

Dear ITSA Members,

In this latest newsletter, we highlight some of the actions we've been concentrating on this year, as well as our plans going forward.

Welcome to Our New Members

First of all, though, please join me in welcoming four new members to the ITSA family: [Authentix](#), [De La Rue](#), [Garsu Pasaulis](#), and [Luminescence Sun Chemical Security](#). We are delighted to have these leading companies in the tax stamp and product authentication industry join our Association, which now brings us to 22 members.



Let me also take this opportunity to introduce you to Anna Ostman, who joined Reconnaissance a few months ago as Associations Executive and who is working with me in the ITSA secretariat role.



Welcome Anna!

Nicola Sudan
ITSA General Secretary

We Want You... For Our Working Groups

Now that our various working groups are in operation, we will continue to expand our activities – including that of improving our internal communication with members. But in order to be as effective as possible, we need as many members as possible to join one or more of the working groups and contribute to the achievement of their various goals.

As a reminder, here is a list of the groups and their current members:

Advocacy – Christine Macqueen, SICPA (group leader); Quentin van den Hove, Agfa;

Communications – Corinne Murcia Giudicelli, SURYS (leader); Rémi Oudinet, SICPA; Gerben van Wijk, KBA-NotaSys;

International Organisations – Keith Thompson, OpSec (leader); Jérôme Duperrut, SICPA; Carlos Robles, Rolland Enterprises;

Memberships – Gerben van Wijk, KBA-NotaSys (leader); Kelly Smith, Ashton Potter;

Standards – Zbigniew Sagan, Advanced Track & Trace (leader); Joachim Koerner, KURZ; Christophe Renard, SICPA; Rob Stierman, KBA-NotaSys.

If you are interested in learning more about these groups, do not hesitate to contact the leaders, at the following emails:

Christine – Christine.Macqueen@sicpa.com

Corinne – c.murcia@surys.com

Keith – kthompson@opsecsecurity.com

Gerben – GVanWijk@kba-notasys.com

Zbigniew – z.sagan@att-fr.com

They're waiting to hear from you!

In the meantime, let's hear from three of the leaders with an update of activities in their particular groups:

Advocacy Working Group – Update from Christine

As you may have seen from previous messages, the key activity of the Advocacy group before the summer break hinged around the EU Tobacco Products Directive and its provisions for security features and traceability. Both of these impact negatively on the future prospects for tax stamps in the EU.

Essentially, the Directive has gone for low-level security feature provisions which, depending on how different governments interpret them, leave significant room for manoeuvre in the hands of tobacco producers and look more like an IP protection solution than one which protects tax or public health.

On the traceability side, the EU solution breaks the system down into many different modules, allowing manufacturers to be responsible for a number of them and undermining governments' ability to maintain effective control.

The significant role manufacturers are allowed to play is in direct contradiction with the provisions of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and its Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, which were being enacted by the Directive.

The EU itself is a signatory to the Protocol as are a significant number of EU Member States. Since international law prevails, the clear implication is that changes need to be made to the Directive to align it with the provisions of the FCTC and its Protocol. This is the sense of a legal challenge which ITSA launched.

It is an important point that we must keep reiterating even while we find ways to bridge the gap. This was the objective of the paper we launched in July to all interested stakeholders ([see here](#)). The paper set out a way in which EU governments could add to the unsatisfactory provisions of the Directive, by putting in place a system based on tax stamps that is independent of manufacturers and robust, that protects tax revenues and that is capable of meeting most elements of the Protocol requirements. This is a pragmatic but necessary approach, partially because it relies on voluntary measures by individual governments. However, it is only a short-term substitute for revision of the Directive itself which we must continue to campaign for.

All of this will come into sharp focus shortly, and with some urgency, during the 8th Conference of the Parties of the FCTC (COP8) and the first Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol (MOP1) in early October. The five-year clock is ticking for the implementation of a global traceability system – one that requires not only national systems to be in place but to join them together through a Global Information Sharing Point, which needs to be designed and implemented.

