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**EUROPEAN EXPLOSIVES NETWORK (EUExNet)**  
**PROJECT Number 803572-LLP-1-2009-1-SE-Leonardo-LNW**

It is our pleasure to write this letter of support for the European Explosives Network (EUExNet) Project which your Agency is currently funding.

SAFEX International is a voluntary association of manufacturers of explosives from all over the world. It is registered as a non-profit organization in Switzerland and aims to minimize the impact of explosives on people, property and the environment throughout the explosives life-cycle. The Association was founded in 1954 in order to share health, safety and environmental (HS&E) information on any issue that can prevent unwanted explosive incidents. Sharing HS&E incident information is an important activity from which members can learn. SAFEX has about 230 member companies from more than 50 different countries all over the world. It collaborates with other organizations and individuals that share its commitment to improve the explosives industry's HS&E performance and enhance the industry's worldwide reputation. We are pleased to count KCEM and the EUExcert Association among those organisations.

Individual member companies and the explosives industry in general are losing expertise in key areas of technology and operations. SAFEX employs two strategies to counter this phenomenon. The first is to establish and maintain a Panel of Experts that can support members who have insufficient in-house expertise. These Experts are highly experienced in explosives and many of them are retired. They are in a position to provide members the ongoing, specialised safety support required for acceptable stewardship of our industry. The problem with such a strategy is that it is not sustainable. Unless something is done to replenish this pool of expertise, preferably with in-house resources, the skills and knowledge will disappear with time.

Hence, a second strategy that focuses on developing a new generation of explosives professionals at all levels in our industry is essential. This, in our opinion, applies particularly to the different management and leadership roles in a typical explosives organisation. The optimal approach is for the industry to join forces and pool relevant knowledge and experience in establishing an effective framework for vocational education and training of people in the explosives sector. The sector needs a tool that interested organisations can employ for competence and career planning. This will help ensure the growth of the industry and continuous reduction of accidents. In this way the industry will become more attractive to a younger generation who may have been deterred from a career in explosives by the approach traditionally adopted. As a consequence unemployment in an age group that has become of increasing concern to decision makers, especially in developed countries, could be reduced.

As this is precisely the purpose of the EUExNet project and the EUExcert Association, SAFEX International has no hesitation in not only commending the EUExNet Project but encouraging its members to support the same.

Yours sincerely,

Dr JE (Boet) Coetzee  
**Secretary General, SAFEX International**

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