



European Group for the CERTification of CONStructional steels

CONSCERT CHARTER

PRINCIPLES

FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

RELATED TO THE

CERTIFICATION OF CONSTRUCTIONAL STEELS

1. FINDINGS

The Directors and Members of CONSCERT jointly find and declare that:

Certified steel in its different manufacturing outputs, in its various shapes and in its numerous grades is a major material for the building sector and a decisive actor for the safety of constructions; reinforcing and prestressing steels are in this regard natural and essential for concrete works.

Certified steel products are valuable regional, national and international resources for which the public and the private Consumers have, in partnership with the governmental Specifiers, an important, continuing and abiding role and responsibility.

European Group for the Certification of Constructional Steels

The certified constructional steels are part of a single metallurgical system. The multiple uses of these resources for constructional material supply, transformation and implementation are interdependent.

Third-party conformity assessment has for several decades revealed and confirmed an economical, objective and transparent route for product certification. In many circumstances, third-party certification was set up on a voluntary basis by the producers, the public and private consumers and the specifiers cooperating with each other. A coordinated approach resulted in maximising the significance of the factory production control, of the testing and of a robust statistical appraisal of the product characteristics.

Third-party certification moreover outlined an integrated process for the definition of the products specifications, in the field of standardisation on the one hand, and for the assessment of conformity, in the field of certification on the other hand. This resulted in a relevant and influential role exerted by Certification Bodies for many years within technical national and European standardising committees.

Observations conducted by the International Association CONSCERT, and other agencies have found that with careful and dedicated management, the future development of certification must secure the significant favourable impacts on the safety, the economy and the environment linked to constructional works.

As administrators of these processes and these methods, the Members of CONSCERT have a shared duty to promote, develop, manage and consolidate efficient certification schemes for the use, benefit, and safety of all their citizens, including generations yet to come. The most effective means of achieving these goals are through the joint pursuit of unified and cooperative principles, policies and programs mutually agreed upon, enacted and adhered to by each and every Member of CONSCERT.

Management of the third-party certification may be subject to the jurisdiction, rights and responsibilities of national or European Authorities. Effective management of the third-party certification requires the exercise of such jurisdiction, rights, and responsibilities. The Members of CONSCERT reaffirm the rights and obligations of such jurisdictions and their willingness to adhere to their rules.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this charter is to confirm the assets of third-party certification, to develop or consolidate efficient and economical certification schemes, to enforce the significance of third-party assessment of conformity, to promote the wide resort to third-party attestation of conformity and the placing on the market of constructional steels with the right performance and adequate fitness for use.

3. PRINCIPLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CONSCERT RESOURCES

In order to achieve the purposes of this charter, the Members and Directors of CONSCERT agree to the following principles:

3.1. Principle 1, Integrity and coherence of CONSCERT and its Members

The planning and management of CONSCERT activities shall recognize and be founded upon the integrity of the Members of CONSCERT. The Members of CONSCERT recognize that certified products are to be treated as a constructional system based on a set of coherent standards covering not only the products characteristics but also the constructional methods. For obvious reasons, the set of such standards may be either unified at the European or world levels or on the contrary dedicated to regional or national constraints of legal or voluntary nature.

3.2. Principle 2, Communication

The signatory Members of CONSCERT recognize and commit to a spirit of communication among each other and together with the Authorities and the Actors involved in product certification.

3.3. Principle 3, Consolidation of the third-party certification

The signatory Members of CONSCERT agree that lean certification schemes may be of serious concern. In recognition of their shared responsibility to conserve and protect credible certification schemes for the safety and benefit of the citizens, the Members of CONSCERT agree to launch actions promoting or consolidating robust and efficient certification processes based on third-party assessment of conformity.

3.4. Principle 4, Openness and transparency

It is the intent of the signatory Members of CONSCERT to stay open to improvements and progress in third-party certification and transparent to their Customers and to each other, with emphasis placed on consulting with and seeking the consent of other Members.

3.5. Principle 5, Cooperative actions

The Directors and Members of CONSCERT commit to pursue the development and maintenance of cooperative actions and practices regarding the application and management of third-party certification, to the establishment of systematic arrangements for the exchange of information regarding certification of constructional steel, and to concerted and coordinated efforts to provide improved information for future certification planning and management decisions.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLES

4.1. Principle 1, Integrity and coherence of CONSCERT and its Members

4.1.1. Integrity

The Members of CONSCERT privilege third-party product certification as it is presently in force and including all its facets.

4.1.2. Technical competence

Product certification is of vertical nature and involves a sectorial technical competence of its various actors. To this end, the members of CONSCERT commit themselves to possess the required technical competence and to apply the means to secure and consolidate it when recruiting and forming their agents. Without prejudice of other applicable criteria, any Member of CONSCERT does base his own technical competence on a practical experience in the field of product certification of constructional steel products for more than 15 years.

