# European standardisation: efficiency and accountability under the new approach

1998/2106(COS) - 08/12/1998

Adopted in 1985, "the new approach to technical harmonisation and standards "means that the purpose of EU legislation should only define the essential requirements that products must meet when they are put on the market, but should not indicate the technical means by which to meet the requirements. This latter task is instead left to independent standards institutes (CEN, ETSI and others). Examples of legislation falling under the new approach is the directives on safety of toys, on lifts and on medical devices. Reporting on a commission communication evaluating the new approach Marie-Paule KESTELIJN-SIERENS (-ELDR, B) considers that the system with a few exceptions has worked well. Improvements to the system and increased funding are needed to ensure broad participation in the standardisation process of all concerned parties, in particular SME:s, environmental and consumer groups, and employees, the Committee held. Other demands from the Committee include measures to improve the efficiency and transparency of the standardisation process. Special attention should also be given to the construction products directive where there has been little progress in terms of standardisation.