

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Special Distribution

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

REGIONAL STANDARDS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

1. At its meeting of 20-22 October 1981, the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade agreed that the secretariat should transmit a number of agreed questions to regional bodies (TBT/M/8, paragraph 55). Questions to be addressed to such bodies were circulated informally on 15 January and 12 February 1982.

2. The following replies have been received from the European Committee for Standardization (CEN)

Question 1:

How was CEN formed, and what has been the traditional relationship between CEN and its member bodies on the one hand and the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) on the other?

Answer:

The members of CEN are the relevant national organizations of Western European countries, i.e. of nine member countries of the EEC and six member countries of the EFTA and Spain. Luxembourg is represented by Belgium. The traditional relationship between CEN and the CEC as well as EFTA lies in the interest of both CEC and EFTA in the elimination of technical barriers to trade. The role of CEN is to harmonize national standards of its members as well as to implement international standards in Europe, in accordance with the CEN rules.

Question 2:

In acting as a technical body producing technical reference documents for common market directives, is CEN a standards developing organization for the European Communities?

Answer:

Although CEN is a standards developing organization it produces, in close cooperation with the CEC as well as EFTA, which is not a standards writing body itself, harmonized national standards (ENS) and/or harmonized documents (HD) or European standards where no international standards or harmonized national standards are available, in order to permit the reference to European harmonized standards in EC directives or in harmonization instruments of EFTA.

Question 3:

Is there an index or catalogue of standards developed by CEN?

Answer:

Yes, there is a catalogue of European standards, which lists the ENS as adopted by each member. The list is available from the central secretariat of CEN.

Question 4:

How does CEN determine its priority needs for standardization?

Answer:

CEN determines its priority needs by common agreement of its members assembled in the technical board (BT) and administrative board (CA) and general assembly (AG).

Question 5:

What is CEN's relationship of ISO?

Answer:

Besides the fact that CEN members are also members of ISO and that CEN bases its harmonization work to the utmost extent on ISO results, there is no relationship to ISO.

Question 6:

Does CEN undertake standardization work in an area where an ISO standard already exists?

Answer:

As already indicated above, CEN bases its work on and implements international standards through HDs, in Europe.

Question 7:

Does CEN have Standards Committees that parallel the ISO Technical Committee structure?

Answer:

Yes, to that very limited extent where CEN requires TCs to harmonize the relevant national standards. This harmonization is based, as already indicated, on ISO results, where available.

Question 8:

When CEN determines a need for standardization in a specific field, does it contact ISO to determine if work is underway in this area?

Answer:

As can be seen from the reply given to question 5, CEN members are well aware of ISO activities which ensures constant alignment of the harmonization progress with ISO work underway.

Question 9:

Does CEN request ISO to undertake standardization work in specific areas?

Answer:

No.

Question 10:

Are the representatives on CEN Committees the same representatives that serve on ISO TC/SC Committees?

Answer:

It may be, but is not necessarily so.