

## **EUROSHNET - a Network of European Occupational Health and Safety Experts**

A. JANOWITZ

KAN - Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardization

- Secretariat -

Alte Heerstr. 111

53757 Sankt Augustin

Germany

E-mail: [janowitz@kan.de](mailto:janowitz@kan.de)

<http://www.kan.de>

The New Approach and the creation of the European Single Market have brought about a close interrelationship between legislation, standardization, testing and certification. The international level is also becoming more and more important, for example for standardization. Introducing European positions at international level and effectively advocating them is a major challenge for European OH&S circles. OH&S institutions of individual Member States alone have only limited means of effectively presenting their interests. It would seem much more efficient for these institutions to discuss relevant issues at European level and present a common position.

Within this context, a European conference on „Standardization, Testing and Certification – a Contribution to Occupational Health and Safety“ was held in October 2001. At this conference, a European network for OH&S experts active in standardization, testing and certification was initiated. The participants discussed, in six workshops, the network’s structure and mode of operation and subjects which the network should begin by addressing.

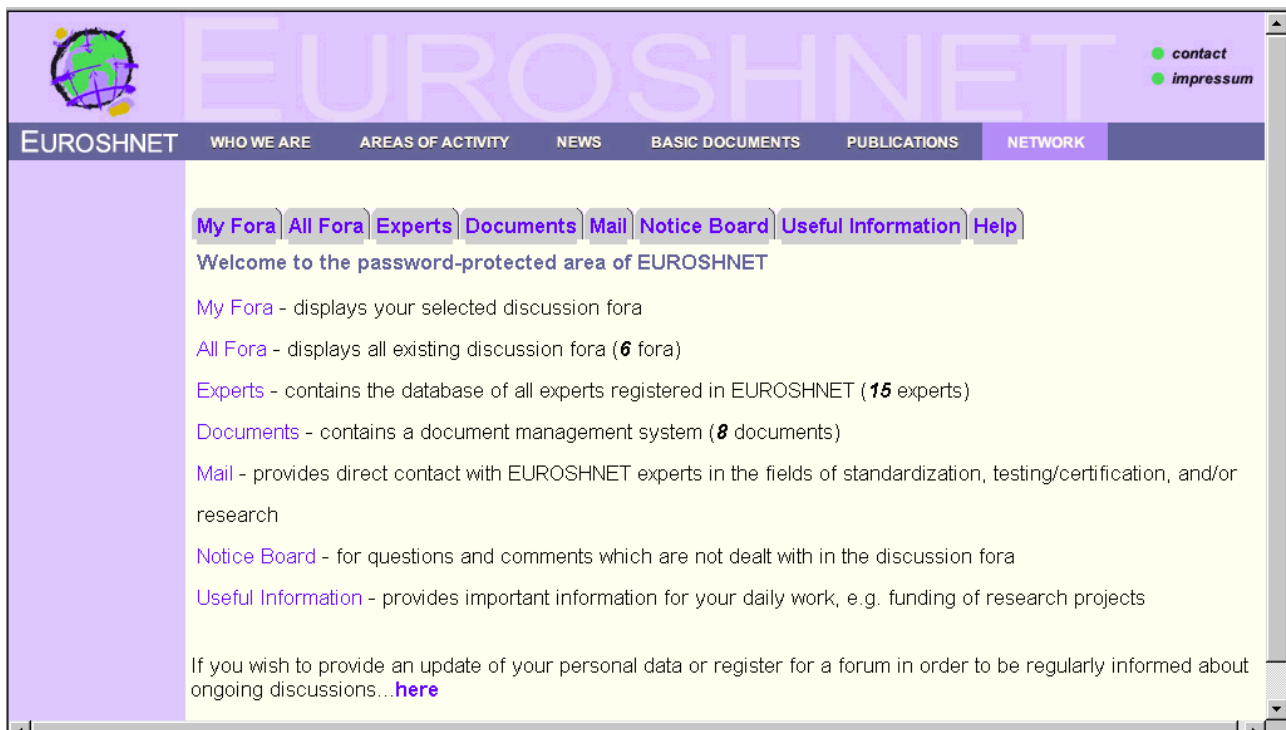
The purpose of EUROSHNET (**EU**ropean **O**ccupational **S**afety and **H**ealth **NET**work) is primarily

- to facilitate contact with other OH&S experts
- to promote discussion of issues of mutual interest
- to disseminate relevant information
- to create and maintain contacts with other networks.

