

## Portorož welcomed back the PT/EQA community

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Portorož, located in the Piran Bay in Slovenia welcomed back the proficiency testing (PT) and external quality assurance (EQA) community during October 2017. The occasion was the 9th international PT workshop on proficiency testing in Analytical Chemistry, Microbiology and Laboratory Medicine organized by the Eurachem Proficiency Testing Working Group in association with EQALM and CITAC. The Slovenian resort had previously organized the 5th PT workshop.

This latest international PT workshop, building on the success of our previous workshops, enabled 199 delegates from 53 countries to come together to discuss a wide range of key issues across the three disciplines of analytical chemistry, microbiology and laboratory medicine. The diversity of delegate backgrounds, which included PT/EQA providers, participants in PT/EQA schemes, end users of PT/EQA results such as accreditation bodies and regulatory authorities, national measurement institutes, laboratory associations, suppliers, universities and independent consultants, coupled with their international spread, ensured a truly global perspective.

Discussions on the availability of PT/EQA schemes in developing countries and the level of participation have been a topic of the Eurachem Workshops of this series since 2008. Therefore, this workshop reviewed changes to PTs in developing countries over the last 10 years. Two important PT development areas, interpretative and sampling PT schemes,

were addressed at the workshop. Other important topics covered by the workshop were the use of virtual PT test items, the implementation of the EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) guidance on the level and frequency of PT participation PT/EQA by laboratories, and the use and treatment of measurement uncertainty in PT schemes.

Through a series of lectures and discussions in working groups, these important topics were explored, with the breath of international delegates from a range of backgrounds facilitating a good level of cross-fertilization of ideas. The workshop also benefited from 57 poster contributions which not only enhanced further the debate on the key topics already mentioned, but also presented a range of other aspects and experiences concerned with PT/EQA. In conjunction with the workshop, training sessions on PT statistics, PT language and reports, and graphical PT tools in ISO 13528 were provided.

This latest workshop once again proved a great success thanks to the hardwork of the local organizers, the quality of the presentations and posters and just as importantly the active participation of all the delegates, leading to lively debate and fruitful discussions. We are pleased to provide the papers on many of the presentations, posters and working group discussions in this PT/EQA topical focus issue of the Journal.

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Building on the success of this workshop, planning is now underway for the 10th workshop which will be held during October 2020.

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 Brian Brookman, LGC, UK  
 Marina Patriarca, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy  
 Ulf Örnemark, Emendo Dokumentgranskning, Sweden



The Eurachem PT WG at the Workshop in Portorož (left to right)

Owen Butler, Health and Safety Executive, UK  
 Raquel Murtula, LABAQUA, Spain  
 Piotr Robouch, European Commission, Joint Research Centre, EU  
 Michael Koch, University of Stuttgart, Germany  
 Tracey Noblett, LGC, UK  
 Laura Ciaralli, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy  
 Kees van Putten, DUCARES B.V., the Netherlands  
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