CB) for the Responsible Plastic Management (RPM) Program, allowing organisations taking positive steps towards reduction, reuse and recycling of plastic to benefit from the RPM trust mark. Read more.
- Cotecna has announced that one of its members, Neutron, has recently completed the revamping of their Metal Lab, including the addition of a clean room for metal trace detection, designed in compliance with ISO 8 standards aiming to reduce interferences from external environment and from contaminated materials. Read more.
- DEKRA has announced the opening of its first vehicle inspection station in Guadalajara, Mexico. Read more.
- DEKRA has started the process of becoming a UK Approved Body for UKCA marking. Read more.
- Element has expanded its product qualification testing (PQT) capability for wireless technology at sites in Hull and Hitchin, UK. Read more.
- Element has been recognized with a new Nadcap accreditation for fastener testing at its Huntington Beach, California laboratory. Read more.
- Element has started the process to create a new center in Linköping, Sweden, bringing three laboratories together into one site close to major clients in the aerospace, defense and industrials sectors. Read more.
- Eurofins has launched a new CE marked serological assay for the identification and quantification of antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. This ELISA kit can support vaccination campaigns by confirming the success of a vaccination and monitoring the antibody levels over time. Read more.
- Eurofins has launched a new extraction-free RT-PCR method, upgrading its RT-PCR assay for use with pharynx gargoyle and saliva sample matrices. Read more.
TIC Market Trends and Developments

- HQTS has won a tender to provide quality inspection services for a project run by The UN Refugee Agency. The two sides will cooperate closely for the next five years. Read more.
- Intertek & BEXIMCO have unveiled a new Center of Excellence (COE) for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Bangladesh. Read more.
- Intertek has announced its appointment by Sun Cable Pty Ltd. to provide marine survey client representation services to assure quality and safety of the Australia-ASEAN Power Link (AAPL). Read more.
- Intertek has announced the launch of a new in-country service for fire testing and certification of building products in Saudi Arabia, to support the increasing demand for fire resistance testing from customers in the region. Read more.
- Intertek has announced the construction of a new Minerals Global Centre of Excellence, located in Perth, Western Australia. Read more.
- ISQ has started developing, within the ErasmusPlus DESTINE project, a new level 4 qualification training, fostering technical training in the Additive Manufacturing & Design Technician area. Read more.
- ISQ has launched the Inspire program, an “open innovation” initiative that aims to involve all ISQ employees in ISQ change and continuous improvement. Read more.
- Kiwa Turkey has certified Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport according to the new ISO/PAS 45005: 2020 standard regarding COVID-19 prevention measures. Read more.
- Kiwa has developed the We Care standard for the implementation and certification of sustainability requirements at company sites and in supply chain management in the food industry. The standard has been published by the FiBL - Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau or Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Germany. Read more.
- Ravi Energie has been accredited by Quality Council of India to carry out Workplace Assessment for Safety and Hygiene (WASH). Read more.
- SGS has announced a partnership with RLP AgroScience, which will allow more complex, tailor-made experimental designs to be provided for environmental and human safety assessments of pesticides, chemicals, biocides and human drugs/veterinary drugs. Read more.
- SGS has assisted Nepal with the design, procurement and implementation of the launch of the Nepal National Single Window (NNSW) and the Nepal Trade Information Portal (NTIP). Read more.
- SGS has launched the first Independently Checked Mark (IC Mark) for reusable fabric masks in the US and Canada. Read more.
- SGS has announced investment in Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GCMS) equipment at its Fujairah laboratory to assist clients when looking at chemical waste contamination in fuels. Read more.
- SGS has launched ‘Realize’, a programme to help companies measure their food safety culture maturity levels and comply with the latest Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) requirements. Read more.
- SGS has opened a new toy testing facility in Mexico City. Read more.
- SOCOTEC has announced the participation of their Luxembourg teams in the extension and renovation project of the Konrad Adenauer building, which houses the annex of the European Parliament located in Luxembourg. Read more.
- SZU’s testing laboratory has been recognised in the European RADMAC group by the certification body DIN CERTCO. Read more.
- TÜV Austria has announced that the Italian lab Archa has been authorised for OK compost certification tests. Read more.
TIC Market Trends and Developments

