

Towards Greater Consumer Participation in Standardization Processes

Final report of the research project
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UNION DES CONSOMMATEURS, *the power of a network*

Union des consommateurs is a non-profit organization that includes Associations coopératives d'économie familiale (ACEFs) [Family Economy Cooperative Associations], the Association des consommateurs pour la qualité dans la construction (ACQC) [Association of Consumers for Quality Construction] and individual members.

The mission of Union des consommateurs is to represent and defend consumers by focusing on the specific interests of households with modest income. Union des consommateurs actions revolve around the cherished values of its members—solidarity, equality and social justice, as well as the improvement of consumers' lives on economic, social, political and environmental levels.

The structure of Union des consommateurs allows it to maintain a broad view of consumer issues while developing specialized expertise in certain sectors of involvement, specifically through its research work on the new problems consumers must face; its actions and national scope are sustained and legitimized by its work on the ground and its deep roots with member associations in their community.

Union des consommateurs acts primarily on the national scene by representing consumers' interests before various authorities—political, regulatory, legal and the public arena. Among its research, action and representation priorities are family budget and indebtedness, energy, questions about telephony, radio broadcasting, teledistribution and the Internet; health, nutrition and biotechnologies; financial products and services and social and fiscal policies.

In the context of market globalization, Union des consommateurs works in collaboration with several consumer groups in English Canada and abroad. It is a member of Consumers International (CI), an organization recognized by the United Nations.

INTRODUCTION

Standardization, which means the requirements and criteria a product, service or process must satisfy to assure its quality usage, has had an expanding role in recent years on regional, national and international levels. For example, it is a standard that establishes the dimensions of wheelchairs and doorways for the access of people with disabilities to public transportation and buildings, and it is also a standard that ensures that credit cards can be used all over the world. Besides the traditional issues related to standards, such as effectiveness, quality, safety and convenience, health and environmental protection, respect for privacy, development of international trade, interchangeability problems, service delivery, an aging population and smart regulation are also factors making standardization a strategic issue and practice as important for the market as it is for society as a whole.

However, to be trustworthy, (and play their role adequately), standards must possess certain attributes:

- their development must be overseen by a recognized body;
- the development process must allow for the involvement of all interested parties;
- standards thus formulated must be documented and publicly available;
- there is usually a method of monitoring and verifying organizations' compliance with standards.¹

Standardization must also demonstrate transparency, visibility, coherence and compliance with regulations with regard to the development and certification of standards. Implementation of participation frameworks and processes based on the consensus of actors and the balance of the interests represented is essential for the credibility of such a system.² Consensual standardization is then based on a "general agreement distinguished by the fact that any significant faction of specific interests does not demonstrate sustained opposition with regard to major points, as well as by a process that strives to consider the opinion of all interested parties and reconcile all the positions that exist—while at the same time, consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity."³

Consumer participation in standardization processes is of major importance for Canadians and SDOs in particular. In Canada, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), through the Canadian Standards Strategy (CSS), which is currently in the process of review (note: the revised Strategy was published in January 2006), emphasizes the range of this consumer participation and considers the improvement of that participation to be a priority. Consumer participation stimulates confidence that moves the public toward products, services and processes and ipso

¹ Office of Consumer Affairs, *Participation in the Standards System – What are Standards?* Online. <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inoca-bc.nsf/en/ca01579e.html> (page consulted February 4, 2005)

² On its Internet site, the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) mentions the importance of consensus and those who must be part of that process: "The hallmarks of the American National Standards process include: consensus on a proposed standard by a group or "consensus body" that includes representatives from materially affected and interested parties..." http://www.ansi.org/standards_activities/overview/overview.aspx?menuid=3 (page consulted January 13, 2006)

³ See Standards Council of Canada, *Guide to the participation of consumer interest representatives and the public in standardization activities*, CAN-P-1011 rev. (Ottawa, SCC, 2002), p. 9.

facto aids the situation of industries and businesses. In sum, consumer participation ensures that voluntary and consensual standards take account of the interests and needs of final consumers.

