



Press Release

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Certification in the area of rope-access techniques

The basis for the national and international of rope-access techniques (SZT) is governed in Europe by the EU Guideline 2001/45 EG. This EU guideline has been implemented in Germany in the framework of work safety regulations.

Regardless of the individual country in which SZT is used or trained, certification is conducted by an outside person not involved in the training program. This is the regulation in all recognized national associations, such as IRATA (UK) and SPRAT (USA), as well as in the German Professional Organization for Rope-Assisted Work Techniques (FISAT e.V.). This procedure of outside certification goes beyond the legal requirements of EU Guideline 2001/45 EG.

Since this EU guideline provides the basis for national work safety rules, no European country requires exclusive qualification through any specific organization. It is ultimately the responsibility of firms using SZT and companies employing outside firms and/or personnel using SZT to ensure that they have the highest possible recognized qualifications.

The pioneers of SZT foresaw very early that the creation of a comprehensible safety and quality standard was the only basis for further development of this work technique. In individual countries, particularly in England, due to the use of SZT in offshore activities, the standards created by the organizations were positively accepted and recognized by institutions responsible for work safety.

In Germany, SZT was already in wide use in the 1970s in the former GDR on the basis of the TGL (GDR official state technical standards). After unification, this basis was no longer valid and urgent need for a new regulation arose. At the same time, firms from former West Germany were attempting to achieve recognition of these work techniques through the Work Safety Board. This became all the more necessary, as a mammoth project with international resonance, the wrapping of the Reichstag building in Berlin ("Wrapped Reichstag Project" by



Christo and Jeanne-Claude), for which more than 120 industrial climbers were used, was to be conducted. For this project, the contracting firms developed an extensive safety concept on whose basis construction industry work safety board, BAU-BG, granted an exceptional permit after intense talks. The wrapping of the Berlin Reichstag, the first large-scale project of this nature in Germany, was carried out by the firms involved with a very high safety standard and, above all, with no accidents. Those firms recognized the necessity of establishing recognized safety and training standards in Germany. With this background, FISAT was founded in 1995. The principle and core task of FISAT was and is ensuring safety and accident protection for rope-assisted work techniques. On the basis of the safety and training standards formulated by FISAT and in collaboration with the work safety board, guidelines were created, the BGI 772. Until the EU Guideline 2001/45 EG and its national implementation, BGI 772 provided the legal basis for the use of SZT. Since this time, FISAT has been conducting certifications on the basis of its own guidelines, which include the BG regulations. In Germany, however, the work safety board does not make a FISAT certification mandatory. When companies employ FISAT certified personnel in the area of rope-access techniques, their workers thus have qualifications that go beyond the minimum required. Use of personnel not certified on this high level can, however, entail legal consequences for a company in the case of an accident. Decisive here is ultimately the company's ability to prove how staff charged with rope-supported work was trained. The FISAT certification is a documented, comprehensible, and legally secure certification of personnel qualifications. Since its foundation, FISAT has established this safety standard on a broad basis, which means that with very few exceptions, all users in the field of rope-access techniques have been certified. On the basis of this same legal reliability, FISAT qualifications are demanded and recognized by contractors. Since the certifications conducted by FISAT have such a high standard and, as already mentioned, are established, they are recognized by work safety boards and other state agencies and required as proof of qualifications. The organs of FISAT, especially the certification team, constantly refine and improve the safety and qualifications standards further, adapting them, for example, to further developments in equipment and techniques. Currently, a work safety board committee in collaboration with representatives of FISAT is elaborating a new regulation to govern the use of rope-supported positioning and access techniques (SZP) in future. Basis for this new regulation is the EU Guideline 2001/45 and the safety and examination guidelines of FISAT. In the new SZP regulation, requirements for training, in particular, are laid down. Basis for this is FISAT's previous work and experience, meaning external



certification by a competent person is required in all three stages of training. Thus, previous recognition of the FISAT certification will be changed into a legal mandate.

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On the basis of the national recognition of FISAT certifications, personnel certified by FISAT also carries out projects worldwide. The individual responsible agencies internationally examine the qualifications of users in individual cases and recognize these according to the comprehensibility of high technical and safety standards.

FISAT-certified users have up to the present successfully carried out projects in other countries with the recognition of those countries specific examining agencies. As examples are listed here:

- Work on membrane roofs in Doha/Qatar, (Seilpartner GmbH)
- Glass and steel assemblies „Ballymun Civic Office“, Dublin (IRL), (Seilpartner GmbH)
- Steel, glass roof assembly „Beacon Court“, Dublin, (IRL), (Seilpartner GmbH)
- Renovation of „SwissRe Tower“, the new landmark of London, (GB), (Seilpartner GmbH)
- Assembly work „Music Centre Gateshead“, Newcastle, (GB), (Seilpartner GmbH)
- Silver Surfer Installation for „London Eye“, (GB), (Nawrocki Alpin GmbH)
- Wrapping of the „World Trade Center“ in Dubai, (SA), (Nawrocki Alpin GmbH)
- Cleaning of the American monument „Mount Rushmore“, (GSARmbH)
- Inspection/concrete renovation, Uddevalla Bridge, (S), (Alpin Technik und Ingenieurservice GmbH)
- Concrete refurbishment, Höga Kusten Bridge, (S), (Alpin Technik und Ingenieurservice GmbH)
- Concrete refurbishment, Svinesund Bridge, (S/N), (Alpin Technik und Ingenieurservice GmbH)
- Repairs on the Franjo-Tudjman Bridge, (HR), (Alpin Technik und Ingenieurservice GmbH)
- Repairs on wind energy facilities in Nunobiki (J), (Seilpartner Windkraft GmbH)
- Repairs on wind energy facilities in Pincher Creek (CAN), (Seilpartner Windkraft GmbH)
- Repairs on wind energy facilities in El Aguila (ESP), (Seilpartner Windkraft GmbH)

Safety

The claim that in certain countries, England for instance, only the certification of specific organizations is recognized has then no legal basis. The responsible English agency, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), has no regulations requiring certification by any specific organization. In England as well, the use of rope-access techniques is governed on the basis of EU Guideline 2001/45 EG within the „W and H“, which simply means that employment of sufficiently competent personnel is required. However, the HSE also considers the use of



personnel certified externally, by IRATA or FISAT for example, as the standard. On the basis of work safety board accident statistics, SZT is a high-altitude access technique with an extremely high degree of safety.

FISAT vs. IRATA

FISAT's safety standards are among the highest internationally. This is to be seen in the following points, for example:

1. Personnel: Annual repeat schooling is required for users' maintenance of quality.
2. Safety techniques: Only the use of CE-standards equipment and components are permissible (e.g. descent ropes with panic brakes)
3. Every user must undergo a prior medical examination for workers per G41.

In individual countries it is simply the case that the international qualifications are not everywhere known in detail, which, however, does not mean that they are not recognized, as the examples mentioned demonstrate.

Through its high standards, FISAT has established itself in the entire German-speaking area as well as in Russia.

Therefore, there is no basis for requiring a foreign qualification of users, whether in the national or international arena.