- TÜV SÜD has signed a business agreement with Samjong KPMG to strengthen the Industrial Operation Technology (OT) security business and share expertise on security authentication systems. Read more.
- TÜV SÜD has been granted the status of a full Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors (APSCA) Member Firm. Read more.
- TÜV SÜD Hong Kong has signed an agreement with the China Quality Certification Centre (CQC) on China Mandatory Product Certification (CCC) testing. Read more.
- TÜV SÜD has achieved US Department of Transportation accreditation as Approval and Inspection Agency for Approval and Inspection of UN Portable Tanks. Read more.
- TÜV SÜD has expanded its method of calculating ice throw and ice fall from wind turbines. Read more.
- TÜV SÜD has partnered with ViewSonic, a global provider of visual solutions to develop the testing of a colour blindness feature in monitors. Read more.
- UL has granted ERG the first wind turbine lifetime extension certificate to advance the ongoing safe operation of clean, sustainable energy generation. Read more.
- UL has expanded the scope of the IECEE CB Scheme scope to include the issuance of test reports and certificates with functional safety evaluations. Read more.
- UL has been approved to test and certify civilian drones in India in efforts to drive India’s leadership in commercial drone use. Read more.
- UL has recognised iSiCHECK as the first smart badge to achieve IoT security rating. Read more.
- UL has launched in-flight battery fire containment certification services in accordance with ANSI/CAN/UL 5800, the Standard for Safety for Battery Fire Containment Products to help the airline industry reduce the safety risk posed by lithium-ion batteries. Read more.
- UL has announced the approval of one of its labs by Ethernet Alliance for Powering over Ethernet (PoE) certification testing. Read more.

Mergers & Acquisitions

- ALS Limited has acquired Steel River Testing, an environmental testing business based in Newcastle and servicing the greater Hunter Valley region, specialised in ambient air and stack emissions testing and capable of evaluating general water parameters. Read more.
- DEKRA has announced an expansion in non-destructive material testing (NDT) business by taking over the engineering firm Ingenieurbüro Witte in Versmold/Ostwestfalen, adding to its network of non-destructive material testing sites in the region in northern Germany. Read more.
- Element has acquired the pharmaceutical analytical testing company Avomeen, strengthening the group’s Life Sciences business unit in North America. Read more.
- Eurofins Scientific has announced the acquisition of Beacon Discovery, a drug discovery and contract research organization (CRO) focused on G-Protein Coupled Receptor (GPCR) research. Read more.
- SGS has announced the acquisition of Autoscope/CTOK, a privately owned business operating three vehicle inspection services (VIS) centers in Le Mans, France. Read more.

Personnel Developments

- Alfred H. Knight has appointed Jo Wang as Deputy Laboratory Manager of AHK China. Read more.
- Intertek has announced the appointment of Lynda Clarizio as a Non-Executive Director of Intertek with effect from 1 March 2021. Read more.
Accreditation and Standardisation News

Accreditation

IAF

- A schedule of the IAF and ILAC mid-term meetings has been published. Find it here.
- Emanuele Riva of ACCREDIA will be confirmed as the IAF Chair during the 2021 General Assembly meeting given that no further nominations were received.

IAF/ILAC

- Further to the 14-day ballot/referendum to all IAF and ILAC Members, which closed 20 January 2021, IAF/ILAC-A1/A2: Addendum 01/2021 - IAF/ILAC Approach to Remote Peer Evaluations of Regions and Single Accreditation Bodies during the COVID-19 Pandemic has now been published and is available in the Publications/IAF-ILAC Joint Publications (A Series) section of the IAF website, as well as the Publications/Joint ILAC-IAF Documents (A-Series) area of the ILAC website.

EA

- The EA REPORT to IAF/ILAC and REGIONS December 2020 has just been released. See it here.
- EA has published a statement on UKAS recognition under the EA MLA dated January 27, 2021. Find it here.
- The following revised EA publications are available online on the public website:
  - Revised EA-INF/05 Directory of European legislations and EU schemes with provisions to accreditation and/or conformity assessment in “Information Documents” at: click here.
  - Updated EA-INF/01 List of EA Publications and International Documents in “Information Documents” at: click here.

