Minutes of the QUALANOD Technical Committee meeting held on 20 June 2007 (8h30 – 11h20) in Zurich (Hotel Sofitel)

TC members:	**ESTAL**	**EAA**
	J. Bettencourt	T. Bardh
	R. Boi	F. Dijkstra
	R. Furneaux	W. Mader **(Chairman)**
	M. Koot	T. Poulet
	T. Ulucak	
	R. Wunderlin	
Guests:	Å. Broli (EC)	
	P. Leclainche	
	P. LLoret (EC)	
	H. Sips	
Secretariat:	J. Schoppig	
	P. Bellot (minutes)	
Apologies:	J. Arenas (EAA)	
	S. Meirsschaut (ESTAL)	

A G E N D A

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4. **Coil – working group's report**
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7. **Weight loss test: substitution of the phosphoric acid / chromic acid solution**
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The Chairman of the Technical Committee, Mr. Mader, welcomed the delegates and guests, especially Mr. Åsmund Broli of Hydro Aluminium, who had been nominated to the Executive Committee by EAA and was attending a QUALANOD meeting for the first time.

Mr. Schoppig explained that, following a legal consultant's recommendations, the Secretariat would give antitrust reminders at every meeting from now on. By signing the attendance sheet, those present would acknowledge that they had been made aware of competition compliance guidelines applying to the meeting.

Those present took note of the antitrust reminder distributed at the meeting.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2006

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved.

2. Statistical report

Mr. Schoppig commented on the list of unsatisfactory inspections based on the reports received between 01.11.06 and 31.05.07. Three inspections out of 201 (1.5%) had been negative. The reasons for negative results were insufficient thickness (1) and weight loss (2). In the previous period (01.06.06 – 31.10.06), four inspections out of 150 (2.7%) had been negative.

A summary of the weight loss and abrasion test results was also distributed to all those present.

3. Abrasion test: BSI's position and purchase of abrasive paper

At a previous meeting, Mr. Furneaux had been asked to locate a source of abrasive paper in the United Kingdom. He had been able to find one company that obtained this type of paper from a source in China. The retailer had already confirmed that he could supply the paper either as a single order directly to QUALANOD or to the members individually.

Mr. Mader said that a German anodizer, who was working to the British Standard and had direct contact with Mr. Clarke, had been able to get an address in Essex and purchase the original paper mentioned in the standard.

Mr. Schoppig would therefore contact this supplier and inform the committee members about the availability of the paper. Another survey would be carried out among the national associations with a view to placing a collective order.

Mr. Boi said that the BS 6161:18 standard which QUALANOD used as a reference for the abrasion test was no longer valid because it depended on a standard that been withdrawn (BS 871). He felt that it would be better for QUALANOD to simply use the method described in the standard without mentioning the standard itself any more. Mr. Mader added that the paper should also be clearly specified by QUALANOD.

The Technical Committee welcomed this idea and kindly asked Mr. Boi to prepare a concrete proposal for the next Technical Committee meeting.

4. Coil – working group's report

In February, two members of the working group (Mr. Djikstra and Mr. Furneaux) had visited Coil. The tests performed by Mr. Djikstra had confirmed that, although they gave good performance in service, class 20 products clearly failed the surface abrasion test with a loss of thickness of over 5 µm. Mr. Djikstra and Mr. Furneaux had therefore made a number of recommendations to help Coil gain approval for its class 20 product.

The working group felt that it was up to Coil either to take action to bring the results of the surface abrasion test up to the required level or to produce further information to explain why the test, in its current form, might not be applicable to coil anodised aluminium.

The Technical Committee agreed with the working group's conclusions and thanked its members for their work. No further action would be taken by QUALANOD unless requested by Coil.

5. Etching – specification of etching practices

The Technical Committee discussed and reviewed the second draft prepared by Mr. Furneaux.

Some amendments were made, primarily to clarify some sentences. It was also decided to avoid any restriction that could limit the development of the process. Tolerances for temperature and etch values were therefore removed from the text.

Regarding surface preparation, Mr. Boi suggested including the designations used in EN EN 12373-1.

With these modifications, the draft was approved by the Technical Committee. It would then be converted into an update sheet provided that the Executive Committee agreed with it.

6. Medium temperature processes

6.1 Assessment of a new medium temperature process (Stage B)

A dossier, including a test report for assessment of a new medium temperature process and a technical data sheet, had been sent to the Technical Committee members a few days before the meeting.

Mr. Schoppig explained that the product had been tested on behalf of a company which used it for its own production but not for commercial purposes. He had visited this plant himself when it had applied for QUALICOAT and later on for QUALANOD too.

The Technical Committee members reviewed the test report and came to the conclusion that an approval could not be granted because the reference samples had not been produced in accordance with the Specifications i.e. using the conventional methods described in the Specifications (hot steam versus hot water). Furthermore the reference samples did not satisfy the quality requirements. This prevented any kind of comparison or assessment.

6.2 Assessment of a medium temperature process after outdoor exposure (Stage C)

In June 2004, the Technical Committee had assessed the laboratory test results of a new medium temperature process and agreed to proceed with the outdoor exposure of test samples produced with this new product even though the results of the laboratory tests were not clearly positive. The samples had now been returned by the testing laboratory after 3 years of exposure at Hook van Holland, but not at Genoa.

Mr. Boi said that no samples had been exposed at Genoa because QUALITAL had never received these panels.

Those present found it difficult to make a final evaluation based on the results of only one exposure site. Furthermore, they were also missing a report from the testing laboratory giving full information about the process.

Finally the Technical Committee asked the Secretariat to send more information to the TC and EC members. The Executive Committee would decide about the outdoor exposure problem (one site only).

7. Weight loss test: substitution of the phosphoric acid / chromic acid solution

At the previous meeting, Mr. Boi had asked for an alternative to the referee test used to evaluate sealing quality according to EN 12373-7 which involved the use of chromic acid containing Cr(VI).

Mr. Mader said that he had been looking for similar tests in existing literature but could not find anything satisfactory.

In the meantime, Mr. Luthiger had referred the matter to the EAA environmental experts in Brussels and informed QUALANOD of their conclusions:

- No ban at present
- Increasing pressure to substitute other substances for Cr(VI) via various Directives
- Possible limits for content in products
- Could fall under REACH (registration necessary from more than 1 t use per year) as it is regarded as a hazardous substance.
- (Anodizers) would be wise to start the discussion with (their) suppliers and ask them for a safety data sheet.

Although there was no reason to panic, the Chairman of the Technical Committee felt that QUALANOD should work on this issue.

Mr. Furneaux said that a working group of aluminium experts was trying to find a test method to evaluate sealing quality at European level. Mr. Mader mentioned the so-called "bubble test" and also drew attention to the SIDA guidelines which were the basis of the QUALANOD Specifications. He offered to send a copy of the English version to the Technical Committee members.

The item "Weight loss test: substitution of the phosphoric acid / chromic acid solution" would be put on the agenda for every future Technical Committee meeting until a solution was found.

8. Any other business

Mr. Mader said that the German association had asked its standards organisation, DIN, to publish a complete set of standards for aluminium surface pretreatment in one book as it had already done in other fields. Purchasing such a book was far more useful than purchasing individual standards. Such a complete set of standards (i.e. book) would cost approx. one-tenth of the total of the unit prices.

He was willing to ask whether DIN could also publish the book in English. However, he warmly advised the national associations to ask their own national standards institutions to publish such a book in their own countries.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting would be held on:

Thursday, 22 November 2007

in Zurich (Hotel SOFITEL)