Units of measurement: approximation of the laws of the Member States (amend. Directive 80/181 /EEC)

2007/0187(COD) - 11/03/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to update Council Directive 80/181/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive 2009/3/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 80/181/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement.

CONTENT: this Directive amends Directive 80/181/EEC, which lays down the legal units of measurement within the EU, and is based on the International System of Units (SI) adopted by the General Conference of Weights and Measures set up by the Metre Convention signed in Paris on 20 May 1875.

Directive 80/181/EEC required the United Kingdom and Ireland to fix a date for ending the exemptions, where they are still being applied, in respect of pint for milk in returnable bottles and beer and cider on draught, mile for road signs and speed indications, and troy ounce for transactions in precious metals. However, experience has shown that, given the local character of those exemptions and the limited number of products concerned, the maintenance of the exemptions would not lead to the imposition of a non-tariff barrier to trade, and as a consequence there is no longer a need to put an end to those exemptions

The new provisions are intended to:

- enable the United Kingdom and Ireland to continue to use the limited local exemptions concerning the pint, the mile and the troy ounce where they are still applied;
- extend the scope of the Directive to consumer and environmental protection;
- extend the use of supplementary indications for an unlimited period (the basic Directive provided for their use until the end of 2009). The importance of the use of supplementary indications lies, for instance, in trade with economic partners which do not use the same units of measurement (e.g. the gallon in trade with the United States);
- introduce three new SI derived units: the katal (kat) as a unit for catalytic activity (used in medicine and biochemistry); the radian (rad) as a unit for a plane angle (used in geometry and physics); the steradian (sr) as a unit for a solid angle (used in geometry and physics);
- drop the acre as a land registration measurement unit (as it is no longer used in the United Kingdom and Ireland).

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 27/05/2008.

TRANSPOSITION: 31/12/2009.

APPLICATION: 01/01/2010.