Although the majority of Canadian consumer associations are not very familiar with standardization processes, they believe, nonetheless, that it is important for consumers to participate in them.⁴

Furthermore, international standardization activities are becoming increasingly important for Canadians, and their participation is especially invited. Many international agreements and treaties require Canada to consider the usage of standards as the basis for national regulations. For example, the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization (WTO) specifies that a country's different standard development organizations must develop new national standards contingent on international standards. Furthermore, more than half of the national standards of Canada are based on international standards, such as those of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). It is then even more important for Canadian consumers to participate in international standardization processes to make their vision and interests in this matter known to the rest of the world.

However, consumer participation in the work of different national and international standardization organizations is neither sufficient nor satisfactory. In Canada, the United States, Europe and internationally, numerous barriers hinder greater consumer participation in standardization processes, specifically:

- insufficient financial resources;
- gaps in expertise and technical training;
- implementation of committees and working groups with little or poor balance;
- lack of credibility of some consumer representatives;
- overly complex procedures;
- limited dialogue between consumer representatives;
- deficiencies in distribution and content of information originating in SDOs;
- etc.

In Canada, the SSC publishes guidelines for consumer participation in standardization processes. Although the importance of this participation is reflected in the guidelines, the four SDOs accredited by the SSC—Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Bureau de la normalisation du Québec (BNQ), Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) and Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC)—have often been criticized for not appearing as concerned as they might be about the role of consumers in the development of standards.

In Europe, there are three large SDOs with the primary mission of serving the standards development and certification aims of industries and businesses: the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). However, the public interest is taken into account and passionately defended within these three SDOs by the [European Association for the Coordination of Consumer Representation in Standardization]

⁴ A Web survey carried out by Union des consommateurs in the context of this project, the detailed results of which are appended, revealed that 76% of consumer associations believed that it is very important that consumers participate in standardization processes while 24% said it was of average importance.

(ANEC), the true voice of European consumers with regard to standardization, composed of national consumer association representatives. Funded by the European Union and recognizing in its charter the importance of funding for consumer participation in standardization work, ANEC still faces the same problem of under-representation of consumers due to a lack of material and financial resources shared by all the national consumer associations.

In the United States, where a highly decentralized standardization system exists, administered and coordinated by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), consumer associations are under-represented in standards development work. Despite the fact that their contribution to standardization processes is widely recognized, specifically in the National Standards Strategy for the United States (NSS), consumer representatives have very little material and financial support or technical training from ANSI or US SDOs. It is then up to the numerous federal agencies and government departments that participate in the work of the SDOs to ensure representation and defence of consumer interests and see to responding to their concerns.

On the international scene, where the standards developed increasingly serve as references for national standards and regulations, consumer participation in standardization processes is significantly limited. In fact, the large international SDOs, like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), only allow consumer representatives to participate in their work through national delegations formed by the different SDOs of their respective countries. However, these delegations only rarely include representatives of consumer associations. The ISO, however, has implemented the Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO) to promote consumer participation in its standardization process. Although it has significant material and financial means and benefits from a solid worldwide reputation, COPOLCO nevertheless experiences the same problem of consumer under-representation as does the ISO itself, its members being relatively the same as those in national standards development body delegations.

The various barriers to consumer participation in standardization processes ensures that one of the desired goals, developing the confidence that steers consumers to products, services and processes they find on the market, is not achieved. These barriers limiting the presence of consumers could even lead to interference with the process itself, and non-consensual standards could be developed that would make mere abstractions out of the genuine interests and needs of the public. The danger is particularly great considering that standards are increasingly being substituted for national regulation because the development of those standards carried out without consumer oversight could be perceived as a violation of democracy.

Do solutions exist that could allow the removal of barriers? Are there avenues that foster greater consumer participation in standardization processes? This problem is the subject for analysis in this research project, which examines in detail the frameworks and processes of consumer representation in SDOs here and elsewhere.

Sections I to IV lay out an inventory of standardization frameworks and processes in Canada, Europe, the United States and internationally while examining the anticipated methods and mechanisms needed for encouraging consumer participation.⁵

⁵ A first version of this project was presented to the organizations concerned in this section. The comments we received in response allowed us to make some corrections. Some of their comments have also been included in the text or in the accompanying notes. We thank them for their collaboration. However, we regret that Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada, which shared some comments with us on

Section V deals with the interactions between standardization and regulation and on the arguments put forth on the necessity of setting out guidelines for this tendency.

