

**US-EC JOINT COMMUNIQUE RESULTING FROM THEIR MEETING  
ON STANDARDS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT  
JUNE 21, 1991**

US Secretary of Commerce Robert Mosbacher and EC Commission Vice-President Martin Bangemann, accompanied by senior representatives of United States and European standardization and certification organizations, held discussions in Washington on standardization and conformity assessment policy in the United States and Europe. It was their third meeting in the past two years.

They confirmed that international standardization and openness of conformity assessment were an indispensable means of eliminating or avoiding the creation of technical barriers to international trade. They agreed that regular exchanges of information between officials and between standardization and certification bodies were also important to this end. They welcomed the steps that had already been taken by US and European standardization and certification entities to establish closer dialogue.

To consolidate the progress already made towards their common objectives in the areas of standardization and conformity assessment, the two sides agreed on the following in relation to STANDARDIZATION:

- o The early exchange of information on areas where standardization may play an important role or where regulations may call for standards to be developed;
- o The promotion by public authorities of the use of international standards and documentation based on the widest consensus, particularly in product legislation, and will continue efforts to broaden their use in procurement;
- o An early conclusion of multilateral discussion in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) concerning the revision of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

In relation to CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT, the two sides also agreed to:

- o The development of confidence building systems in the field of conformity assessment, in particular accreditation, based on international standards and documents;
- o The consideration of the steps proposed by the Secretary of Commerce to strengthen the coherence of the US system to provide an assurance that US conformity assessment programs satisfy international guidelines;

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- o The two sides recognized that any agreements on mutual recognition of conformity assessment would entail, inter alia:

designated conformity assessment entities in the United States having notified body status allowing them to perform the full range of required conformity assessment procedures under the EC directives and

EC bodies participating fully in US conformity assessment systems.

- o Both sides also agreed that preparatory discussions between US and Community officials should take place to prepare ground for the negotiation of possible mutual recognition agreements. Once the EC Council of Ministers has agreed negotiating directives formal negotiations can take place.
- o The two sides also noted that developments in the US towards reinforcing confidence in conformity assessment activities in certain fields (e.g. medical devices sector) should facilitate subcontracting by EC notified bodies to conformity assessment entities in the United States.

#### INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

The two sides took note of a commitment by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) a federation of standards developers, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the European Committee for Norms (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Norms (CENELEC), and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI):

- o To promote the faster development of international standards through maximum efficiency in the international standardization bodies in order to meet the needs of public authorities and the market;
- o To identify in the international standardization organizations priority areas in which international work to develop standards based on the widest consensus could be intensified in order to promote international trade;
- o To implement to the greatest possible extent international standards;
- o To develop a system enabling such implementation to be monitored effectively by the members of international bodies and to exchange information on implementation;
- o To establish and maintain a coordinated and complete information system on standards and standard-making to which access is readily available and to enlist other US standards developers to join in establishing such systems;
- o By the end of the year, to make a joint report to Secretary Mosbacher and Vice-President Bangemann on progress toward these objectives.

In light of the close cooperation between the European Community and the Member States of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in matters discussed at the meeting and taking into account that the national standards bodies of the EFTA countries are full members of the European standardization organizations, representatives of EFTA participated as observers in the meetings.

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