European standardisation: efficiency and accountability under the new approach

1998/2106(COS) - 12/02/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Parliament voted to endorse the resolution drafted by Mrs. KESTELIN-SIERENS (ELDR, B) which welcomes Commission proposals for improving efficiency and transparency in the standardisation process and is aimed at abolishing non-tariff barriers to trade. - The Parliament pointed to the fact that more resources must be made available to SMEs and consumer and environment organisations at national and EU level to enable them to participate adequately in the standardisation process. - It urged the Commission to draw up a Green Paper within two years containing cost-benefit analyses and assessments of European standardisation work and supporting its implementation, and to benchmark and implement a best practice model of the standardisation process in Europe vis-à-vis other economies. - The Parliament believes that a balance must be struck not only between transparency and efficiency, but also between efficiency and market impact of standardisation activities, and calls, consequently, on the Commission and national and European standards institutes to look into that aspect more closely. - The EP notes that co-operation between the three European standards institutes - CEN, CENELEC and ETSI - generally operates smoothly and consequently fails to see how, at this time, a merger of European standards institutes could make the standardisation process more efficient, since each institute has established its own particular expertise, there would be no clear advantage to be gained that could be offset against the cost and effort of adjustment and none of the European standards institutes advocates it. - The Parliament opposes the use of formal voting at an early stage of standardisation activities with the objective of speeding up the process, since the European standardisation process is based on mutual agreement, which in turn safeguards the participation, involvement and confidence of all parties.