

CERTALARM -
the Quality Mark
for Fire
& Security

CERTALARM's support for the Commission's conclusions about the renewal of the BER

CERTALARM

CERTALARM (see www.certalarm.org) is an AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif). The voluntary certification schemes of CERTALARM guarantee compliance to European standards (for products, systems, installations and services) in the Alarm sector (including fire, intruder & social alarms).

CERTALARM aims to be the initiator, developer and executor of European voluntary certification sector schemes for the Alarms sector operating under the EA umbrella (see www.european-accreditation.org). Products and systems are tested by accredited Test Laboratories. Inspections of installations and services are carried out by accredited Inspection Bodies. Resulting test or inspection reports are assessed for certification purposes by accredited Certification Bodies. In addition, sample testing and factory process inspection ensure life-long compliance.

The involved Test Laboratories, Inspection Bodies and Certification Bodies have to acquire their orders from the manufacturers in full competition in an open market.

CERTALARM certification removes the necessity for products (and systems, installations and services) to be separately certified in each country: it reduces costs and speeds up the introduction of new products and technology. Furthermore, it removes the confusion created by country-specific certification schemes, allowing easier cross-border trading of products and services. CERTALARM contributes to making Europe the most competitive economy in the world.

CERTALARM was originally initiated by Euralarm (see <http://www.euralarm.org>), the European Trade Association for the electronic fire and security alarms sector. It is now an independent non-profit association established in Belgium since 2008. CERTALARM has the following four groups of members:

- Certification Bodies, Test laboratories & Inspection Bodies;
- Industry;
- Users & Customers;
- Insurers & Authorities.

CERTALARM defines and owns the certification schemes. CERTALARM has a first certification scheme defined for Fire and Security systems and components (see www.certalarm.org/downloads/304/R01.pdf), which is based on European standards (see www.certalarm.org/downloads/305/R02.pdf). The schemes are operated by "partners" under a licence contract (see www.certalarm.org/en/about/partners.html). Registration of issued certificates is centralised and published on the website.

CERTALARM had its first General Assembly on 18 September 2009. Operations have been started on the 1st of November 2009 with the appointment of Lucien Coletta as the General Manager. The first certificates are expected within the next two months. The aim is to reach a level of hundreds of new certificates per year.

BER (EC Regulation n° EC 358/2003/EC - Block Exemption Regulation for the insurance sector)

In the current BER the text in article 1, item f is relevant for the establishment, existence and future of CERTALARM.

This text about the technical specifications of the security devices is related to the first certification scheme of CERTALARM. Based on the current BER, the establishment, recognition and distribution of standards between two or more companies in the insurance sector is allowed in the absence of EU harmonized specifications. This exemption has, up to today, allowed some countries to maintain specific standards and certification schemes for security devices.

In the particular case of Fire systems and components the Construction Products Directive can be considered as a certification scheme that successfully removes barriers to intra-EU trade. However, in most of the Member States, the market demands a quality mark based upon initial assessment of conformity, continuous surveillance and periodical reassessment of products (system 5 according to ISO/IEC Guide 67). For that reason CERTALARM was founded and a voluntary certification scheme was defined, which is and remains the only EA endorsed certification scheme for the Fire and Security industries at Community level.

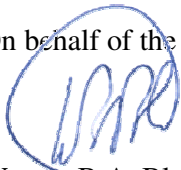
For Intruder systems and components no certification scheme was available on Community level until CERTALARM defined such a scheme (the same as for Fire systems and components).

With the availability of standards and the CERTALARM schemes on Community level, country-specific standards and schemes have to be forbidden as being contra productive with respect to the EU policy to create one strong European market. CERTALARM is ready to fill in the gap when country-specific standards and schemes are not legalized anymore by the BER. Institutes that are today operating country-specific schemes are welcome to become partners of CERTALARM in order to continue their work at a European level as know-how centre, test laboratory and certification body in the field of Fire and Security systems and components. As a partner of CERTALARM they will have the opportunity to compete in an open market with the other partners of CERTALARM.

Renewal of the BER

CERTALARM embraces the conclusions of the European Commission that it is not appropriate to renew article 1, item f of the current BER in the new BER as of 1 April 2010.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of CERTALARM



Wouter B.A. Blom
President of CERTALARM

24 November 2009