

## ECOL trainers, candidates wanted

ESTA is looking for training and examination organisations to take part in a trial pilot project for a new European Crane Operators Licence (ECOL) in February next year.

It also wants to sign up would-be ECOL operators to participate in the same exercise. Candidates can be novices that have to be trained from scratch, or operators with demonstrable experience.

ESTA Director Ton Klijn said: "We are calling on any interested parties to contact us as soon as possible.

"We hope that training organisations across Europe will see working with ECOL as a great business opportunity - while at the same time helping make our industry safer, more professional and more efficient."

ESTA – the European association for abnormal road transport and mobile cranes – started work on a Europe-wide operator licence for mobile crane operators back in 2013 in an attempt to raise standards, improve safety and ease skills shortages.

"We are making excellent progress and once everything is in place, we want to trial the system with selected groups to ensure that it is working effectively before it goes live," Ton Klijn added.

Assuming that the pilot goes to plan, ESTA will then be in a position to request the European Qualifications Framework to have ECOL registered and recognised at EQF Level 2 across Europe.

Klijn stressed 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," he added.

"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."