

National Aerospace NDT Board News

The next meeting of the NANDTB will be in Sydney on 5th February 2007. It has been monitoring the developments of other Boards, particularly in Europe where interest has been strongest. Most recently, the first meeting of the European NANDTB Forum was held in Paris on 1st December. It followed an agreement in principle to form such a group at a meeting of interested parties in September. There was no representative from the Australian Board present but from its good relationship with members of that Forum, it continues to receive minutes and other relevant information. The number of national NDT Boards being formed in Europe continues to grow and now includes France, UK, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Scandinavia (Finland, Sweden and Norway), Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the Netherlands, Greece, Austria and others are being developed.

This first meeting of the Forum finalised agreement on its objectives, essential relationships, appointments and working documents. Much of what follows is a direct extract from the minutes of the meeting.

Objectives:

1. Harmonisation of the quality level of the NANDTB of each country in order to acquire a uniform minimum level (equivalence)
2. Interpretation of applicable standards in the same way
3. Promotion of European NDT to the rest of the world

Essential Relationships:

The individual National Aerospace NDT Boards in membership of the Forum should be recognised as the sole certifier of NDT outside agencies (in the aeronautical context) by—

- (a) Official services of its country

- (b) Primes of its country

- (c) Directors board of the aeronautical companies of its country

- (d) Organisations of accreditation of its country

The appointment of Mr. Patrick Auge from France as its first chairman, and Mr. John Biddulph from the UK as vice-chairman were confirmed. Its Constitution and Method of Working documents were also accepted.

Significantly, the chairman noted that there are many methods of working and various levels of progress existing between each NANDTB. To achieve harmonisation will require a great deal of work and some concessions from Forum members. It was further clarified that members were the Boards themselves and not the countries present. This is important where two or more counties form a joint Board, as was done in Scandinavia.

It remains important for the Australian NANDTB to monitor developments in countries using EN 4179 and NAS 410 as certification standards for aerospace NDT personnel. The Australian Board benefits from the interest it has shown already and continues to be included in the information flowing from Europe. If the Australian Board is to be relevant and credible it must achieve recognition by other Boards. Future dealings with the European Forum as a single entity should greatly simplify its acceptance by member Boards. The chairman of the European Forum rightly identified its greatest challenge as the harmonisation of the Boards. An external view of the current situation could be that the disparity between some Boards with respect to their origins, affiliations and capabilities will test the effectiveness of the Forum in achieving this goal.



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