Standardisation

ISO CASCO

- ISO/IEC DIS 17030 on general requirements for third-party marks of conformity is out for ballot until 2021-04-22.
- ISO CASCO has conducted an informative session on ISO/IEC DIS 17030 to brief on the main changes to the document and provide an opportunity for questions. More information will be published in the near future.
- We have received clarification from the ISO CASCO secretariat that TIC Council, as an A-liaison, may make comments on all documents, including those submitted to ballot.
TIC Council Focus Topics

The Current State of the EU Affairs

The NextGenerationEU budget and the Recovery and Resilience Facility

NextGenerationEU, the temporary instrument designed to boost the recovery, will be the largest stimulus package ever financed through the EU budget. A total of €750 billion are destined to help rebuild a post-COVID-19 Europe.

From this sum, €672.5 billion are dedicated to the Recovery and Resilience Facility, a special instrument that aims to make sustainable recovery in Europe easier to reach. Specifically, up to €312.5 billion will be disbursed in grants and €360 billion in loans destined to foster environmental sustainability, productivity, fairness, and macroeconomic stability. Money expenditure, in general, should “address issues that need significant investment to create jobs and growth, and which are needed for the green and digital transitions.”

Moreover, the grants and loans provided to EU countries under the bloc’s €750 billion recovery plan will not automatically exclude funding for gas infrastructure or highways, as long as these are part of a coherent national decarbonisation strategy with clear milestones.

This stimulus package shall be available for projects carried out until 2026. Each member state is expected to create a national plan for the use of the allotted funding and is expected to include a minimum of 37% of expenditure for climate investment and reforms and a minimum of 20% to accompany the digital transition. See grant allocation per member states.

Possible impacts for the TIC sector

Member states have been given until the 30th of April to submit their plans for tapping into the Facility funds. Until these plans are known, it is hard to guess what the potential impact on the TIC sector may be. However, various guidance documents for member states do show the potential actions that can be carried out. It is to be noted that the “Member States are invited to refer to the extent possible to the environmental objectives as defined in the EU Taxonomy Regulation”, highlighting the importance that TIC services are included in the ongoing EU’s efforts to update its Taxonomy regulation.

Environmental:

- Renovation wave of residential buildings, social and affordable housing, private or public buildings (with a focus on schools and hospitals), modernisation of district heating systems and land restoration.
- Decarbonisation of industry, investments in energy efficiency in the industry sector and SMEs, supporting innovation, competitiveness of their value chains and reform programmes.
- Investments in circular economy and the bio-economy and investments in sustainable food production and consumption in line with objectives set out in the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Digitalization:

- Supporting small companies to reposition themselves after the pandemic in a more digital ecosystem with digital tools that respect European values and taking into account cybersecurity needs; and supporting the development of business models and skills to enable their organisational structures to keep pace securely and sustainably.
- Funding of material tracking systems and databases (i.e. product passport type information) to facilitate handling of materials and substances along the value chain and feed back to production processes.
TIC Council Focus Topics

The Current State of the EU Affairs

The NextGenerationEU budget and the Recovery and Resilience Facility

Possible consequences for the European economic governance
The Jacques Delors Centre issued a policy brief investigating the changes that the €750 billion EU recovery package will impose on Brussels’ economic governance. There are five main lessons to be learned that profoundly modify the old post-2008 financial agenda:

- EU debt is possible and will become a reality;
- the EU and the Eurozone get a fiscal capacity;
- the European Semester will be history;
- the crisis management architecture is politically questioned;
- and the Eurozone loses its relevance for EU decision-making.

The paper concludes that, taken together, these five lessons from the pandemic will render the old pre-pandemic Eurozone reform agenda redundant.

What can TIC Council do?
Individual members are encouraged to reach out – directly or via national associations - to the relevant national government authorities, generally Ministries of Finance, charged with developing the national plans. This should be done before April 30.
TIC Council Focus Topics

The Current State of Affairs in US Politics

AI and Machine Learning – The way to the future?

