

CERTIFICATION AND MARKING FOR EUROPE

Success Factors for a European Mark and The Benefits of an Expanded ENEC Mark Scheme

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European Third Party conformity assessment in the electrical sector originated because there was a need, and in some cases a legal requirement, for an independent assessment to be carried out on products which might present hazards in use. This led to the creation of National Certification Bodies operating national schemes for the certification of electrical products, to which a proliferation of “National Marks” were applied.

But that is now history!

Today’s European Certification Schemes in the electrical sector are based on European harmonized standards and the creation of an expanded ENEC Mark Scheme begins the process of establishing a single European Certification Scheme and Mark for the electrical sector.

The ENEC mark is well proven.

More than 14,000 ENEC mark certificates have been issued covering 32,000 products, and manufacturers inside and outside Europe voluntarily seek the third-party assessment of their products through the Scheme. They do so primarily to demonstrate due diligence under the Law and to support their declaration of conformity with the Essential Safety Requirements of the relevant European Directives.

The expansion of the ENEC Mark Scheme has been achieved by first expanding its scope to cover household appliances with effect from January 2008.

This helped us to address the Keymark issues brought about by the Keymarks’ joint ownership by CEN and CENELEC, a situation that created ambiguity as to its’ meaning and difficulties in agreeing the key procedural elements on which the Keymark Schemes owned by the respective standards bodies should be based. The CENELEC Keymark scheme was closed to new applicants at the end of 2007, resolving those difficulties and facilitating the focus on the marketing and promotion of an Expanded ENEC Mark. The ENEC Mark Scheme has since been expanded further to cover consumer electronic products and now has a scope covering more than 80% of the electrical products placed on the European market.

Success Factors for a European Mark

The prime success factor for the European ENEC Mark has been that it fulfills the needs of the manufacturer. They require an ISO Type 5 Full Certificate Scheme comprising:-

1. Third Party Testing
2. Third Party Certification
3. Annual Factory Inspection
4. Ongoing monitoring of products and production
5. Regular monitoring of the mark in the market place

Because it is a Full Certification Scheme limited to safety only, the ENEC Mark Scheme provides safety assurance for the lifetime of the certification.

A high quality operation is essential to instill confidence in the scheme and mark and this is achieved through measures such as the stringent initial and ongoing assessment of ENEC Certification Bodies and Test laboratories, regular meeting of testing experts and the participation of Test Laboratories in a Comparative Testing Programme.

The scheme must be open to manufacturers' world wide, otherwise it will not address the problem of the safety of products manufactured outside Europe and subsequently placed on the European market.

This will be helped by the good co-operation between the European ENEC Mark Scheme and the International CB Scheme. An ENEC Mark can be used as the basis for access to other regional marks around the world and a CB Test Certificate and Report can be used by manufacturers outside Europe as the basis for an application for an ENEC Mark. We are part of a global industry and international co-operation is an essential requirement of success.

Finally, the scheme needs the acceptance of key stakeholders, including:-

- The Certification Bodies (manifesting itself in the mutual acceptance of the testing and certification carried out by the schemes member, an acceptance in the case of the ENEC Mark Scheme that has grown out of decades of co-operation).
- All European Countries
- The Manufacturers and their Associations, (a difficult task when their needs vary from sector to sector)
- The Regulatory and Market Surveillance Authorities (acceptance by them would speed the growth and establishment of any scheme).
- The Consumer/User (ENEC has not established itself as a "consumer mark" primarily because of its' lack of promotion, due to the historic complexities of European certification, the Keymark issue and because of its' lack of acceptance or recognition by the Authorities.

The expanded ENEC Mark will be widely promoted and as part of that promotion the ENEC Mark will be accompanied by an explanation of its meaning “Europe Safe” and a web site reference, activities which we hope will in time lead to its acceptance as a “Consumer Mark”.

The Benefits of an Expanded ENEC Mark

The benefits of an expanded ENEC Mark are many.

First and foremost it begins the process of establishing a single high quality European Certification Mark for the electrical product sector, a development that has considerably simplified the structure of European Certification in the electrical sector. It has also helped address the Keymark issue and now the Scheme has only one mark on which to focus, it will facilitate the improved promotion of that mark.

Another major benefit is that the ENEC Mark will provide safety assurance to the consumer or user, and the authorities, for the lifetime of the certification and not just when the product was first tested.

Finally, the expanded ENEC Mark Scheme could be of great benefit to the market surveillance authorities, providing them with the assurance that the product to which it was applied has been the subject of third party conformity by a body operating within a “recognized” European Scheme. Unfortunately we do not benefit from that recognition today and perhaps its encouragement will become a policy conclusion drawn from today’s discussion.

I hope the following summary directly answers the key questions the contributors to this Workshop were asked to address.

1(a) The Role of Certification and Marking – Safe Products

A developed and widely used ENEC Mark Scheme can make a significant contribution to improving the safety of electrical products in Europe.

We believe that the more products that are subject to third party conformity assessment, the safer the market becomes. Extending the scheme to more manufacturers outside Europe will particularly help, and maintaining product and manufacturer information for the lifetime of the certification will help traceability.

The ENEC Mark Scheme Certification Bodies and Test laboratories are expert in undertaking market surveillance activities but, even though most are also LVD Notified Bodies, their services are used only infrequently by the Market Surveillance Authorities. There is tremendous scope for improving the safety of products placed on the European market through a closer co-operation between the LVD Notified Bodies and the Market Surveillance Authorities.

Electrical products are modified continuously during their lifetime and those engaged in Certification and Marking are skilled in monitoring those modifications and effectively managing safety problems when they occur.

The application of a proven and reliable safety mark will complement the application of CE Marking without detracting from its' meaning and the Certification and Marking of products with a developed and well managed Scheme such as the ENEC Mark Scheme, will improve the safety of products in Europe.

1(b) The Role of Certification and Marking – Free Movement of Products

The ENEC Mark scheme for electrical products has been developed to encourage the free movement of products in Europe.

It is based on one High Quality European Mark that can be applied by a European-wide Certification and testing network with mutual acceptance of test results.

The scheme is open to manufacturers worldwide and is recognized by the International CB Scheme.

The application of a proven and reliable safety mark supports the application of CE Marking without detracting from its' meaning and the Certification and Marking of products within a developed and well managed Scheme, such as the ENEC Mark Scheme, will encourage the free movement of products in Europe.