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PODSTAWY PRAWNE CERTYFIKACJI NA ŁOTWIE

LEGAL BASIS FOR CERTIFICATION IN LATVIA

The level of fire safety in the country is directly related with attestation of conformity system. Let's take closer look to the system of conformity attestation in Latvia. The whole system is based on the Law of Attestation of conformity (Approved on 08th August, 1996). The Law states following issues:

- Main principles of attestation of conformity in the mandatory field;
- Accreditation system in the mandatory and voluntary field.

The main goal of the Law is to provide and state united system of conformity attestation of products, processes and services. The system should confirm to the requirements of EU and International legislation.

The attestation of conformity performs only certification, inspection and testing institutions that are published in the official gazette by Ministry of Economics. The responsible institution in the field of attestation of conformity is Ministry of Economics. The Law states general requirements of attestation, but it is also the basis to state essential requirements for products, services and processes in the Minister Cabinet rules. In the fire safety field are following Minister Cabinet rules:

- "Procedure of Conformity Attestation of Construction Products in Regulatory Area" (Minister Cabinet rules No. 181, issued on 30th April, 2001);
- Conformity Attestation rules of fire safety products, fire fighting devices and equipment (Minister Cabinet rules No. 282, issued on 13th April, 2004).

Through the "Procedure of Conformity Attestation of Construction Products in Regulatory Area" EC Directive 89/106 "On the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to construction products" is implemented in Latvia Legislation. Procedure states:

- Construction products that fall under these Minister Cabinet rules;
- Procedure of attestation of conformity;
- Procedure of notification of attestation conformity institutions;

- The attestation of conformity of those products which do not have European standards (EN) or ETAGs (Guideline for European Technical Approval), but have national standards with stated essential requirements. That means that there are still national standards which state requirements (test methods and classification criteria) for construction products, and in this case, if there is not included the system of attestation of conformity in the standard, it is possible to state attestation of conformity according Minister Cabinet rules;
- Market surveillance system – clarifies that it is performed by State Construction Inspection and Consumer Protection Centre;
- Procedure of construction product’s “CE” marking.

According to Minister Cabinet rules No. 181 there are regularly published references to applicable standards – EN and ETAG. The requirements of EC Directive 89/106 are implemented but there are still problems with attestation of conformity of construction products:

- The lack of CEN standards – there are not approved or prepared a lot of standards that also state essential requirement No. 2 “Safety in case of fire”. Such situation arise problems because there are not approved National Standards that state essential requirements for construction products, the lack of standards influences in negative way fire safety level. In this case attestation of conformity is not performed in unified and correct way;
- The new system is different form previous one and it will take quiet a lot of time and efforts to train and educate consumers. The approach is different and people should get used to it.

There are positive effects of implementation of new system:

- There are unified requirements for all construction products in all EU member states – it makes more easy classification and application of construction products;
- After implementation of whole system – it is easier to improve it, because after stated time all member states will implement it.

The Minister Cabinet rules “Conformity Attestation rules of fire safety products, fire fighting devices and equipment” state:

- Essential requirements for fire safety products, fire fighting devices and equipment;
- The system of attestation of conformity of mentioned products.

These Minister Cabinet rules has quiet long history, because already on 1996 it was intended to implement such rules. These rules improve fire safety level, because they state requirements for essential fire products – fire extinguishers (there were not requirements

in Latvia legislation previously which stated that fire extinguishers should conform to EN standards), extinguishing media and hoses.

The future outlook for Latvia in the field of certification:

- Improve the legislation in this field – elaborate Building Codes and Fire Safety rules taking into account requirements that are stated in EN;
- To strengthen fire supervision for construction products that would include training and education of fire supervision inspectors;
- Popularization of fire safety among inhabitants – it could also include education regarding quality and performance of construction products.