



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

Ref. 1104320

Brussels, 14 February 2011

EFTA TBT Committee Comment on the review of the European Standardisation system.

Dear Ms. Brykman,

Reference is made to the ongoing review of the European Standardisation System (ESS) carried out by DG Enterprise and Industry, and proposal No 6 in document COM (2010) 608 "Towards a Single Market Act": *"The Commission will propose a legislative reform of the standardisation framework in 2011 to make standard-setting procedures more effective, efficient and inclusive and to extend the scope of the procedures from goods to services."*

The EFTA TBT Committee is the body in EFTA following the review of the ESS, and the review was on the agenda of the Committee's meeting in December 2010. The Committee has subsequently agreed to forward the following views to the European Commission as input to your considerations:

1. EFTA supports the continuation of the principle of national delegation.
2. We think one should seek to speed up the standardisation process, without compromising the WTO TBT requirements. Early dialogue with stakeholders when preparing European Commission mandates may be a way to ensure better quality of mandates and thus speed up the standardisation process.
3. We think more efficient co-operation between the three ESOs is still needed.
4. We emphasise that involvement in the standardisation process of societal stakeholders is important. Also ministries and/or national authorities should increase their participation in standards development when needed. To achieve this, awareness-raising among ministries and/or national authorities is needed, bearing in mind that standardisation is mainly a privately run activity. In general, awareness-raising about standardisation is a continuous process necessary for all stakeholders.
5. We believe that standardisation may be used more actively to achieve political goals, e.g. in the field of environment and climate when appropriate. However, there must be a clear distinction between what should be established by law (e.g. maximum emission levels), and what should be established by standardisation (e.g. how to best stay below those levels). One should not forget that testing standards may be important for environmental policies.

6. The Services Directive (2006/123) encourages the use of certification and standards to increase the quality of services (Article 26). We should, however, avoid the proliferation of national standards and certification schemes in this context. We support the inclusion of services standardisation in the scope of the legal act which will replace the 98/34 Directive. More political attention has to be made to the need for European standards for services instead of national standards.
7. It seems important to look for a more efficient system for administering financial support from the EU to the ESOs.

I hope the above views are in line with what you consider to be the future of European Standardisation. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Tore N. Thomassen, the Secretary of the EFTA TBT Committee, for any further clarification.

On behalf of the EFTA TBT Committee,

Sincerely yours,



Gunnar Selvik
Director

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