

Ladies and Gentlemen,
distinguished guests,
dear colleagues,

This first semester of 2011 marks the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union. It is therefore both timely and appropriate that the 55th Congress of the European Organization for Quality be held here in Budapest. I would like to take the opportunity to welcome you all and to thank our organizers, the Hungarian National Committee for EOQ for the hard work and organization of this congress.

“Navigating Global Quality in a New Era”, the motto of our congress this year, invites we all to think about quality approach beyond European borders and beyond the classical understanding of this concept.

EOQ’s mission is to improve European society through the promotion of Quality and our vision today is to become Europe’s leading promoter of Quality in its broadest sense. For this purpose, EOQ is acting to improve society through qualified and competent people in the various aspects of quality meaning risk, quality, environment, health and safety, corporate social responsibility and so on.

Quality management is seen more and more as an integration platform and thus quality management develops ever more to across section discipline. Quality management represents the basis for the integration of further requirements.

According to a recent study, in addition to quality, following topics have a high meaning in the life and success of a company:

- Occupational health and safety: 44.8%
- Material and resource management: 43.6%
- Environmental management: 33.7%
- Riskmanagement: 30.4%
- Energy management: 20.1%

According to this study, about 90% of respondents evaluate the application of an integrated management system more than effective or very effective, by considering all before mentioned aspects.

The whole world is still experiencing the financial and economic crisis. On the other hand, actions when on March 11 this year the horrifying earthquake of magnitude 9.0 struck Japan, followed by an even more devastating tsunami, the world held its breath. The Fukushima nuclear power plant has been severely damaged, posing another and even more frightening risk to the people of Japan.

A Hungarian proverb says “Necessity is the greatest teacher”. Today the whole world should learn from the dramatic experiences of the last periods and think about how doing things better in the future.

In this context, risk management will have a significant importance; it should be seriously approached at world, continent, country, company and personal level.

As risks may come from uncertainty in financial markets, project failures, legal liabilities, credit risk, accidents, natural causes and disasters as well as deliberate attacks from an adversary, risk management is the identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events or to maximize the realization of opportunities.

One of EOQ's goals is to achieve mutual recognition of personnel competences within Europe, hence, the registration and unified certification of quality and management professionals.

EOQ is today active and strongly involved in the development of normative reference documents for the certification of professionals working in the field of management systems. Risk management is a priority topic on the working program of EOQ's technical working group.

More than 80 000 professionals are already certified in accordance with the EOQ professional competence requirements, harmonized at European level. EOQ member organizations are realizing training activities for the EOQ personnel certification, which is one of the highest level recognition for professionals acting in integrated management systems.

Competence certificates based on EOQ personnel certification schemes have an outstanding reputation and are objective proof of competence due to the world wide accepted processes of assessment, examination, certification and re-certification.

I would like to close wishing you all, every success in your deliberations and experiences of this European Quality event. I hope that by the end of the Congress every one of you will feel newly inspired and newly committed to the quality cause in its broadest sense. We all have a role to play, and every one of us must play their part.

Thank you!