



Every two months, IECEx Chairman Prof. Dr. Thorsten Arnhold provides an update on developments within his organisation

At the end of September, the annual IECEx management meeting took place in Dubai, UAE. For me personally, it is always a pleasure to be in this breathtaking city.

On the one hand, I am always impressed by the huge developments which happen in between my visits to the city, while on the other hand I also like the peaceful and respectful coexistence of people of different cultures and religions. Therefore, Dubai is the perfect place for a meeting of an international organisation such as IECEx. Our hosts from the national standards organisation, ESMA, gave their very best efforts to make our conference a big success.

As in the years before, more than 100 delegates and observers joined our event. It was a pleasure for us to welcome two new member countries to our community - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Greece.

Some of the highlights and announcements from the event were:

- All our operational schemes, including the certified equipment scheme, the service facility scheme, and the personnel competence scheme, have seen steady growth over the last year.

IECEX annual meeting 2019

- IECEx has now issued more than 3,000 certificates of personnel competence.
- There are now 29 recognised training providers registered. Both of these facts highlight the significant contribution that IECEx is making to overall workplace safety in the international process industry.
- During the last year, we launched our new website homepage. To avoid too much confusion among our users, the website remains similar but with a modern appearance and new inner structure which improves the performance of our most important communication platform.
- We welcomed the President and the Executive Secretary of OIML and were able to report on the first steps of the cooperation between our organisations.
- Finally, delegates elected my successor, Mr. Paul Meanwell from South Africa, as the new Chairman of the IECEx System. Paul has worked in the mining industry for many years and is the chair of the South African Flameproof Association.

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Unfortunately, there are also some negative developments to report. Initiated by global trade issues, some countries are trying to establish their own regulations regarding conformity assessments. For

instance, there are endeavours to send national assessors to manufacturers to carry out the manufacturer facility assessments. In practice, this would mean that the IECEx reports would no longer be recognised by these countries and the manufacturers would have to bear multiple inspections of almost the same subjects.

The IECEx and IEC position on this is quite clear - to be a member of a global organisation does not just mean to profit from the benefits, but to also fulfil all its duties and obligations. However, as a European I should be careful with personal statements. After all, those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. In this special case, the name of the glass house is ATEX.

With the beginning of the New Year, I will hand over my position to Paul. According to our rules, the Chairman can be elected for two terms, which is good since it ensures the ongoing flexibility of an organisation.

As a member of the IECEx executive, I will continue to contribute to the success of our system and from the beginning of next year, I will become the German member of the IEC Conformity Assessment Board which controls the activities of all conformity assessment systems of IEC, i.e. IECCE, IECQ, IECRE and IECEx.

I do not want to finish this article without the expression of a big thank you to all the marvellous people who work with me together in our systems, especially my colleagues from the IECEx office in Sydney. They are the reason for our common success and for my personal experience that the last six years have been more joy than hard work for me. ■