

CERTIFICATION - THE ACTIVITY WHICH INFLUENCES THE DEVELOPMENT LEVEL OF HUMAN SOCIETY

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Abstract: *In this paper are presented the national, European and international institutional existing relationships of the standardisation and certification bodies. Furthermore, is analyzed the connection between certification and standardisation and their influence on the level of the society from Romania and namely from the European Union countries. Certification process is very complex as it requires a radical change in work mode of society requires rules and principles and requires the ability to learn and assimilate new knowledge.*

Keywords: certification, accreditation, standardization

1. INTRODUCTION

The certification of products/services is an extremely important and strictly necessary thing for the existence of producers on the domestic or external market, and this is why they want to certify their products even though their certification is compulsory or voluntary. The certification is a very complex process because it requires a radical change of the working practice of a society, new rules and principles and an ability of learning and assimilating new knowledge. In literature, the definition of certification has many forms, but all of them have the same general meaning, namely that certification certifies the quality of a product.

Guide 2 ISO/CEI: 1996, defines certification as: “*a procedure through which a third party certifies in written that a product, process or service complies with the specified requirements*” [3].

Practically, the certification certifies the compliance of products with a standard or a certain normative document.

2. BRIEF HISTORICAL PRESENTATION

In order to make a historical presentation of the certification activity, it is necessary to correlate it with the standardisation activity.

In 1990 RELAR association is founded according to Law no. 21/1924 on associations and foundations, published in the Romanian Official Gazette, Part I, no. 27 on 6 February 1924. In Romania, the conceiving of the legal and institutional framework of certification and accreditation was determined and stimulated by the need of integrating the economic activities in the international economic system. All these needs led to the creation of the National System of Quality Certification, a legal framework which was completed through the Government Decision no. 167 on 6 April 1992. This system comprised not only all the certification bodies of products and services, quality system, personnel, test laboratories, but also all accredited laboratories. Also in 1992 through the GD no. 721, the National Training, Consultancy and Management Centre for Quality Provision [5] was founded. Through the

Government Decision no. 483/24 August 1992, the Romanian Standards Institute functioned as a specialised institute of the central public administration, in the field of standardisation, and on 28 August 1992, the GD no. 19/28.08.1992 on the Romanian standardisation activity appears. The National Certification System was coordinated by the Romanian Standards Institute (IRS).

In April 1992, within the Romanian Standard Institute the DCANOC (Directorate of Certification, Accreditation, Bodies Notification and Quality) was founded, which started to carry out accreditation activities. The decisions on accreditation were approved by the Accreditation Council. In 1993 RELAR association turns into RELAR – Accreditation Body of Test Laboratories and has been carrying out accreditation activities since 1995. On 6 July 1998, as a consequence of the Government Ordinance no. 38/30 January 1998, in the Constitution General Assembly it was decided to merge the two existent accreditation bodies (RELAR and IRS-DCANOC), into one national accreditation body called RENAR [4]. Also in 1998 there was a significant institutional reform, namely the National Standardisation Body, the Romanian Standards Institute became the Romanian Standardisation Association – ASRO [1] according to the Government Ordinance no. 39/30 January 1998 (amended through GO no. 44/27 July 1998). In 2003 there is issued the Order of Industry and Resources Ministry no. 354/12 June 2003 on the recognition of the Romanian Accreditation Association -RENAR as a national accreditation body, and through the GD no. 985/2004 ASRO is recognised as a national standardisation body, according to the GO no. 39/1998 on the national standardisation activity approved with amendments and completions through the Law no. 355/2002. The Romanian Accreditation Association is a non-governmental association, of a non-profit-making nature and is founded according to the provisions of Law 21/1924, with the subsequent amendments, and its legal personality is recognised through the Civil Decision no. 1966 on 07.08.1990 (file 1975/PJ/1990) of the Sector 1 Bucharest Court of First Instance. The Association is officially recognised as a single national accreditation body, pursuant to the GO 23/2009 and according to the provisions of (EC) Regulation no. 765/2008 and works in coordination with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment. RENAR activities are checked whether are lawful or not in accordance with the applicable regulations in force.

According to the aforementioned data, the bodies which establish, in present, the legal framework on the two standardisation and certification activities in Romania are: RENAR National Accreditation Association in Romania and ASRO Romanian Standardisation Association. These bodies are recognised and work directly with the government.