Section VI first presents the new standardization issues and tendencies likely to attract the attention of consumer associations. Then we analyze the main barriers, from the perspective of consumer associations, which hinder greater consumer participation in standardization processes. Last, we suggest solutions for lifting those barriers and encouraging greater consumer participation.

In conclusion, we suggest a redoubling of efforts to address the difficulties that consumers encounter participating in the work of SDOs while stressing the necessity of credible representation and adequate consumer participation in standardization processes.

September 26, 2005, was not able to get back to us with the more developed comments that were to follow before the date indicated for finalization of this report.

I. FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES OF STANDARDIZATION IN CANADA

I.1 Standards Council of Canada (SCC)

I.1.a) Description

Created in 1970 by the federal government following the adoption of the *Standards Council of Canada Act*⁶, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC)⁷ is a federal Crown corporation accountable to Parliament through the Minister of Industry. Composed of 15 members and 86 employees grouped in three permanent committees and eight advisory committees, the SCC assures the oversight and coordinated operation of voluntary standardization activities⁸ in Canada and represents the interests of the country in developing and applying international standards, specifically with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

In order to implement effective and efficient standardization in Canada, the SCC's mandate is to:

- "promote the participation of Canadians in voluntary standards activities;
- promote public-private sector cooperation in relation to voluntary standardization in Canada;
- coordinate and oversee the efforts of the persons and organizations involved in the National Standards System,
- foster quality, performance and technological innovation in Canadian goods and services through standards-related activities, and
- develop standards-related strategies and long-term objectives."⁹

The SCC also has the mission of administering and managing the National Standards System (NSS), "which includes organizations and individuals involved in voluntary standards development, promotion and implementation in Canada.... More than 15,000 Canadian members contribute to committees that develop national and international standards. The Standards Council has accredited more than 400 organizations. Some of these develop standards, and others are conformity assessment organizations that determine the compliance of products or services with a standard's requirements."¹⁰

⁶ *Standards Council of Canada Act* (R.S. 1985, c. S-16)

⁷ Standards Council of Canada website: <http://www.scc.ca/en/index.shtml> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁸ When they are not the subject of any legislative measure

⁹ Subsection 4(1), R.S. 1985, c. S-16 (1st suppl.) modified in 1996, c. 24.

¹⁰ National Standards System website: <http://www.scc.ca/en/nss/index.shtml> (page consulted in January 2006)

Among SCC collaborators are:

- calibration and testing laboratories;
- certification organizations;
- consumer organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- industry;
- governments;
- organizations certifying personnel and training of auditors;
- registrar organizations;
- SDOs.

The strategic orientations of the NSS are described in the Canadian Standards Strategy (CSS), ordered by the federal Ministry of Industry, developed by an advisory committee of interested parties and unveiled in March 2000.¹¹ Consumer contributions to its development should be emphasized since the Consumer and Public Interest Committee (CPIC), which we describe in detail below, participated in its drafting. As director of standardization processes in Canada, the CSS specifies the objectives targeted by Canadian standardization on national and international levels.

The SSC is responsible for certifying SDOs.

There are four SDOs in Canada accredited by the SCC:

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
- Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)
- Canada General Standards Board (CGSB)
- Underwriters' Laboratory of Canada (ULC)

Once developed by accredited SDOs, new standards may be submitted to the SSC for adoption as national standards.

"Key criteria for designation as a National Standard of Canada include:

- having been developed by consensus of a balanced committee of stakeholders;
- having been subjected to public scrutiny;
- publication in both official languages;
- compatibility with or incorporation of existing international and relevant foreign standards¹² ;
- not constituting a barrier to trade."¹³

We will return to the four accredited SDOs further on in this report.

I.I.b) Consumer Participation

Through the *Standards Council of Canada Act*, the SSC has the mission of promoting the participation of Canadians in voluntary standardization processes.¹⁴ In order to fulfill

¹¹ The SCC published an update in January 2005 entitled CSS Update 2005-2008, SCC website: http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/CSS_update_e.pdf (page consulted in January 2006) The document specifies that the new version retains the six goals of the original.

