

## STANDARDS - TESTING AND CERTIFICATION

### ISSUE

The European Commission is in the process of formulating procedures for establishing mutual recognition of testing and certification agreements with third countries. Canada is concerned that unless mutual testing and certification agreements are concluded between Canada and the EC, Canadian exports to the Community may be curtailed.

### BACKGROUND

An integral part of the Single Market process has been the harmonization of existing standards among EC Member States, and the development of new EC (and, indeed Europe-wide) standards. Early in 1991, the European Commission will be seeking a negotiating mandate from the EC Council prior to engaging in the negotiation of mutual recognition agreements with third countries. Canada has already made known its views, and has familiarized the Commission with the Canadian national standards system which can serve as the basis for the negotiation of an EC-Canada agreement.

### EC POSITION

The Commission's mandate will include the requirement of reciprocity in any negotiated agreement. Preliminary discussions have revealed that the EC expects a bilateral agreement with Canada to be less problematic than may be the case with other trading partners.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Canada recognizes that there is an advantage to exporters of a broader standards regime as it should be easier to comply with one common set of standards, rather than several.

Canada has requested that the EC's negotiating mandate allow for existing agreements between Canadian organizations and EC Member States to continue to function. Specific agreements already in place include (a) B.C. Council of Forest Industries (COFI); (b) Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and British Standards Institute, on acceptance of test results on electrical products; (c) CSA and Netherlands standards body, also with respect to electrical products. The CSA would also like to continue its present training program for product inspectors in Europe.

Current product areas of Canadian priority for inclusion in a mutual recognition agreement include: (a) wood products; (b) telecommunications equipment; (c) pharmaceuticals and medical devices; (d) manufactured machinery and equipment products; (e) non-wood products affected by construction directives.