

TRADE WINDS

PREPARED BY THE STANDARDS COUNCIL OF CANADA

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"Europe 1992" - Status Report

The European Community's self-imposed deadline of January 1993 to complete the legal framework for a Single Internal Market in which goods, labour and capital will move freely is now upon us. While the EC has made remarkable progress towards making this initiative a reality, and many important changes in the EC marketplace have already taken place, the challenge will continue well into this decade. At a time when Canadian manufacturers are readying themselves for new business opportunities in the EC, it is crucial that they be aware of the extent to which European policies and procedures are still evolving.

The move to create a Single European Market by January 1993 came in 1985 with the release of the European Commission's White Paper. This Report detailed a "new approach" to product standards that prescribed broad minimum requirements regarding consumer protection and public health. The task of developing standards to meet the technical requirements has been given to the three European standards organizations, European Committee for Standardization (CEN), European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). The White Paper dealt not only with the preparation of mutual recognition of standards and technical regulations but also product testing and certification activities.

Of the 282 White Paper directives that have been proposed, 89 percent have now been adopted at the Com-

munity level. As of November 1992, there were 32 proposals outstanding, of which 23 were scheduled to be considered in December 1992. All of the necessary legislation in Member States to harmonize requirements for producers of manufactured goods is now in place. However, the implementation of these directives into national legislation varies widely. The Community, for its part, is being vigilant in monitoring transposition of directives into national legislation. The European Court of Justice is being used as a last resort for ensuring implementation by delinquent countries.

There will also be transition periods to allow for the completion of European standards in support of directives. While progress to date has seen many standards finalized, the burden of preparing some 2500 standards in support of European directives has not been completed.

Testing and certification is another area where arrangements are still being hammered out. The lack of coordination in testing and certification among European Community (EC) Member States is perhaps the biggest drawback facing Canadian exporters wishing to broaden their market to EC countries.

In the regulated market, access for products is ensured through legislation. Canada has already been involved in discussions with the EC Commission towards Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) on

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Telecommunications Terminal Equipment

The EC Directive concerning Telecommunications Terminal Equipment (91/263/EEC), including the mutual recognition of their conformity, came into force on November 6, 1992.

The purpose of this Directive is "to harmonize conditions for the placing on the market of telecommunications terminal equipment in order to create an open and unified market". It will help to ensure that telecommunications terminal equipment, intended to be connected either directly or indirectly to a public telecommunications network, satisfy minimum public safety requirements. It will also help to reduce existing disparities in national legislation that presently restrict the flow of telecom products between European Member States.

Manufacturers of telecommunications equipment are now legally bound to comply with the requirements outlined in this Directive in order to obtain the CE mark of conformity. Copies of this Directive are available upon request from the Standards Council of Canada.

The Standards Council of Canada's TRADE WINDS joins the pages of CanadExport with a view to informing readers of standardization developments affecting global trade. It will feature timely information on the standards-related aspects of the liberalization of trade through bilateral or multilateral accords such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, as well as information on the European Common Market Initiative.

Listings are available from SCC of draft European standards and notifications of proposed regulations recently received from 41 countries that have signed the GATT Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (Standards Code). A sample listing is provided on the next page.