



Mr Fabio Colasanti
Director General
DG Enterprise
European Commission
200 rue de la Loi
1049 Bruxelles

26 November 2001

Subject: European Policy Principles on International Standardisation

Dear Director General,

Your services have kindly sent us the recently published working document on European Policy Principles on International Standardisation (SEC 2001, 1296). In our view, this paper is an excellent basis for future action in the field of international standardisation and UNICE wishes to thank you for having given us the opportunity to be involved in the development of this paper at an early stage. UNICE finds it very useful to have a clearly defined and coherent European policy in relation to international standardisation and thus to have the principles in print.

The paper now serves as a commitment from the Commission to give due consideration to these principles when developing new policy initiatives. In this connection we are happy to note that the Commission has taken on board the principle of "one applied standard and one accepted test for each product" as a trade facilitating objective. We also find it very useful that the Commission will continue to endeavour to identify common regulatory objectives with countries and regions outside the EU.

UNICE wishes to highlight the fact that the importance of international standardisation is growing at the same pace as international trade. Therefore, UNICE fully supports the Commission in strengthening the relevance of international standards.

UNICE agrees that international, European and national standardisation bodies complement each other. This implies that national standardisation bodies commit themselves to contribute to the international standardisation work and regional standardisation bodies are encouraged to enter into co-operation agreements with ISO and IEC.

UNICE also supports the Commission in clarifying the role of international standards in the context of the WTO - TBT agreement. A clear hierarchy of international, regional and national standards whereby the regional and national standards adopt the content of international standards as far as practicable is a precondition for industry and society to fully benefit from the potential of international standardisation. As a consequence a more active involvement of developing countries in international standardisation is also necessary.

We welcome the Commission's commitment to technical support in this field. Furthermore, we believe that the national bodies associated with the international bodies have an important role in ensuring information to and participation of all interested parties.

In UNICE's view, the Commission and industry must work hand in hand to achieve the aims set out in the paper. Industry is using various channels to strengthen the efficiency of the international standardisation organisations in delivering their products when they are needed in the marketplace. Furthermore, there is a large potential for deregulation on the basis of international standards.

The UNICE Working Group on Technical Barriers to Trade which is in charge of the issue would find it useful to stay in close contact with your services in order to develop the ideas further and to discuss future challenges in this area.

Yours sincerely,

(original signed by)
Daniela Israelachwili
Acting Secretary General