

5.1.13. UKRAINIAN NDT PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION EVALUATION SYSTEMS

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This article describes the systems of NDT personnel qualification evaluation that are used in various fields of Ukrainian industry; the issue of the examination and certification bodies' independence and the matter of foreign and national regulatory documentation application.

Nowadays, there are two main schemes of NDT specialists' competence evaluation in Ukraine. First of all, it's the employers' examination to the grades according to the "Common Wage Rate Book" (CWRB) in force in Ukraine (without the certification in contrast to foreign employers' schemes). Secondly, it's the examination by independent personnel certification bodies in NDT field (PCB) to proficiency levels in conformity with the "Occupational Classification" in force in Ukraine.

Personal examination by the grades is done by the companies' certification committees headed by these companies' chiefs or their product inspection departments' heads. These committees' work is accomplished without any common knowledge evaluation rules, methods, programs or testing procedures, as well as with no common examination question base, sample demands etc. One of the largest disadvantages of such system is testing committees' subjectivity factor and their dependence on the employer, which was numerously pointed out by the foreign specialists on international NDT conferences, while signing trade agreements, buying products and services or investing into Ukrainian industry. The last matter is particularly emphasized after Ukraine joined WTO; considering government policy of Euro Integration and after making more than 40 European NDT methods and certification procedure standards national. To improve the effectiveness of the employers' NDT personnel examination system, the centralized training and examination of the certification committees' members was introduced in some branches of industry, which slightly optimized this system within field, but did not solve the problem of the testing committees' independence and their subjectivity. The employers' NDT personal examination system is still remaining in such Ukrainian industry branches as nuclear power engineering, metallurgy and rail transport, but even in these fields there is a tendency of carrying out the examinations by independent personnel certification bodies.

NDT personnel certification by the independent PCB is widely used as in voluntary, as in legislation regulated certification fields in Ukraine. As a rule, NDT personnel in voluntary certification field is certified in accordance with EN 473 standard demands and in legislation regulated certification field it's accomplished according to department rules harmonized with this standard. The three levels NDT personnel certification system is used for the product inspection of Gaspromnadzor, aviation, shipbuilding and engineering industries.

Ukrainian PCB NDT personnel certification procedure principals are similar to foreign ones, although there is one issue to be pointed out. Some foreign accreditation authorities consider PCB accreditation in compliance with ISO/IEC 17024:2003 and EN 473 demands as a necessity to apply only European EN standards, but not regional NDT regulatory documentation (RD), during specialized and practical NDT examinations, even though EN standards' text does not mention the guidance or demands for the procedure of knowledge and product inspecting ability for any particular NDT RD examination. This demand is definitely reasonable from the certified specialists' point of view, whose objects' inspecting is restricted by EN standards (mainly in European countries), but it is not suitable for the repre-

sentatives of the countries, which are not using or just starting to implement EN standards and where NDT is mainly applied according to regional RD (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and other Eastern-European countries). As a result of such approach, during PCB audit most of PCB activities, its training (TC) and examinational (ECNDT) centers, which are training, examining and certifying specialist in accordance to the regional NDT RD, are left out from foreign accreditation authorities' view. An alternative to this method is a creation of agency documentation for NDT personnel certification, harmonized with ISO/IEC 17024:2003 and EN 473 demands, which means the usage of advanced procedures of this standards in application to the regional RD structure demands, taking into account the specifications of the field or an agency. Naturally, the production sectors' structure in these documents would be different from EN 473:2008 standard's restrictions.

It should be notified, that most of foreign and national PCB have their own TC and ECNDT or examinational centers, which are functioning as parts of the same organizations, associations or as a separated PCB organization departments. The in-house TC and ECNDT ensure PCB's self-sufficiency and competitiveness, as well as its independence from out coming influences, especially from the attracted TC and ECNDT. As we can see, PCB that does not have its own TC and ECNDT, cannot be considered fully independent, cause in its work it has to take in account the interests of attracted TC and ECNDT, which do not always coincide with the PCB's policy.

Before large-scale application of EN NDT standards in Ukraine, which looks like a long-run prospect, the way of creation of agency documentation, harmonized with EN 473, seems to be the most appropriate and available from the point of view of modern NDT quality demands implementation, while considering specifications of the particular field.