



ESTA's ECOL plans pass important milestones

ESTA's ground-breaking project to establish a European Crane Operator Licence (ECOL) is making good progress.

A meeting of ESTA's ECOL Working Group on May 15 has agreed a date to trial the project – February 1, 2018. "Once everything is in place, we will trial the system with selected groups to ensure that it is working effectively before it goes live," ESTA Secretary Ton Klijn said.

Assuming that goes to plan, ESTA will be in a position to request the European Qualifications Framework to have ECOL registered and recognised at EQF Level 2 across Europe. Klijn added: "We are keen to stress that ECOL does not mean experienced and qualified operators, with the necessary documentation, will need to retrain to obtain an ECOL certificate.

"It is a misunderstanding that we are proposing to retrain all of Europe's crane operators – that is simply not the case. Any operator that has the necessary initial education and experience and can prove it, will not have to start from scratch, but will find it straightforward to obtain an ECOL certificate."

In addition, ESTA has also established the ECOL Foundation, the body that will have the job of supervising and monitoring the system of education, examination and maintenance.

"This is a significant step forward and is the culmination of a huge amount of work and consultation with ESTA members, the wider industry and relevant authorities," said Ton Klijn.

The documents creating the ECOL Foundation were formally signed in the Netherlands on May 19 by Ton Klijn and Sander Splinter, President of ESTA's Crane Section and Managing Director of Mammoet Europe.

The ECOL foundation will set the criteria for becoming an ECOL-educator and for becoming an ECOL-examination institution in this field. Only when 'ECOL-approved' can an organisation train and test operators for the ECOL license and have use of the ECOL logo.

The foundation will also issue certificates and recognize diplomas, manage the ECOL register and organize continuing education.

ESTA believes that ECOL will raise safety standards across Europe, reduce training costs, make the industry more efficient and be of great benefit to experienced and qualified crane operators