Dear Readers,

The end of the year draws near, and we find ourselves taking stock of where we are now and what are the next steps for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic led to unprecedented structural shifts for both TIC Council and the TIC companies, in order to establish new ways of organizing the workflow in an attempt to best adapt to a continuously changing global landscape.

What remains unaltered are our continued efforts to raise awareness and understanding amongst key stakeholders about the role the TIC industry plays during these challenging times and beyond. And in that view, we are proud to announce that our application to join the official EU OSHA campaign has been accepted. This campaign aims to contribute towards safe and healthy workplaces for everyone’s benefit, which will provide us with a platform to bring our competence and expertise in verifying the highest standards and best practices in the workplace.

This month of November has been indeed characterized by a specific focus on health and safety with topics such as anti-counterfeiting or remote inspections, particularly in the wake of the European International Product Safety Week that presented an excellent opportunity to shed light on these two topics.

As such, we have published press releases and white papers to underline to the media and other relevant stakeholders our positions on these topics. On the one hand, we have highlighted the necessity for proper market surveillance and identification of counterfeit products to ensure a level playing field for compliant economic operators and enhance consumer safety, on the other hand, our white paper on remote inspection explores the technical requirements, benefits, and the future of remote inspections and provides an in-depth discussion of the practice, decision points, and case studies.

This is just a part of our continued efforts to ensure that our sector is properly positioned and gains increasing visibility amongst key stakeholders.

Best regards,
Ms. Hanane Taidi
Director General, TIC Council

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TIC Market Trends and Developments

Business Developments

- AmSpec has announced the opening of its new branch and laboratory in Las Palmas, Spain. Read more.
- Apave and Sercel have launched AP’Structure, an SHM (Structural Health Monitoring) solution with which operators can monitor the integrity of entire buildings and infrastructure in real time. Read more.
- Bureau Veritas has been ranked among the Financial Times’ 2021 Diversity Leaders. Read more.
- Bureau Veritas has been named the most responsible company in the Professional Services industry category of the 2020 Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) Corporate Sustainability Assessment rankings. Read more.
- Control Union, along with Peterson, have announced that they have received an award of Royal Designation by Dutch Monarch, King Willem-Alexander, to mark the company celebrating 100 years of business. Read more.
- DEKRA has announced the development of a joint venture with Zhejiang Intelligent Connected Vehicle Innovation Center in Deqing in Eastern China, in order to extend its global testing network for automated and connected driving. Read more.
- Eurofins has announced that the resolution proposing a ten-for-one stock split has been passed by the requisite majority during an Extraordinary General Meeting. Read more.
- Eurofins has launched SARS-CoV-2 test kits for the widely available Sanger sequencing equipment. Read more.
- HQTS India Company has recently performed its first virtual audit in the face of logistical challenges presented by Covid-19. Read more.
- HQTS Group has took part in the first Quality Day Salon, hosted by Toyota Material Handling (Toyota Forklifts) in China. Read more.
- Intertek has been awarded the IAOB 2020 Certification Body of the Year award by the International Automotive Oversight Bureau. Read more.
- Intertek Cristal has announced their support for the Government of Cabo Verde in the implementation of standard operating procedures of hygiene practices for several regional medical facilities with POSI-Check. Read more.
- Kiwa Finland has created a new European Hot Work Certificate competence training for the international market. It combines online learning, virtual reality and all administration. Read more.
- Kiwa and Green Energy Park in Morocco have signed an agreement for a cooperation allowing Green Energy Park to perform as a Kiwa-appointed external lab for testing and certification of Photovoltaic Modules, inverters and batteries. Read more.
- Kiwa has announced that it has become part of the EU Clean Hydrogen Alliance. Read more.
- SGS has expanded its Biosafety Center of Excellence in Glasgow – boosting its capacity to support scientists and manufacturers in the development and delivery of effective vaccines, cell and gene therapies and other biological medicines. Read more.
- SGS and Graz University of Technology (TU Graz) have accounced the opening of Lamarr Security Research, a non-profit research center focusing on information security and establishing trust in digital systems and products. Read more.
- SGS has decided to move its Clinical Pharmacology Unit (CPU) to a new location in 2021, increasing its capacity to conduct Human Challenge studies. Read more.
TIC Market Trends and Developments

- SGS has signed a contract with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) of the Central African Republic (CAR) on the implementation of the Pre-Verification of Conformity of Imported Goods to CAR, starting March 2021. Read more.
- TÜV Rheinland has started offering remote audits worldwide for all common management system standards in conjunction with its accreditation rules. Read more.
- UL has announced a modeling and simulation-based service that supports the certification process. Read more.
- UL International (Netherlands) B.V. has recently achieved System 1+ Notified Body status for Product Area 31 (Power, Control and Communication Cable) of the EU's Construction Products Regulation (EU) No 305/2011. Read more.
- UL has announced the opening of a large-scale electric vehicle (EV) battery laboratory to support the growing EV market, located in Changzhou, China. Read more.
- UL has completed their first remote-witnessed testing program in the Middle East region, certifying vertical turbine fire pumps in Saudi Arabia. Read more.
- UL has announced the expansion of its Frankfurt – Neu - Isenburg facility for testing and certification of new electric vehicle (EV) charging. Read more.

