European Economic and Social Committee

INT/193
Electrical equipment

Brussels, 24 September 2003

OPINION

of the European Economic and Social Committee

on the

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits (codified version)

COM(2003) 252 final - 2003/0094 (COD)

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On 26 May 2003 the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 308 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the:

> *Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits (codified version)*
> (COM(2003) 252 final – 2003/0094 (COD)).

The Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 3 September 2003. The rapporteur was **Mr Bo Green**.

At its 402nd plenary session (meeting of 24 September 2003), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 119 votes in favour, one against and three abstentions.

1. Background

1.1 On 1 April 1987 the Commission instructed its staff that all legislative acts should be codified after no more than ten amendments or at even shorter intervals to ensure that the Community rules are clear and readily understandable.

1.2 Given that no changes of substance may be made to the instruments affected by codification, an interinstitutional agreement was made on 20 December 1994 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission whereby an accelerated procedure may be used for the fast-track adoption of codified instruments.

2. The Commission proposal

2.1 The purpose of the present proposal is to undertake a codification of the low voltage directive 73/23/EEC. The new directive will supersede the various acts incorporated in it[1]. The proposal fully preserves the content of the acts being codified and effects only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

2.2 The low voltage directive covers electrical equipment designed for use with a voltage rating of between 50 and 1,000 V for alternating current and between 75 and 1,500 V for direct current. It therefore applies to a large proportion of the electrical appliances used for both professional and private purposes. It is the low voltage directive which sets out the requirements for CE marking and an EC declaration of conformity.

1 Annex V, Part A, of the draft directive.

3. **General comments**

3.1 In principle, the EESC endorses the Commission proposal, which is intended to make Community legislation clear and transparent.

4. **Specific comments**

4.1 Proposed amendment to the wording of the second paragraph of Article 5:

"*Standards shall be regarded as harmonised once they are drawn up and adopted by a recognised standards body, and published under national procedures. The standards shall be kept up to date in the light of technological progress and the developments in good engineering practice in safety matters.*"

The present wording does not concern the bodies mentioned in Article 11 of the draft directive. In actual fact the standards are those drawn up by CENELEC[2].

Brussels, 24 September 2003.

The President of the European Economic and Social Committee	The Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee
Roger Briesch	**Patrick Venturini**

2 European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization