

Report

Nordic - Baltic seminar on market surveillance of CE marked construction products

9-10.5.2005 Radisson SAS Hotel Helsinki

Background

Well functioning market surveillance that covers the whole European Economical Area can only be based on well functioning national market surveillance systems in each member states and co-operation between the national surveillance authorities. Even though this is a commonly agreed fact, no administrative co-operation between national authorities has yet been organised in the field of construction products.

The idea of arranging a seminar on market surveillance of CE marked construction products in the Nordic countries was first presented in the autumn 2004 as a result of unofficial discussion between Nordic construction authorities. While developing the idea further it became clear that it would be beneficial to include also the Baltic countries within this co-operation. Since their becoming member states of the EU the marketing of construction products from Nordic countries to the Baltic region as well as vice versa forms as important a control area as the transportation of products within the Nordic region.

Objective of the seminar

The idea of the seminar was to get the representatives of market surveillance authority organisations from all the Nordic and Baltic countries together at the first time. The objective was to learn how market surveillance work is organized and dealt with in day to day practise in these eight countries and to form personal contacts between colleagues in different countries.

Nordic – Baltic administrative co-operation can not replace the need for co-operation that would cover the whole EEA. Nevertheless, a good understanding of each others ways of action as well as personal contacts between the national authorities can remarkably unify

the market surveillance in Nordic – Baltic area and make the market surveillance more efficient.

Hosts

The seminar was arranged by the Safety Technology Authority (Turvatekniikan keskus) which is the organisation that takes care of market surveillance of CE marked construction products in Finland. The person responsible for the organisation of the seminar was Mr. Timo Pulkki.

The chairman of the seminar was Mr. Sven-Eric Roman from the Finnish ministry of the environment.

Attendance

The seminar was intended for authorities only. The purpose was to get participants that would represent both the legislative organisations (mainly ministries) as well as the organisations that take care of day to day market surveillance in each country. From Finland were also invited representatives from the national board of notified bodies and the Finnish EOTA organisation VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland.

All eight Nordic and Baltic countries attended the seminar. In total the attendance was 23 persons of which 10 came from Finland and 13 from other countries (two persons from Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden, one person from Denmark and Lithuania).

Seminar programme

At the first day the seminar was opened by Ms. Helena Säteri from the Finnish ministry of the environment. Days program began with a presentation concerning "arranging of co-operation between national market surveillance authorities" given by Mr. Seppo Ahvenainen, director general of the Finnish Safety Technology Authority.

The main content of the first day were presentations describing how market surveillance of CE-marked construction products is organised in each country. The participants were also requested to bring forth practical experiences and topical questions concerning the market surveillance of construction products.

Presentations were given by:

- Denmark, Ms. Mette Preisler, National Agency for Enterprise and Construction

- Estonia, Mr. Fred Haas, Technical Inspectorate
- Finland, Mr. Timo Pulkki, Safety Technology Authority
- Iceland, Mr. Tryggvi Axelsson, General Market Surveillance Authority
- Latvia, Ms. Svetlana Silutina, State Construction Inspectorate
- Lithuania, Ms. Vanda Keruliene, State Non Food Products Inspectorate
- Norway, Mr. Terje Maagerø, National Office of Building Technology and Administration
- Sweden, Mr. Bo Nilvall, Boverket

The day was ended by a summing up of the days presentations made by the chairman.

For the second day participants were asked to present different kind of problems and other issues of interest that they would like to have discussed together. The following items were presented and discussed:

- How to define the producer in case of a combination of more than just one manufacturer's products.
- Limits of flexibility in marking products according to CPD. Application in practise.
- Evaluation of compliance of cement with the regulatory limit on water-soluble chromium content.
- Uncertainty in operating reactively in market surveillance.
- Correspondence with manufacturers.
- Sanctions in the case of non-conformity.

The second day as well as the whole seminar was ended by a summing up and conclusions made by the chairman.

Organisation of market surveillance in participating countries

The main principle of organising market surveillance of CE marked construction products in the Nordic and Baltic countries is on reactive basis. Reactive surveillance can be reinforced by use of active surveillance projects or other kind of active measures. The only notable exception in reactive organising principle is Lithuania, where there is a tradition of impressive active market surveillance that covers all construction products, not only CE marked products.

In most of the Nordic and Baltic countries market surveillance of CE marked construction products was first started by adding it to accompany the existing surveillance activities.

Accordingly the organisation model of market surveillance of construction products varies depending on the traditions and existing organisation structure that produces market surveillance in general in each country. The aim is to get benefit from experience already available concerning the tools of market surveillance as well as expertise in the field of construction products.

Problems and experiences so far

The problems concerning market surveillance of CE marked construction products can be divided roughly in two: problems concerning the whole construction product directive (89/106/EEC) based conformity assessment system and practical problems concerning the organisation of day-to-day surveillance work. This seminar mainly concentrated on the latter.

The largest conversation was raised by the question of resources and funding. In most of the participating countries market surveillance of CE marked construction products is added as a new responsibility to employees who already have older responsibilities to fill their capacity. Still the surveillance area is expanding rapidly.

Otherwise many practical items were discussed (see chapter "seminar programme") and although this forum could not make any official decisions, changing opinions gave a deeper understanding of the overall situation and reduced the risk of making contradictory decisions in neighbouring countries.

Summary and continuation

Administrative co-operation between Nordic and Baltic countries can not replace the need for co-operation that would cover the whole EEA, but nevertheless good understanding of each others ways of action as well as personal contacts between the national authorities can remarkably unify the market surveillance in Nordic – Baltic area and make the market surveillance more efficient.

At the end of the seminar it was generally agreed that continuation of co-operation between market surveillance authorities in Nordic-Baltic region is of importance. No fixed act of continuation was decided but it was agreed that a new gathering for summing up of the development in this field would be arranged 2006 or in the first half of the year 2007.