Mergers and Acquisitions

- APAVE has announced the acquisition of 90% of the Spanish company Eurocontrol. Read more.
- SGS has announced the acquisition of Engineering Control Limited (ECL) headquartered in New Zealand. Read more.
- SGS has announced the acquisition of SYNLAB Analytics & Services (A&S), a European environmental, food testing and tribology services company. Read more.
- SOCOTEC Groups has announced the acquisition of Cementys, a group that specializes in infrastructure monitoring. Read more.
Accreditation and Standardisation News

Accreditation

IAF

- IAF held the Technical Committee meeting on October 30, 2020 as a four hour Zoom meeting. It had approximately about 262 attendees. The majority of the discussion reviewed action items and WG/TF reports. No discussion took place concerning the IAL/ILAC merger. It may be discussed in detail during the IAF General Assembly; during the ILAC GA, information was presented but there was no discussion. Of particular interest to TIC Council are the following two items:
  - Creation of new Working Group on ISO/IEC 17011. Currently IAF has 27 mandatory documents. 12 of those are specific to the application of 17011. ILAC also has several documents. It is recognized there is no coordinating committee or joint approach between IAF and ILAC on this particular issue. The JWG-A series was not considered to be addressing the issues the IAF TC may want to. There was general support for the creation of this WG, but first Terms of Reference need to be agreed to and they should be very focused on IAF-specific issues. Norman Brunner from Austria and Leopoldo Cortez from Portugal opposed the proposal.
  - MD 17: Witnessing Activities for the Accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies will be reviewed. This is partially caused by the impact of Covid-19. The revisions, reportedly, should focus on potentially reducing witnessing or providing tighter parameters. While this is for MS, TICC needs to monitor due to the trickledown effect in the IAF to tag-on Products and Personnel.
- IAF held its 34th General Assembly on November 5, 2020 as a four hour Zoom meeting. About 270 participants joined. The 2021 joint Annual Meetings are scheduled for October 27 - November 7 in Montreal, Canada. The resolutions approved at the IAF General Assembly are posted under News & Events/Meetings.
- The following revised documents have been published by IAF and are available in the IAF website:
  - IAF MLA Status - 14/10/2020
  - IAF PL 5:2020 Structure of the International Accreditation Forum Inc.

IAF/ILAC

- Registration is now open for upcoming IAF and ILAC meetings. More information here.

EA

- EA has informed that due to the pandemic the implementation of EA-3/12: EA Policy for the Accreditation of Organic Production Certification is postponed to January 1, 2021.

Standardisation

ISO CASCO

- ISO CASCO has issued a response to a clarification request related to ISO IEC 17065 “Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services” that was submitted by BSI. It was addressed by the maintenance group of WG29, and the form with the answer is available here.
- The ISO Central Secretariat has, once again, extended the measures whereby all meetings must be held virtually until 28 February 2021.
TIC Council Focus Topics

The Current State of the EU Affairs

The European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for better consumer protection against unsafe products. The report, entitled “Addressing product safety in the Single Market” (rapporteur Marion Walsmann, PPE, Germany) was adopted with an overwhelming majority of 688 votes in favour (8 against and 1 abstention). The main points of the report are highlighted below:

- It calls for the inclusion of emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, robotics, 3D printing and others within the scope of the GPsd;
- It calls on the Commission to assess the need for an EU cybersecurity certification scheme covering products with embedded emerging technologies, such as AI, IoT and robotics;
- It calls on the Commission to develop mandatory certification schemes for consumer products that can be quickly updated;
- It urges online marketplaces to take more responsibility to ensure the safety of products.

The TIC Council participated, on Friday November 27, in the third meeting of the Stakeholder Cybersecurity Certification Group, established by the Cybersecurity Act in 2019 to advise the Commission and ENISA, the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, on strategic issues regarding cybersecurity certification, and assist the Commission in the preparation of the Union’s Rolling Work Programme. The TIC Council offered feedback on the Programme, which proposes ways to implement the measures of the Cybersecurity Act and provides a forward-looking perspective on the future of European cybersecurity.

