Standardisation: broader use in Community policy

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OBJECTIVE: the Commission communication is in response to the commitment made in the Strategic Programme to present a report on the broader use of standardization in Community policies. It attempts to give an overview of the current situation as regards the use of standards within the context of Union policies and set out the projects for extending the role of standardization in the immediate future.
CONTENT: the volume of European standards has increased considerably over recent years and has established the specific role of European standardization, which is why the Commission considers that the use of standardization should be encouraged and that, where appropriate, the principle of referring to European standards should be applied in Union legislation. The Commission recommends that certain conditions should be adhered to when deciding to taking recourse to standardization: - efficiency: the European standardization agencies should be able to respond to the demand for European standards from industry and the authorities; - European dimension: this implies clear, uniform identification of the European nature of a standard once it has been transposed at national level and a truly European mark of conformity using the EN logo; - acceptability: this implies completely transparent activities, easy access to European standards and integral access to the standardization process for interested parties; - needs: needs for European standards in specific sectors should be evaluated as an on-going process and the transparency and objectivity of the standardization process should be highlighted; - technical adequacy: standards must support the integration of the market without hampering innovation. Where possible, standardization should be based on test methods and performance specifications. The Commission acknowledges that European standardization organizations have taken substantial measures in order to meet these requirements. However, this action is still important for the future and continuing improvements to European standardization as a support for EU policy should be based on close collaboration and dialogue between the European authorities and the standardization organizations in a spirit of partnership.