

of Canadian workers from other jurisdictions. To date, most self-regulated occupations have developed mutual recognition agreements to facilitate the mobility of workers. While barriers still exist, the Government remains committed to working with the provinces and territories to further reduce impediments.

Recommendation 30

When evaluating measures to ease the burden that different regulatory systems can impose on companies undertaking business in North America and to avoid the drawbacks of regulatory harmonization, the Government of Canada, in consultation with the provinces, should seriously consider entering into agreements with its NAFTA partners to implement mutual recognition schemes for existing regulations. Under such arrangements, countries would recognize each other's regulatory standards as appropriate, thereby facilitating cross-border commerce.

Canada continues to seek ways to ease the regulatory burden on companies and to facilitate trade within NAFTA, keeping in mind the need to protect the health and safety of Canadians. For example, part of the mandate of the NAFTA Committee on Standards-Related Measures (CSRM) is to facilitate the Parties making compatible standards-related measures, which includes technical regulations. The CSRM thus provides excellent opportunity for the advancement of such ideas.

Mutual recognition is one option within a range of regulatory cooperation activities, which also includes accreditation and certification, mutual recognition agreements (MRAs), equivalence (acceptance or recognition of foreign regulatory approaches or decisions as providing equivalent levels of protection); and full harmonization (identical regulations or use of international standards).

Canada has been involved in a number of bilateral and multilateral MRAs on conformity assessment for the past ten years. Such agreements are intended to result in an importing country accepting reports prepared in the exporting country attesting that products meet the importing country's regulatory requirements. However, MRAs have proven to be extremely time-consuming, resource-demanding and incredibly complex – while not guaranteeing any certainty of success at the end of the day.

Canada is open to exploring other means of enhancing regulatory cooperation with our NAFTA Partners including the use of equivalence agreements, on a sector-by-sector basis. The process of determining whether three different standards or regulations provide a similar level of protection will prove to be challenging in its complexity. However, there may be some sectors in which the NAFTA regulatory systems work to similar goals and produce similar results. Canada remains open to explore regulatory

