



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Recommendations on regulatory cooperation and standardization policies

Working Party on
Regulatory Cooperation and
Standardization Policies

B. ■ Coordination of Technical Regulations and Standardization¹

The Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies,

Considering that the marked increase in the number of agreements on standards reached internationally and the considerable number of organizations involved in technical regulations and standardization activities suggest a need for coordination which in some cases, especially in respect of intergovernmental organizations, may be acute;

Noting that the purpose of the present recommendations is not to create any additional coordination mechanism but rather to draw the attention of all those concerned with these matters to problems which can arise from insufficient coordination of international or regional technical regulations and standardization activities or from the lack of such coordination, and to define specific measurements to attain more effective coordination;

Noting further that the mere fact that certain problems relating to the lack of satisfactory coordination have been raised and discussed in the Working Party or by experts nominated by it, draws attention to those problems and promotes their solution;

Bearing in mind the objectives of coordination of technical regulations and standardization activities conducted internationally, which should be carried out in order:

- (a) to ensure that international and regional standards take into account the interests of all concerned;

¹ Recommendation adopted in 1970, revised in 1988 and 1996.

- (b) to promote the implementation of relevant international basic standards;
- (c) to attain a uniform use of terms;
- (d) to achieve compatibility with other relevant international standards adopted or in course of preparation;
- (e) to prevent further divergence between national standards and technical regulations resulting from a lack of internationally or regionally agreed standards in areas where they are needed;

Affirming that to this end coordination of all technical regulations and standardization activities conducted internationally should aim at:

- (a) avoiding the creation of technical barriers to trade in accordance with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) including its "Code of Good Practice on the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards";
- (b) concentrating activity, wherever possible, in a given sector or sphere of policy in a single international or regional organization and determining, whenever necessary, concordant target dates so that delays in the completion of one organization's work on a given matter do not affect the work already accomplished by another organization on different aspects of the same matter;
- (c) establishing close contacts between organizations dealing with different aspects of the same product or service or, in cases of acknowledged need, with the same aspect of that product or service;
- (d) facilitating the implementation of international and regional standards by unifying their presentation as a whole or in respect of some elements such as title, index number and year of publication;

Has agreed to recommend the following means to promote cooperation:

At the national level

- B.1** ECE Governments should give consideration to the possibility of extending the practice of designating a single agency or official to be responsible for coordinating governmental technical harmonization and standardization policies. The coordination at the national level of standardization work in international, regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations is of primary importance and should be achieved.

- B.2** ECE Governments are invited to make the necessary arrangements for effective implementation of the work programme embodied in the "ECE Standardization List", a list of sectors which are of interest to UNECE member Governments with a view to providing regular guidance for a programme of work for international standardization and published and kept up to date by the Working Party.
- B.3** ECE Governments should ensure that their representatives at meetings of international or regional organizations are briefed about the advantages to be obtained by implementing the principles enumerated below (B.8.1-4). In pursuance of coordination at the national level, it is also desirable that a participant follows a specific project from the beginning to the end, and for a country to be represented, whenever possible, by the same expert in two or more organizations dealing with related matters.
- B.4** ECE Governments should, in formulating and applying their policies for public purchasing, whenever possible and when permitted by national legislation and legislative processes, make the fullest use of internationally or regionally recommended standards or of national standards based on such standards.
- B.5** ECE Governments should ensure that information on national standards, technical regulations, certification systems and conformity assessment procedures adopted or proposed within their territories be available at an authorized enquiry point, an agency or an office.
- B.6** ECE Governments should ensure that standards organizations act in accordance with the WTO/TBT "Code of Good Practice on the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards".
- B.7** ECE Governments should ensure that, at the request of other countries, technical assistance in the field of technical regulations and standardization activities is provided.

At the international level

- B.8** ECE Governments are invited to ensure, to the extent possible, that the following principles are observed when international standardizing activities are initiated or pursued:
- B.8.1** Before an international or regional organization starts standardization work in a particular field, information should be sought at the outset on relevant international or regional standards already adopted, and on any such work under way or suspended, in order to diminish the risk of duplication of work.

- B.8.2** Whenever feasible and unless there are persuasive reasons to the contrary, the work on new standards should normally be initiated through the competent international standards organization. In cases, where there are clearly defined regional needs which are unlikely to be met by the corresponding international organization, a new standardization project could be carried out by the relevant regional organization. In this case it would be advantageous that the international and regional organizations concerned jointly agree on the concrete provisions to apply for the implementation of this principle.
- B.8.3** When work on a specific standard or standards is undertaken by an international or regional organization, close contacts with relevant organizations should also be established or maintained. In this respect, methods already adopted by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC) are recommended for use by other organizations. These methods include:
- B.8.3.1** inter-secretariat meetings;
 - B.8.3.2** supply of documents from one organization on a selective basis;
 - B.8.3.3** exchange of documents for mutual information;
 - B.8.3.4** attendance from time to time of an observer at a meeting to deal with non-recurrent questions;²
 - B.8.3.5** regular attendance of an observer at meetings of both organizations;
 - B.8.3.6** case B.8.3.5, but always in one direction only;
 - B.8.3.7** convening of coordination meetings on an ad hoc basis;
 - B.8.3.8** a standing coordinating (or steering) committee.
- B.8.4** In order to facilitate their implementation, international and regional standards should be aligned as far as possible to the common layout normally used by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC), particularly with regard to titles of standards, their index numbers and years of publication.

² Always accompanied by exchange of documents on a regular basis.