ITSA's Advocacy and International Organisations groups are working on messaging to highlight to delegates the importance of the track and trace provisions in Article 8 of the Protocol and remind them that these provisions can be implemented through a tax stamp programme – as well as pointing out that the EU framework is a model with fatal flaws.

All inputs or volunteers to join the Advocacy group and work on this topic are welcome.

Kind regards
Christine

Communications Working Group – Update from Corinne

WhatsApp group for members

Thanks to Anna Ostman for having set up the ITSA WhatsApp group with the cell phone numbers she has collected so far. Members are invited to inform Anna of any changes/new numbers to add. So if you are not yet on the group – and want to be – please let Anna know (anna@reconnaissance-intl.com).

The administration of the WhatsApp group will be handled by the secretariat to ensure continuity in case of changes in the board or Communications Working Group (CWG).

The CWG will use this tool to share information, initiate interaction on different topics, and propose social activities.

Any members can use the group as a platform to push and pull information.

LinkedIn

We have a LinkedIn group set up in the name of [International Tax Stamp Association](#), which we will now start using much more often, as a vehicle for, primarily, sharing our press

releases and publications.

If you are not already a member of the LinkedIn group, may I please invite you to visit the group and request membership.

YouTube

We are happy to inform you of the launch of an [ITSA YouTube](#) account, created by Rémi Oudinet.

To kick things off, Rémi has loaded four interviews conducted with ITSA board members at the 2017 Tax Stamp Forum in Berlin onto the account.

The CWG proposes that rather than members loading company information directly onto the YouTube account, they just load the link to the information on their websites, and that only ITSA-produced content is loaded directly onto the account.

Twitter

We are also busy setting up a Twitter account, which we will shortly be activating and will keep you posted on.

The information to be Tweeted will consist of news in the tax stamp (or related) environment that is either of a general nature or specific to ITSA. We will not make any Tweets pertaining to the promotion of a specific member.

We propose that the ITSA secretariat (Nicola/Anna/Astrid), as well as the CWG founding members (Gerben, Rémi and myself) be allowed to Tweet on behalf of ITSA, and you are all encouraged to relay the Tweets using your own company and/or personal Twitter accounts.

So we have made some good initial progress in strengthening the use of the various tools at our disposal to improve our external and internal communication. But we still have a lot to do in this domain – with some very interesting potential projects that came out of the member survey conducted earlier this year. However, we won't be able to accomplish all the projects without your help, so you are more than welcome to contact me if you would like to join the CWG!

Best wishes
Corinne

Standards Working Group – Update from Zbigniew

I am happy to report that – barring any last-minute hitches – the ISO 22382 standard for the content, security, issuance and examination of excise tax stamps, will be published this month.

ISO will be issuing a media release, supported by ITSA, which has also planned a promotional campaign to ensure the standard is seen and adopted by excise tax authorities.

In addition, ITSA will be publicising the standard to other relevant organisations, including tax stamp and component suppliers, who will benefit from the improvements in tax authority processes and specifications that should follow from the standard.

ITSA has contracted with Ian Lancaster, the ISO-designated project leader for writing the standard, who will coordinate the promotional campaign on ITSA's behalf.

One of the next steps will be to identify the priority meetings and conferences that we need to be at in order to present the standard to our target audiences. We will also need to draft the required promotional materials, as well as a draft budget.

We are confident that this standard will prove to be an effective tool in providing tax authorities with guidance and information on how to achieve the current 'best' in physical tax stamps, and are looking forward to being involved in this valuable project.

I am at your disposal for any questions, comments or concerns you may have and look forward to your input.

Kind regards
Zbigniew

Latest ITSA Releases



ITSA Welcomes 'Game-Changing' Tobacco Control Initiative

[Read here](#)

ITSA EU TPD Guidance Urges Track & Trace Compliance

[Read here](#)

ITSA Guideline for EU Member States Implementing the TPD

[Read here](#)

Get In Touch

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in contact with the secretariat team:

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