3. CERTIFICATION AND STANDARDISATION – LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND IDEAL COUPLE

Romania's accession to the European Communion requested the alignment of national standards to EN/ISO standards. Furthermore, it requested the possibility of accrediting some specialised bodies according to ISO-9000. These bodies must be independent from both producers/suppliers and beneficiaries/consumers. They aim to prove the existence of a high and adequate level of confidence that a product/service is in compliance with a certain standard recognised and accepted not only by producers/suppliers, but also by

beneficiaries/consumers. In the figure 1 it is presented the simplified scheme of the institutional relationships between the two national bodies, and their connection and subordination to European and international standardization and accreditation bodies. As it can be observed, ASRO gives the right of using the certification mark of the compliance of products and services with the Romanian, European and international standards, while RENAR accredits the certification bodies, test laboratories, calibration laboratories and the inspection bodies. The stage before the certification is the standardisation, and the intermediary between the two stages is the auditing. Since, in time, the research activity stimulated the standardisation activity, they became a strong couple, which determines each other.

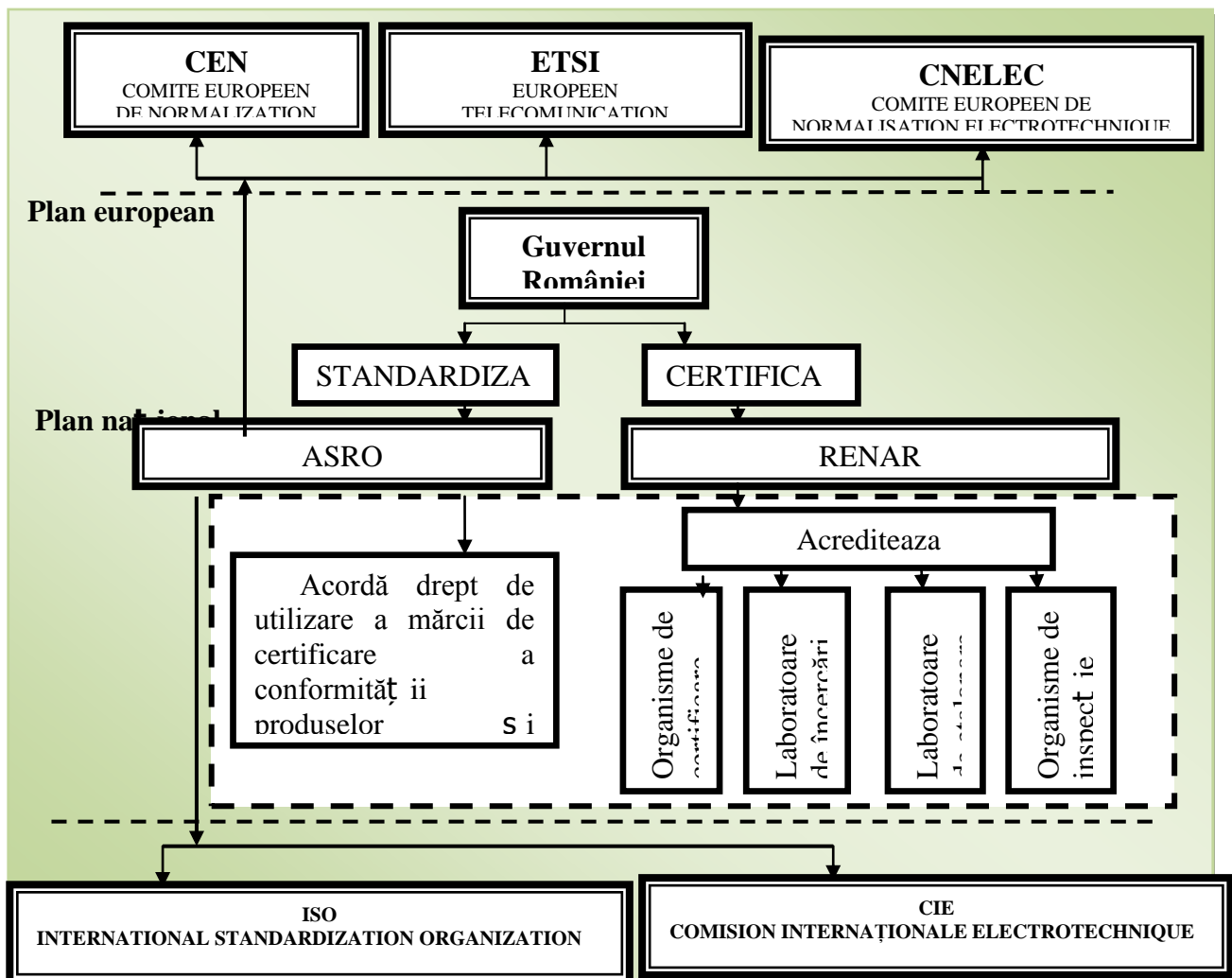


Fig.1. The national, European and international institutional relationships of the Romanian standardisation and certification bodies.

The activity's progress compared to the market's requirements influenced the standardisation activity. Standardisation, at its turn, taking into account the evolution of the technique, influenced the research activity. Certification has always appeared as a result of a regulation or a standard on the product that must be certified. In the conditions of the market's economy, the standard is a complete or partially optional (voluntary) document, a characteristic resulting not only from the way of elaborating, implementing them, but also from the basic principle of free market. It gives a maximum liberty to economic agents in elaborating technological solutions and price-quality relationships, which are practiced on the competitive market. The European accession meant, in fact, the free movement of products, services, capitals and persons on single market. This accession needed and still needs the harmonisation of national regulations and elimination of technical barriers, being an important element of improving competitiveness on the international market, and consolidating the domestic markets. In order to see if the product/service is in compliance with the reference standards/standards it is necessary to certify it.

