



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRADE/WP.6/2000/5
21 September 2000

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY
AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
Working Party on Technical Harmonization
and Standardization Policies
Tenth session, 6-8 November 2000
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN STANDARDIZATION ACTIVITIES
AND IN THE FIELD OF REGULATORY COOPERATION AT THE
INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS**

Belarus: National legislation on standardization and related areas,
and problems in the area of conformity assessment

This paper has been submitted by the State Committee for Standardization, Metrology and Certification of Belarus.

It contains information on issues to be considered under agenda items 5 and 8 (a).

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Belarus: national legislation concerning standardization and other matters;
problems of conformity assessment

Standardization

If it is to be able to make more sophisticated, higher-quality products and to conquer international niche markets, Belarus naturally needs to master modern approaches to: the appraisal of markets and customers' requirements; product development and manufacture; quality assessment, and the organization of after-sales service. Market-economy countries make active use for these purposes of the potential offered by standardization, metrology and certification. The relations between, and responsibilities of Government bodies, economic entities and consumers regarding the above-mentioned activities have been defined in a number of laws adopted in recent years, namely the Protection of Consumers' Rights Act, the Standardization Act, the Uniformization of Measurements Act and the Certification of Goods and Services Act.

A particular feature of the Belarusian standardization system is the possibility of direct application without redrafting, because they are still relevant, of more than 19,000 standards drawn up as State Standards of the former USSR, as well as of newly drafted inter-State standards applicable between CIS countries. Their application facilitates the development of links between producers and suppliers in the CIS countries and was made possible by the Government's signing in 1992 of the Intergovernmental Agreement to Implement Harmonized Policies in Standardization, Metrology and Certification.

In 1993, with a view to improving its products' competitiveness on world markets, Belarus became a full member of several influential bodies: the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML). Joining these organizations has enabled Belarus rapidly to build up a collection of international standards, of which there were virtually none in the country prior to 1993, and, as a result, to place more than 16,000 international standards at the disposal of its scientists and engineers.

The National Standards Collection, which owes its creation to a Government decision, contains more than 100,000 normative instruments, including Belarusian and inter-State documents, standards from international organizations and national standards of industrialized countries.

Nowadays Belarus also has access to PERINORM, the bibliographical database of international standards, European Union standards and national standards of leading European countries, and regularly receives information on United States, Japanese and Chinese normative instruments. It is already possible to obtain via Gosstandart information concerning standards applicable on any desired foreign market, as well as the texts of those standards. By agreement with the Commission of the European Union, work is in hand to establish a European technical directives and standards information centre having a Russian-language full-text database of European directives and standards and facilities for database access by Belarusian enterprises and other CIS countries.

The principles underlying the development and updating of the country's standards are: harmonization with international standards and requirements and direct application of existing international standards.

This applies first and foremost to standards for product safety and product measurement.

Certification

Conformity assessment is one of the most effective tools employed in Belarus for protecting the market and consumers against poor-quality, unsafe products and counterfeit goods.

Legislation and standards

In Belarus, certification is effected in accordance with the Protection of Consumers' Rights Act and the Certification of Products, Activities and Services Act. These laws provide that products, activities and services to which mandatory standards in force in the Republic regarding consumers' safety, health and property or environmental protection apply must be certified under the National Certification System.

The principal rules of the National Certification System have been revised with a view to enabling mutual recognition of certificates of conformity. Belarus has both a National Certification System and a National Accreditation System. Among the European standards which have been adopted as State standards are: STB EN 45010-99, STB EN 45011-99 and STB EN 45012-99.

Currently some 15% of products and services sold on the Belarusian market are subject to mandatory certification. This group includes household electrical appliances and radioelectronic apparatus, toys, cosmetics, tableware and kitchenware, alcoholic beverages and tobacco manufactures, etc.

Goods on the list of products subject to mandatory certification may not be sold on the domestic market or imported into Belarus without having received a conformity certificate under the National Certification System. Construction-industry products, medical equipment, disinfectants, drinking-water supply systems and other goods have recently been added to the list.

The certification requirements are the same for imports and for products manufactured in Belarus. That is consistent with the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

To ensure compliance with the law on mandatory certification and to promote voluntary certification in response to customers' requests, more than 102 bodies for the certification of products, activities and services and over 700 accredited testing laboratories operate in Belarus. This enables independent assessment of most types of product sold on the Belarusian market.

Agreements on mutual recognition of the results of certification work

The National Certification System's principles and procedures correspond to their international counterparts. Belarus is therefore able to conclude agreements with other countries on mutual recognition of the results of certification work.

Belarus is a party to the CIS countries' Agreement on the Principles for the Conduct of Certification Work and on the Mutual Recognition of Such Work, which was signed in 1992.

It has also concluded agreements on mutual recognition of certification work with Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, China and Turkey.

Agreements on certification and testing have been concluded with a number of competent organizations in the European Union, including: Germany's VDE, Norway's NEMKO and Sweden's SEMKO. These agreements enable the results of testing by VDE, NEMKO and SEMKO to be used for the issuance of certificates under the Belarusian National Certification System, and for the results of testing carried out in Belarus to be used for the issuance of VDE, NEMKO and SEMKO certificates entitling products to bear the CE mark.