¹² It should be emphasized here that nearly 80% of the national standards of Canada are based on international standards.

¹³ National standards development, on the SCC website: <http://www.scc.ca/en/programs/standards/ntlstandards.shtml> (page consulted in January 2006)

that obligation, the SCC may grant financial support to Canadians and Canadian organizations participating in voluntary standardization processes to help them satisfy national and international requirements.¹⁵ The *Act* also invests the SCC with the power to assemble and disseminate information on domestic and foreign standards and standardization.¹⁶

At the SCC, consumer participation is concentrated primarily in the development and implementation of the National Standards System (NSS). In this way, consumers and NGOs representing them can see to it that the NSS works to improve the country's social and economic welfare, specifically with regard to quality, effectiveness and safety of products and services; health, education, the environment, sustainable development, the social responsibility of businesses and the protection of privacy.

In the NSS framework, the SCC has published two important documents clearly defining the policies, objectives and procedures of the Council in matters of consensual standards.¹⁷ These documents state that an important place must be made for consumer participation in standardization processes. The first document, CAN-P-1D, Standards Development Organization Accreditation, specifies that:

1.1 Accreditation granted by the SCC to SDOs is subordinate to the recourse of these organizations to a consensual process. The following principles govern consensus in Canada:

- Procurement of the same access for all interested parties, guaranteeing them effective participation (implying that there are sufficient resources, equal access to information and an understanding of the process by all parties). To reach that goal, it will be necessary to find the required resources (money, training, competency of personnel, etc.);
- 2. Respect for various interests and the ability to recognize who procures access (Guide 59, articles 6.1, 6.5 and, to some degree, 6.3) to ensure a balance of interests;
- Procurement of a dispute-resolution mechanism (Guide 59, article 4.2).

And, further:

- **6.5** On the national level, participation shall be organized by the SDOs and the SCC in accordance with their respective procedures for reaching consensus, which must anticipate balanced representation of interested parties: manufacturers, buyers, consumers, etc.

Among the accreditation criteria in Appendix 3 (normative), Additional Criteria for Accreditation of Standards Development Organizations, with which organizations must comply, are:

¹⁴ *Standards Council of Canada Act* (R.S. 1985, c. S-16), Section 4(1) a)

¹⁵ However, it should be emphasized that nearly 80% of the national standards of Canada are based on international standards.

¹⁵ *Standards Council of Canada Act* (R.S. 1985, c. S-16), Section 4(2) j)

¹⁶ *Standards Council of Canada Act* (R.S. 1985, c. S-16), Section 4(2) jk)

¹⁷ For reference, let us mention that the ANSI website discusses the importance of consensus: "The hallmarks of the American National Standards process include: consensus on a proposed standard by a group or 'consensus body' that includes representatives from materially affected and interested parties....": http://www.ansi.org/standards_activities/overview/overview.aspx?menuid=3 (page consulted in January 2006)

15. The standards development organization shall ensure that membership on voluntary standards will be open to all concerned interests, subject to the maintenance of reasonably sized and balanced committees, and shall identify the organization's procedures supporting this criterion.

16. The standards development organization shall be prepared to make provision for public access to committee membership rosters on request and shall confirm its willingness to do so.¹⁸

The second document, CAN-P-2E, Criteria and Procedures for Preparation and Approval of National Standards of Canada, specifies that all standards developed by an SDO must comply with certain precise criteria to be recognized as a National Standard of Canada:

3.1.1 Criteria 1 The importance, opportunity and congruence of a standard proposed as a National Standard of Canada must reasonably reconcile the perspectives of a certain number of competent individuals representing a balance of the interests of producers, consumers and other interested parties, depending on the targeted area.

Appendix A also states that a national standard must indicate the following in its foreword:

A national standard of Canada is one approved by the Standards Council of Canada and which reflects a reasonable agreement among the perspectives of a certain number of competent individuals who constitute, as much as possible, a balanced representation of the interests of producers, consumers and other interested parties, depending on the targeted area.¹⁹

Based on the above, SDOs will not be accredited or their accreditation maintained if they do not possess, in their standards development, a balanced representation of interests, including those of consumers, and the standards developed by these organizations will not be recognized as national standards if they are developed without such a balanced representation.²⁰

The SCC thus possesses, via the implementation of these two incontrovertible documents, upon accreditation and once organizations have become accredited, coercive tools allowing it to promote effective consumer participation in standardization processes in Canada.