As EUROSHNET intends to promote co-ordination between individual experts, OH&S experts active in standardization, testing or certification and belonging to a European OH&S institution can become personal members of the network. EUROSHNET is supported by a steering committee. In addition to EUROGIP, INRS, HVBG/BG-PRÜFZERT and KAN, OH&S institutions from Finland (FIOH), the United Kingdom (HSL), Spain (INSHT), and Poland (CIOP) are represented on the committee. EUROSHNET is being set up in stages. In 2003, experts from OH&S institutions in the countries represented on the steering committee are granted access. From 2004 onwards, the network is to be opened up to OH&S institutions of further Member States of the European Union and of further candidate countries to EU membership.

### Web-based communication platform

An English-medium communication platform has been set up at [www.euroshnet.org](http://www.euroshnet.org) in order to support communication and the exchange of information within EUROSHNET.



A public area provides information on the network and on matters of general interest:

### **Who we are**

explains the objectives and modus operandi of EUROSHNET. The institutions active on the steering committee are presented, and links provided to their respective web sites.

### **Areas of activity**

describes the subjects currently being discussed in the area not open to the public, and provides information on EUROSHNET events.

### **News**

reports on new discussion fora, recent EUROSHNET publications, and events in the field of occupational health and safety.

### **Basic documents**

refers to documents of the European Commission, the European standards organizations, and international documents of relevance to EUROSHNET. The documents can be downloaded.

### **Publications**

contains reports on and by EUROSHNET.

A password-protected area (the network proper), which is accessible only to members of the network via a personal password, encompasses:

### **My fora**

lists the discussion fora for which the expert accessing the network is registered. The expert is notified by e-mail of any new entries in his or her fora.

### **All fora**

contains an overview of the current fora, together with all messages. Fora are not permanent fixtures and are closed when the experts consider that they have served their useful purpose. New fora for topical subjects can be set up at any time. The facility also exists for sub-fora to be set up in which particular aspects may be discussed. A moderator is responsible for each forum. The experts

may express their opinion online in any of the fora. By now, fora on the following subjects have been set up:

- **Ergonomic aspects in product standards**

Performance of workshops for the dissemination of information on ergonomic design rules and data, and formulation of European ergonomic standards as guidelines for practical application.

- **Emissions from machines**

Collection, validation and exploitation of machine emissions data. Production of a survey of measurement methods and machine operating states during measurement. Possibilities for the exploitation of emission values for the purpose of exposure assessment.

- **Research for the promotion of standardization, testing and certification**

Identification of requirements and priorities, and definition of joint research activities, for example within the framework of future EU research programmes.

- **Harmonization of requirements for the accreditation of testing and certification bodies**

Support in the drafting of standards with requirements regarding the assessment and notification of testing and certification bodies, and for the surveillance of notified bodies.

## **Experts**

contains a database which permits detailed searches for experts from the areas of standardization (members of standards committees), testing/certification (areas of activity in notified bodies) and applied research (researchers in particular areas). The database provides, for each individual, the name, institution, address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, fields of expertise, membership of standardization committees and interest in involvement in certain fora.

## **Documents**

provides a document management system. Members get access to documents which are not available to the general public (e.g. draft position statements by OH&S experts on European standards).

### **Mail**

enables e-mails to be sent simultaneously to all experts in the areas of standardization, testing, certification and/or applied research, or to experts in particular areas only.

### **Notice board**

acts as a bulletin board for subjects of relevance to occupational health and safety which are not covered by the existing fora.

### **Useful information**

provides information for example on possibilities to obtain funding for research projects.

EUROSHNET is not limited to the web-based communications platform. Numerous other means of co-operation within the network are to be exploited and developed. The communication platform will facilitate the forging of contacts between OH&S experts, and will accelerate discussion and joined activity and place them on a wider footing. It cannot, and should not, replace personal contact between the OH&S experts, however.

A **registration form** for participation in EUROSHNET is available at [www.euroshnet.org](http://www.euroshnet.org) (under "Network") and can be used by experts of European OH&S institutions active in standardization, testing, certification and related research. Once their registration has been accepted, new members receive their personal access data (user name and password) and can make use of the communication platform after entering information on their specialist fields.

If you have further questions about EUROSHNET, please contact Rita Schlüter, Secretariat of KAN (Commission for OH&S and Standardization), Alte Heerstr. 111, 53757 Sankt Augustin, Tel: 0049 2241 231 3475, Fax: 0049 2241 231 3464, e-mail: [schlueter@kan.de](mailto:schlueter@kan.de).