

## **EUEXCERT – CERTIFYING EXPERTISE IN THE EUROPEAN EXPLOSIVES SECTOR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

An understanding of explosives science and technology, and the competence to harness it, is central to maintaining explosives capability, national security, and sustaining a competitive industry. A consequence of losing this competence is the increased likelihood of explosives accidents. These are often catastrophic as demonstrated by accidents in Nigeria, Russia, Toulouse and Enschede. In addition to the loss of life, there was the very significant damage to homes, domestic and industrial infrastructure and to the environment at a cost of many millions of euros.

There is a perception and some evidence that, in Europe, competence in this key technological area is being eroded. In several European nations, a high proportion of the most experienced and knowledgeable personnel are retiring or nearing retirement. Urgent efforts are therefore underway in some European nations to replenish this expertise.

In 2003, KCEM started a European project with partners from Finland, Italy, Norway and United Kingdom to tackle this problem. The project is partly financed by the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The aim of this pilot project is to establish a training and education programme aimed at restoring and maintaining the competence of workers engaged in the explosives industry. The programme places increased emphasis on improving the quality of the educational material and in improving access to training through use of workplace and e-learning. Improvement in competence and skills will enhance the status of explosives workers, improve worker and public safety and improve European industrial competitiveness through greater worker mobility and the ability to react rapidly to a fast changing economic and industrial environment.

This paper will describe the project, the outcomes of the project and coming activities. More information about the project can be found on the project's website, [www.euexcert.org](http://www.euexcert.org).