The compliance of products of a trading company can cause a chain reaction of the compliance of some products, both upstream and downstream. Once the products were certified, they would have a stronger competitiveness on the uncertified products, thus determining the other producers to certify their products. In addition, the company which certified its products can become much more pretentious, asking the suppliers to provide only certified products.

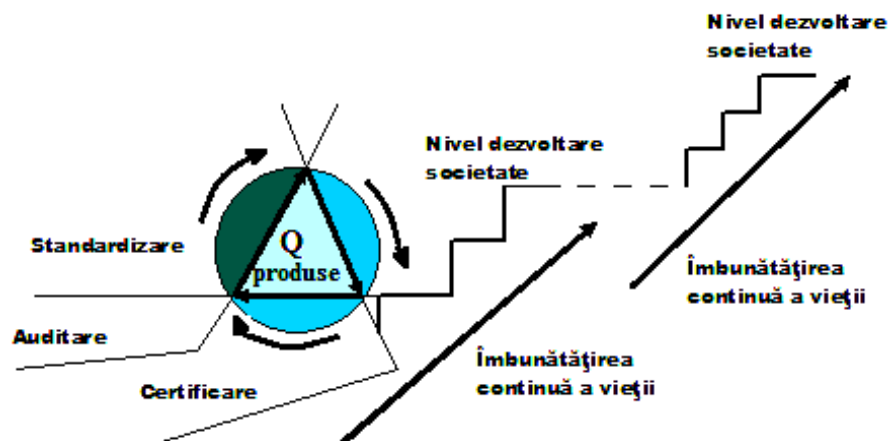


Fig.2. The stages of continuous improvement of human life and quality of products, processes and services influenced by standardisation, accreditation and certification.

From the aforementioned information it can be observed the importance of the standardisation and certification activities, which lead to the increase of people's safety as well as to the increase of product's quality, both of them influencing the improvement of people's livings.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Since certification is a successional activity of the standardisation activity, it plays an important role in the development and modernisation of industry and implicitly of human society, and therefore, as a member state of the European Union, we must keep up with the different challenges from various fields both at European and international level. By certifying the products of a trading company, a chain reaction occurs of the certification of others products, both upstream and downstream a company, because the company which certifies its products becomes a feared competitor for the companies with uncertified products and more pretentious, thus asking the suppliers to provide only certified product.

From the paper it can be drawn the conclusion that for a continuous improvement of human life and quality of products, processes and services it is necessary to implement and keep up with the revised and recently published (standardised) standards, to apply and continuously assess and monitor their appliance (auditing), followed by the issuing of a conformity certificate, or a conformity mark (certification).

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