The field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) touches on every industry, and machine learning - a subset of AI - is being incorporated into business processes to help streamline and improve the ability to see patterns and be agile. In manufacturing, machine learning has practical applications in assisting product designers to model and evaluate designs prior to fabrication, in identifying risks to safety early in the design process, and in evaluating trends in model designs to speed innovation. In testing, inspection and certification, machine learning can help identify safety trends, applicable safety requirements, and streamline the testing, inspection, and certification process.

In a report published by the Congressional Research Service on 10 November 2020, the writers note “that no commonly accepted definition of AI exists.” While several are suggested in the report, one that aligns more generally with industry applications such as machine learning is “An artificial system developed in computer software, physical hardware, or other context that solves tasks requiring human-like perception, cognition, planning, learning, communication, or physical action.”

Of interest in national defense applications and seeing broad applications in commercial industry, legislation surrounding AI and its applications is currently being developed in several States. Additionally, organizations such as NIST (the US National Institute of Standards and Technology) has been consistently promoting panels, workshops and discussions around the creation of building blocks for reliable, robust, and trustworthy AI systems. Here you will find a bird’s eye view of the current status of US legislation on AI, while here you will find a memo of current and future AI policies promoted by the US government.

Given the importance of AI and machine learning for developing better TIC services, TIC Council Americas has recently been active in supporting and promoting discussions around the topic: Karin Athanas, TIC Council Americas’ Executive Director, has recently spoken during ICPHSO’s 2021 Annual Symposium at a Breakout session focused on machine learning, discussing its use to support the design and ensure the safety of products and exploring the risks and benefits of using machine learning and artificial intelligence to ensure safer products. Find all information here.

But there is not only ICPHSO on the agenda: the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) held a stakeholder workshop on AI on Tuesday March 2nd, to discuss the ramifications of AI and related technologies on consumer products from a consumer safety perspective. TIC Council Americas has, again, brought the perspective of the TIC sector on the subject as a panel participant. TIC Council members and relevant stakeholder can expect further efforts from TIC Council in providing the perspective of the testing, inspection and certification sector on these topics.
Upcoming Events

March
- 11 March: Technological leadership, global level-playing field and green transition: the rail industrial ecosystem perspective
- 15 March: European Consumer Summit 2021
- 16 March: The Future is Now - How ESG Strategies, Smart Investments, and EU policies are shaping Global Food Systems
- 16 March: Hydrogen, Sun, Wind - Which ones can make the best contribution to Europe's energy transformation?
- 16 March: ENISA-ERA Conference: Cybersecurity in Railways
- 16-17 March: 7th International Conference on Food Science and Food Safety
- 17 March: Using Data to Fight Counterfeiting in E-commerce
- 18 March: The European industrial strategy rebooted - Orgalim
- 18 March: How Can the EU’s Digital Markets Act Unlock the Power of Data?
- 23-24 March: The Turing Presents: AI UK
- 23-25 March: Rethink, Reset, Recharge - Global Food Safety Initiative Conference 2021 - GFSI
- 25 March: PAC Webinar: Global Trends - Sustainability CSR and Corporate Citizenship
- 29 March: European Year of Rail Launch event

April
- 7 April: AI for Good Global Summit: AI for sustainable transformation in smart cities, mobility & energy
- 9 April: Cen 10-10 webinar: Standardization in Horizon Europe
- 20-22 April: MedTech Forum 2021
- 26 April: FT: Hydrogen Summit The Clean Fuel of the Future
- 26-30 April: ETSI IoT Week - ETSI

May
- 5-6 May: OILM Digital Transformation in Legal Metrology
- 6 May: FDF Webinar - Dealing with Food Compliance Risks & Prioritising Activity? The Food and Drink Forum
- 17 May: UN Biodiversity Conference: Convention on biological diversity
- 24-25 May: FT: ENERGY SOURCE LIVE The Biden era: The great US energy reset?
- 31 May: Politico AI Summit 2021
ASTM International approved a new standard for barrier face coverings that will help establish minimum design, performance, labeling, and care requirements for reusable barrier face coverings. The new standard (F3502) is intended to apply to the general public and workers. TIC Council welcomes this effort to rebuild trust and reduce the spread of infection by establishing clear, safe and recognised standards.