



**Mr. Frank K. Kitzantides** currently serves as chairman of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) System for Conformity Testing and Certification of Electrical Equipment (IECEE). In this issue, he speaks with the ANSI Reporter about conformity assessment activities in the electrotechnical arena, U.S. National Committee (USNC) and IEC activities, and his candidacy for the office of IEC vice president and Chairman of the Standardization Management Board (SMB).

## MR. FRANK KITZANTIDES

Chairman, IEC System for Conformity Testing and Certification of Electrical Equipment

**ANSI Reporter (AR):** *Mr. Kitzantides, you have served as chairman of the IECEE Certification Management Committee since 1998. We understand that your term of office will conclude later this year. For those readers who may not be familiar with the committee, would you please explain how the IEC is organized to manage conformity assessment issues?*

**Frank Kitzantides (FK):** In the early 1990s it became apparent that conformity assessment and certification were becoming an important key to international trade and needed to be dealt with at the highest levels of the Commission in terms of strategy and direction. At the 1994 IEC General Meeting in Nice, the Conformity Assessment Board (CAB) was established to act on behalf of the IEC Council for all conformity assessment activities. CAB is responsible for managing IEC's conformity assessment activities; approving officers, budgets and rules of the IEC Schemes.

The three IEC Schemes (IECEE, IECQ and IECEx) have their own Statutes and Rules of Procedures, their own management bodies and their own separate budgets. IECQ deals with the quality assessment of electronic components and the IECEx is operating a scheme for the safety of electrical equipment in explosive atmospheres.

*One standard, One test:* the IEC provides this opportunity to the world with its Schemes. They are valuable tools for global trade because they provide the industry with an efficient method of market access by reducing multiple testing/approvals, at national levels — thus faster and cheaper access to markets.

**AR:** *The work of the IECEE has a direct impact on international trade. Can you explain how the IECEE's work also impacts on the end-user — in this case, the consumer?*

**FK:** The IECEE CB Scheme is by far the most widely used mutual recognition (reciprocal acceptance) type-testing program with a very wide scope including many consumer products.

The IEC conformity assessment programs reassure the individual users and consumers that the products they buy meet their expectations in terms of performance, safety and durability.

Of the 28,000 CB Test Certificates issued in 2002, 23,000 were issued for three product categories:

- Office Equipment (12,000 certificates);
- Household (5,500 certificates), and
- Electronics and Entertainment (5,500 certificates).

A substantial percentage of all three are for “consumer” products. Removing significant delays and costs for multiple testing and approvals allows industry to produce reliable products faster and cheaper. The IEC conformity assessment programs reassure the

individual users and consumers that the products they buy meet their expectations in terms of performance, safety and durability.

**AR:** *In addition to your role in IEC, you also serve as vice-president — technical of the U.S. National Committee of the IEC. How does the USNC address conformity assessment activities in the international arena?*

**FK:** The overall responsibility for domestic and international policy on conformity assessment is under the auspices of the ANSI Board Conformity Assessment Policy Committee (CAPC). This committee works closely with the ANSI International Policy Committee on international crosscutting conformity assessment issues. Reporting to the CAPC is the International Conformity Assessment Committee (ICAC) that has the responsibility for developing the U.S. positions on ISO/IEC Conformity Assessment Committee (CASCO) documents.

Representatives from the USNC serve on the ICAC and communicate the electro-technical community's viewpoints. However, since the USNC has responsibility for the development of all U.S. positions on matters arising within the IEC and other electrotechnical bodies, it has also established standing committees on IECEE, IECQ and IECEx. These bodies have balanced memberships, are separately funded, and operate autonomously on matters affecting U.S. views with respect to each of the IEC Schemes.

A USNC coordinating committee consisting of the officers of the three standing committees develops U.S. positions on common issues addressed by CAB.

**AR:** *In October 2002 the IEC approved the Implementation Plan of its Global Relevance Policy. From your perspective, how is the roll-out of this policy progressing and what are the near- and long-term implications?*

**FK:** With the approval of the Global Relevance Implementation Plan, the IEC accomplished a major goal in its *Masterplan 2000*. This is good for IEC and will enhance the development and global acceptance of IEC standards. The real test now is to put this concept into practice. There is work to be done in informing and educating the implementers, the Working Group convenors, and the TC/SC Chairs and Secretaries to make sure that all proposals for essential differences in requirements (EDRs) are processed in a uniform manner.

To roll out this program, the IEC held a seminar last April in Geneva on the implementation procedures for EDRs. Another seminar is scheduled to be held in early September at the ANSI offices in New York. It is hoped that the second seminar will provide more precise explanations to the questions already raised, but the real test will be on the processing of EDR submittals. The U.S. is working on a couple of EDRs and expects to submit them by late summer.

Perhaps the progress has been a little slow, but it is important to do it methodically in order to minimize any long-term implications and misunderstandings.

**AR:** *Finally, Mr. Kitzantides, we would like to congratulate you on your nomination as a candidate for the office of IEC vice president and chairman of the Standardization*

*Management Board (SMB). In your view, what major issues do you foresee the IEC being called upon to address?*

**FK:** Regardless of the election outcome, I feel honored and privileged to have been nominated by my national committee, and to have received the support of many other countries, former IEC officers, corporations and industry groups. To all of those I am eternally grateful.

The IEC has made great strides to improve productivity and accelerate standards development since the first General Meeting I attended as a U.S. delegate in Montreal in 1985. There will continue to be a demand to further improve the management of technical work, to produce more flexible standards systems, reduce duplication and strengthen the cooperation with ISO and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

A number of major global drivers will determine the course of trade and commerce and the pace of globalization itself, especially the dramatic role being played by electronic commerce, the formation of more global joint ventures, increased trade among nations and the development of even more sophisticated IT tools.

Further, at the present time, the IEC is being challenged, among others, to:

- attain recognition as a preeminent international standards organization;
- maximize world-wide acceptance of its standards;
- implement a systems approach to standardization;
- enhance collaboration with regional bodies;

- maximize application of IT tools in the standards development process;
- foster strategic planning to highlight standardization needs for new technologies;
- and facilitate the active involvement of all IEC national committees in the standardization process.

The IEC will have to define the requirements for tomorrow's products to assure that new standards add value, not just costs, and that they continue to meet customer and market requirements. It is an industry-driven organization and, as history has shown, it will respond well to our sector's standardization needs of tomorrow.

**AR:** *Thank you. Are there any last thoughts you would like to share?*

**FK:** This will be my last year of participation in the IEC after 19 years. It has been a truly memorable experience and I am very proud of the fact that this organization has become the most well-known and talked about international conformity assessment body for electrical equipment.

The many meetings of the IEC in various member countries have contributed to a considerable exchange of knowledge among the delegates and, in some cases, true friendship. This not only promotes a better understanding of the countries, but also of the people involved.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all the members for the enthusiastic cooperation I received as a country delegate and as chairman, and I wish the IEC continued success in the years to come. ■



The U.S. National Committee of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) proudly supports

**Mr. Frank K. Kitzantides**

as a candidate for IEC Vice President and Chairman of the Standardization Management Board