4.1.3. Notification

The Members of CONSCERT are certification bodies that benefit in their respective Member States from the official recognition by the national authority in charge of notification duties. When relevant on a national basis, they are accredited as Product Certification Bodies. When CE-marking is of application, the Members of CONSCERT shall

be notified for the products that are related to the field covered by CONSCERT and their affiliation.

4.1.4. Integrated approach

The Members of CONSCERT commit themselves to certify constructional steels exclusively according to a set of coherent products specifications and constructional methods.

4.2. Principle 2, Communication

4.2.1. Internal communication

The Members of CONSCERT regularly and actively participate to the meetings organised by CONSCERT.

4.2.2. External communication

The members of CONSCERT commit themselves to participate efficiently to the forums organised by their Member States for the attention of certification bodies. On the European level, they are active members of the Sectorial Groups of Notified Bodies for the activities relevant to their affiliation to CONSCERT. At both national and international scenes, the Members of CONSCERT assume technological watch in the standardisation Sectors or Committees related to the activities of interest to CONSCERT.

4.3. Principle 3, Consolidation of the third-party certification

4.3.1. Robust certification schemes

The Members of CONSCERT privilege robust and efficient certification processes based on third-party assessment of conformity.

4.3.2. Testing

The members of CONSCERT recognise the merits of testing in so far as such a practice has demonstrated and still demonstrates its capacity to outline the statistical consistency of test results (in relation with the concepts of reproducibility and repeatability, bias and scatter, uncertainty of measurement).

4.3.3. Statistical analysis

The Members of CONSCERT promote and consolidate the resort to discriminating statistical methods when assessing the conformity.

4.4. Principle 4, Openness and transparency

4.4.1. Openness

The Members of CONSCERT are open to progress and developments regarding third-party product certification on a coordinated manner. Should any trend or pressure be observed to alleviate the rules, the Members of CONSCERT will neither approve nor permit any diversion without notifying and consulting with and seeking the consent and concurrence of all affected Members of CONSCERT.

4.4.2. Transparency

The members of CONSCERT apply transparent certification rules that are edited and fully available to the certified companies. Each Member of CONSCERT relies on an own business administration whose structure and organisation are in line with all the legal requirements in force in the Member State of its head office. Each Member of CONSCERT applies a proper and independent business accounting.

4.5. Principle 5, Cooperative actions

4.5.1. Coordinated actions

The Members of CONSCERT do contribute to cooperative actions and practices regarding the good application and right management of third-party certification.

4.5.2. Exchange of information

The Members of CONSCERT favour systematic arrangements for the exchange of information regarding certification of constructional steel.

4.5.3. Bilateral conventions

The members of CONSCERT are free to set up bilateral conventions of reciprocal recognition of certification, inspection or testing activities.

5. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The Members of CONSCERT mutually recognize the rights and standing of all Members of CONSCERT to represent and protect the rights and interests of their respective jurisdictions and citizens in the shared resources of third-party certification.

Each Member of CONSCERT reserves and retains all rights and authority to seek protection of its rights, in such manner as may now or hereafter be provided by law.

In entering into this Charter, no Member of CONSCERT shall be deemed to imply its consent to any diversion from third-party certification now or in the future.

6. DEFINITIONS FOR PURPOSES OF THIS CHARTER

Construction product means any product which is produced for incorporation in a permanent manner in construction works or parts thereof and whose placing on the market is accompanied by a statement of performance or fitness for use.

Permanent manner means permanently installed in construction works so as that the dismantling of the product decreases the performance of the work and the dismantling or exchange of the product constitute construction operations.

Construction works means buildings and civil engineering works.

Conformity assessment means the process whereby demonstration is made that the manufacturer declaration relating to the performance characteristics or the fitness for a specific use of a product, is accurate, reliable and statistically stable.

Testing means the testing of samples taken at the factory.

Audit testing means the testing of samples taken at the factory by the cares of the certification body and performed outside the factory premises by accredited laboratories.

Witness testing means the testing of samples taken at the factory by the cares of the certification body, using the manufacturer's testing facilities equipment with or without the manufacturer's testing personnel operating it, for testing in the framework of conformity attestation, provided that:

- the manufacturer's facilities for testing are calibrated,
- the Notified Body agrees to the use of the manufacturer's testing facilities knowing that he, as NB, retains the responsibility for the test performed and its results,
- the Notified Body manages and surveys the tests, and assists to them also in the case they are carried out by the manufacturer's staff.

7. Signed and entered into the 09th of July 2008 by

Dario AGALBATO, IGQ

Ben BOWSHER, UK CARES

Jacques DEFOURNY, OCAB-OCBS

Evert SMIT, KIWA

Dieter GÖDECKER, ADZB

Douglas WALLDING, NORDCERT

Louis-Jean HOLLEBECQ, AFCAB

Jan KARLSEN, KONTROLLRADET

Luis LAZARO, AENOR

Erkki SAARINEN, INSPECTA Certification

Karsten TØLLØSE, DS Certificering