European standardisation: efficiency and accountability under the new approach

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OBJECTIVE: This Commission report is in response to a request from the Council to prepare a report on the efficiency of European standardisation. SUBSTANCE: The report has been prepared in close collaboration with the Member States, European and national standards bodies and the relevant committees at Community level. It describes the relationship between the new approach and standardisation and emphasises the need for accountability in standardisation. It then indicates how efficiency can be assessed, and formulates a number of proposals for improving efficiency. Its main conclusions are as follows: - the basic concepts of the new approach and of European standardisation have proved their validity for the development of the single market, - the management of the standardisation process and transparency can be improved, which is a task mainly for the European standards bodies, - standardisation as a voluntary system has its limitations, and public authorities have the responsibility to create incentives and the framework in which standards can be developed in a efficient way. With regard in particular to improving transparency, the Commission invites the standards organisations to make reports on the progress of standardisation in new approach areas available on the Internet. A number of aspects, such as the analysis of the impact of standards on the market, the working of sectoral committees and the visibility of European standardisation and its financing require continuous follow-up, involving the cooperation of standards bodies, national authorities and the Commission.