

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

concerning standardization in telecommunications within the
field of Community standardization

NOTE FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

Subject: Standardization in telecommunications within the field of Community Standardization.

A communication on the above subject is forwarded herewith to the Council for consideration at the Council of Ministers of the 12th December 1988.

This communication describes the present situation of standardization in telecommunications in the Community, principally with regard to the creation of the European Telecommunication Standardization Institute (ETSI). It draws the attention of the Council to certain difficulties which ETSI has encountered during its launching; it requests the Council to invite the various interested parties to take measures which will allow these difficulties to be overcome.

COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL

STANDARDIZATION IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE FIELD OF COMMUNITY STANDARDIZATION

1. The coming into force , in July 1987, of the Single Act provided both the political impetus and the means necessary for the creation of the internal market by 1992. The creation of the internal market implies the free circulation of goods through out the Community. As recognised by the Heads of State and of Government in Juin 1987, among the measures that are necessary to enable the free movement of goods, technical standardization is the most important.

2. The general programme of standardization in the Community has been developed progressively since the '70s and its structure is based around two acts of the Council:
 - one, Council Directive 83/189⁽¹⁾, which obliges the Member States to submit for preliminary examination by Member States and the Commission their proposals for technical regulations, and which institutes a system of transparency in European standardization activities.
 - two, the Council Resolution of 7 May 1985 concerning "a new approach on matters related to technical harmonization and standardization" and which forsees, in particular, the reference to standards for the definition of technical characteristics of products.

To implement this policy, the Commission is supported by the European standardization bodies CEN and CENELEC, now joined also by the recently created European Telecommunications Standardization Institute(ETSI).

(1) Council Directive of 28 March 1983 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations.

3. Standardization in telecommunications has a special significance for four reasons:

- In the telecommunications sector , the standards which aim to ensure data communication and system compatibility are becoming more and more complex due to the growing sophistication of these systems.
- There is a particular urgency associated with standardization in telecommunications due to the rapid evolution in technology and World competition in this sector.
- Telecommunications standardization must always be dealt with in a more precise way than other sectors taking into account the international standardization perspective.
- Within telecommunications standards are found the source of common conformity specifications necessary for the approval of terminals for connection to networks.

The Commission has, since 1983, made efforts to progress the standardization work , first in cooperation with CEPT, then since CEPT was found not to possess the most appropriate structure, with ETSI, whose creation had already been foreseen in the "Green Paper".

4. The Commission is pleased with the speed with which ETSI has been created, and believes that regulations as they exist now governing the functioning of ETSI and the rules for the participation of the parties concerned with the Institute , constitute a good basis for the Institute to respond to the needs of the telecommunications sector on matters related to the elaboration of standards. The Commission for its part is determined to support the development of ETSI and to use its services to further the Community telecommunications policy. The structure now created must be used to introduce as soon as possible a dynamism into the European standardization process⁽²⁾: this necessitates that all interested parties give full attention to the needs of ETSI, in particular during the period of establishing its activities, and that they make the strongest efforts to satisfy these needs.

(2) The limited number of common technical specifications produced up to now in the telecommunications sector has greatly reduced the effect of the Directive 86/361/EEC of 24 July 1986 concerning the first stage of the mutual recognition of type approval for telecommunications terminal equipment

5. Of prime importance in this regard is the necessity to carefully examine how to ensure a coherent entry by ETSI into the European standardization system. In fact this implies the need to follow three actions:
- a) Following the adoption by the General Assembly of ETSI of Article 14⁽³⁾ of its internal rules of procedures, which created the conditions necessary to enable ETSI to be recognised as a European standardization body, it still remains for the member Countries to notify in accordance with paragraphe 1 of Article 14, the national standardization bodies which must be involved in the procedure for the adaption of standards prepared by ETSI. This notification must be made without delay because it is an important step in the finalization of the cooperation agreement between the Commission and ETSI.
 - b) ETSI must conclude in the shortest time possible a cooperation agreement with CEN- CENELEC within the framework of the Information Technology Steering Committee(ITSTC) to establish the necessary coordination for the production of standards in the whole sector of information technology, taking account of the overlapping areas of interest.
 - c) Finally, in order to mend the fragmented state of European standardization, negotiations between ETSI and CEN-CENELEC must be initiated with a view to merging into a single organization. This organization, while having member bodies which can preserve their individual identity, will exclusively represent European standardization and shall replace those organizations now mentioned in Directive 83/189.

In the light of these actions, it is important also to ensure that the certificate of conformity, which up to now has had a national character, will be implemented at Community level and will conform with the certification systems being defined within the whole framework of Community standardization policy.

6. Secondly consideration must be given to the requirement to put at the disposal of ETSI the necessary resources for the performance of its tasks. This requirement in particular concerns the availability of technical experts to make up the project teams for the execution of the work of ETSI. The identification of experts within the ETSI members which have the necessary competence and are available to relocate to ETSI for a sufficiently long period undoubtedly poses a significant problem. But all the members of ETSI, the administrations, the industry and the users must make a genuine effort and create the necessary incentives to put the essential resources at ETSI's disposal: this is the *sine qua non* for ETSI to succeed in its mission.

(3) Article 14 contains the rules which ETSI must follow to set up the procedures which characterize the process of creating standards, that is to say the establishment of the status quo, the public enquiry in advance of the adoption of standards by ETSI and the transposition of these standards at national level.

A further consideration of importance is to make the best possible use of the limited resources in technical expertise available in Europe. As shown by the success of standardization work in the domain of mobile communications, work on a particular subject, which has not previously been dealt with at national level, will progress more rapidly at European level. The ETSI members should therefore be encouraged to limit work related to the preparation of specifications at national level to a minimum, which would have the double benefit of reducing the obstacles to producing common standards and freeing the expert resources to carry out the work in ETSI.

7. In conclusion, in order to facilitate the establishment of telecommunications standardization at a European level, the Council is asked to invite :
- The Member States to nominate without delay the national standardization bodies which will participate in the ETSI procedures for the adaption of standards
 - ETSI and CEN-CENELEC
 - a) to quickly conclude an accord of cooperation within the ITSTC framework
 - b) to enter into negotiations with a view to the formation of a single European standardization organization
 - the administrations , the industry and the users who are members of ETSI
 - a) to make available to ETSI the necessary experts for the execution of its programme of work
 - b) to ensure that any pre- standardization and standardization work will be carried out at a common level from the earliest possible stage in the work.
 - the Commission to ensure the coherent development of ETSI and to give its support , in particular in the programme of work related to the community telecommunications policy.