

b) Telecommunications Standards

Within the EC's numerous activities in the telecommunications sector, progress has been greatest in the area of standards where the EC objective is to achieve legislative harmonization, transparency, and mutual recognition of testing and certification practices. If achieved by the end of 1992, these goals will facilitate the development and marketing of equipment within the EC by European-based companies. It is the opinion of the Working Group that although the EC objectives may not be reached by the end of 1992, the movement towards harmonization of standards will be achieved at some point. Canadian firms operating in the EC should welcome this development provided they are not excluded from the unified market by virtue of these standards.

At this time, while Canada cannot participate directly in the development of European voluntary standards, a number of avenues exist for Canada to be aware of and react to developments in EC policy. These include the publication of the CEN/CENELEC¹ review of Monthly Activities, availability of draft European Standards during the six month inquiry phase and discussions of European Standards in an ISO/IEC/CCITT (ITU)² context. While such transparency provisions are in place for CEN/CENELEC, transparency provisions for ETSI are not yet confirmed but Canada has been offered guest status at ETSI assemblies. In addition, the EC has recently decided to publish a weekly list of member state notifications of proposed technical regulations and standards under the 83/189 Directive.

During the aforementioned six-month inquiry period for the development of CEN/CENELEC voluntary standards, the European standards organizations have agreed to provide draft standards through ISO member bodies in non-EC countries and to consider comments received from these bodies. It is envisioned that the Standards Council of Canada, the Canadian member body in ISO, will be responsible for making this information available to the Canadian business community and will convey Canadian responses before the adoption of these draft standards. In addition, the Europe 1992 Working Group on Standards will report separately on specific arrangements being concluded to alert Canadian interest groups to proposed and draft CEN/CENELEC/ETSI standards.

The Commission's plans for the future European Organization for Testing and Certification of equipment, which require approval by the Council, are outlined in its proposal dated July 24, 1989, COM(89)209. The thrust of the Community certification policy is to provide open access to new testing and certification bodies which meet established criteria and, where practical, to encourage self-certification by manufacturers.

c) EC Regulations

Over the years, the Member States have used regulations to limit or close their domestic telecommunications markets to foreign companies by: (a) prohibiting foreign ownership of basic facilities; (b) denying the right of establishment for foreign (or non-PTT domestic) providers of enhanced services; and (c) limiting interconnection to the public networks, including restrictions on the use of leased lines. The EC's declared intention to encourage competition in telecoms services within Europe 1992 may not, in its final form, apply uniformly to third parties. Thus, market entry for Canadian companies could become subject to negotiations that entail the EC's notion of "reciprocity".

¹ CEN - European Standardization Committee
CENELEC - European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardizations

² ISO - International Organization for Standardization
IEC - International Electrotechnical Commission
CCITT - ITU Consultative Committee for International Telephone and Telegraph