The TIC Council has responded to important ongoing European Commission consultations on the revision of the Blue Guide and the Sustainable Products Initiative. In general, the TIC Council supports the establishment of EU requirements on mandatory sustainability labelling and disclosure of information to market actors along the value chain. Furthermore, minimum labelling requirements will remove from the market any vague or misleading labels.

The European Commission published the "New Consumer Agenda" on 13 November 2020. This presents the Commission’s plans for the consumer policy up to 2025, announcing actions that Commission will undertake in five key priorities: green transition, digital transformation, redress and enforcement of consumer rights, specific needs of certain consumer groups and international cooperation. These are the initiatives relevant to the TIC sector for the years 2020 and 2021:

- 2020: Set up a Consumer Policy Advisory Group, bringing together representatives from the consumer organisations, civil society and the industry in support of the consumer agenda; develop voluntary pledges of economic operators to actions in support of sustainable consumption, beyond what is required by law; elements to protect consumers against illegal products when using online marketplaces in the future Digital Services Act.
- 2021: Present a legislative proposal to empower consumers for the green transition with better information on products’ sustainability and better protection against unfair practices; make a proposal for a horizontal legal act laying down requirements for AI; revise the General Product Safety Directive and Machinery Directive; present new safety requirements to be met by standards on childcare products; develop an action plan with China for strengthened product safety cooperation for products sold online; develop regulatory support, technical assistance and capacity building for EU partner countries, including in Africa
The Current State of Affairs in US Politics

Carbon-free power, electricity and housing: legislation and promises

Across the U.S., more and more States are pushing for 100% no-carbon power via legislative reforms aiming for reaching this objective by the 2040s-2050s. New Mexico already passed last year legislation requiring 100% carbon-free power by 2045, calling for utilities to reach 50% renewable power by 2030 and 80% by 2040. Rural electricity cooperatives would have extra time to reach the carbon-free goal, with a 2050 deadline. With a law already in place, California is requiring carbon-free electricity by 2045, as well as Hawaii, while the Minnesota governor Tim Walz has proposed a plan for reaching 100% by 2050, which is currently in a debating phase.

This trend is further highlighted by President-Elect Joe Biden’s plan for tackling climate change, which thanks to a prospective $2 trillion funding aims to eliminate emissions from the electric sector by 2035, impose stricter gas mileage standards, fund investments to weatherize millions of homes and commercial buildings, and upgrade the U.S.’s transportation system. To reach this ambitious goal, the proposed plan includes investments on renewable energies, such as wind, solar, nuclear (among some complaints), hydropower and biomass.

This shift is made even more feasible thanks to the plummeting prices of wind and solar energy, as recently analysed by researchers at both the University of California, Berkeley, and the San Francisco-based energy and climate policy firm Energy Innovation. According to their studies, over the past decade, wind energy prices have fallen by 70%, and solar photovoltaics by around 89%. Renewables and nuclear energy now power about 40% of the country’s electricity. A combination of improvements in product design and economies of scale means that in many markets, renewables are cheaper than coal.

Still, as mentioned above, the lack of any significant country-wide legislation concerning clean energy means that initiatives in this field are still limited to single State-wide pushes, creating contradictions of goals and requirements.

There is, however, a growing movement focused on small-scale efforts, urging homebuilders and cities to eliminate fossil energy from homes altogether, including things like natural gas furnaces or stoves. Notably, heating and cooling residential and commercial buildings account for about 12% of the country’s total emissions, according to the EPA, while globally, raw materials used for construction contribute about 11% of greenhouse gas emissions, according to the World Green Building Council. To meet these ambitious objectives, the housing industry must eliminate this carbon imprint and design houses in new and innovative ways that can constitute sustainable alternatives.

Sources and further readings:

- Washington Post - Biden calls for 100 percent clean electricity by 2035. Here’s how far we have to go
- Grist - How the U.S. power grid could go on a 90% carbon-free diet
- National Geographic - A blueprint for a carbon-free America
- U.S.’s Energy Information and Administration - EIA’s 50% Carbon-Free Generation side case projects little effect on CO2 emissions
- POLITICO - Getting energized about efficiency
Upcoming Events

December
- 3 December: The EU Single Market for business & consumers - Applia Europe
- 3 December: The future of EU-UK relationship - EPC
- 7 December: INTERPOL General Assembly
- 7-11 December: European Space Week 2020
- 16 December: The state of play of WTO negotiations on e-commerce, investment facilitation and domestic regulations
- 18 December: ENISA Cybersecurity Certification Conference

January
- 28-29 January: 35th CASCO Plenary and Workshop

February
- 4 February: Masters of Digital 2021 - Digital Europe
- 22-25 February: ICPHSO Annual meeting - Orlando
- 22-24 February: EU Industry Days 2021
In November, we have published press releases on proper market surveillance and identification of counterfeit products, and a white paper on the subject of remote inspections in times of COVID.