The SCC accreditation process for SDOs, similar to the process of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)²¹, must focus on guaranteeing exemplary standardization practices.

¹⁸ See Standards Council of Canada, Accreditation of Standards Development Organizations, CAN-P-1D, (Ottawa, SCC, 1999). SCC website: http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/1d_e.pdf (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁹ See Standards Council of Canada, Criteria and Methods of Preparation and Approval of National Standards of Canada, CAN-P-2E, (Ottawa, SCC, 1992), p. 3.

²⁰ SCC rules recognize that "there may be some circumstances where the subject matter... is specialized to the extent that it is not possible to form a balanced committee." In such cases, the SCC requires the SDO to substantiate the reasons for the imbalance when it forwards the proposed standard to the SCC for approval as a National Standard of Canada. Source: Using Standards Development Processes for Regulations, in Innovation in Canada, Canadian government website: <http://www.innovation.gc.ca/gol/innovation/site.nsf/en/in04885.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

²¹ At its website, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), official US ISO representative, offers framework documents for its accreditations, including rules, guides, procedures and forms:

Like the ANSI, the SCC carries out onsite accreditation audits to ensure that all mandatory criteria are met before accreditation and every three years for accreditation renewal (5 years for the ANSI) and that surveillance audits will be performed every year to ensure that organizations always comply with criteria and to allow them to address any shortcomings.²²

The SCC recognizes that consumer participation in standardization work is an important element and one of the requirements of balanced representation. The place for that participation in the context of balanced representation and respect for the interests of the interested parties will thus be presumed to be one of the criteria with which compliance will be audited.²³

It is obvious that SDOs will not be accredited if they do not comply scrupulously with rules concerning balanced representation. According to Begonia Lojk of the SCC:

The first step in the accreditation process is the complete study of SDO procedures, and because they must completely conform to our criteria before we proceed with the audit, in all likelihood the audit will reveal that these criteria are effectively followed. The object of the audit is to confirm that with careful examination of documentation and interviews. Non-compliance should only be encountered rarely.²⁴

If, in the context of audits ensuring that SDOs always comply with accreditation criteria, the SCC observes an imbalance in representation, theoretically it can withdraw the accreditation of SDOs for non-respect of requirements listed in the document CAN-P-1D. Furthermore, for the same reasons, a request for recognition of a National Canadian Standard may theoretically be refused.

In case of non-compliance, first, violation notices are sent to the SDOs at fault, and the SCC has the power to withdraw accreditation if SDOs do not rectify problematic situations satisfactorily and reasonably quickly. We have found nothing in writing about whether the SCC has used coercive methods in the past. However, during a phone conversation, an SCC representative said that, to his knowledge, no sanction has ever been applied nor any formal blame attributed to any SDO following an audit.²⁵

http://www.ansi.org/conformity_assessment/overview/overview.aspx?menuid=4 (page consulted in January 2006)

²² Audit criteria are described in the document CAN-P-1; Standards Council of Canada, *Accreditation of Standards Development Organizations*, CAN-P-1D, (Ottawa, SCC, 1999): http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/1d_f.pdf (page consulted in January 2006)

²³We note here that the ANSI, along with the verifications performed during audits, also deals with methods for organizations to implement in order to correct any imbalance of representation: "8.1.3. Does each of the identified interest categories have adequate representation? 8.1.3.1 If not, what efforts have been made to attract additional members?" American National Standards Institute (ANSI), *ANSI Auditing Policy and Procedures*, Issue Date: January 31, 2005

²⁴ Begonia Lojk, P. Eng. Manager, Standards Governance, in a written response, sent to Union des consommateurs on December 12, 2005, concerning a preliminary version of this report.

²⁵ 10/08/05 phone conversation with Darryl Kingston, Senior Program Officer, Consumer and Public Interest. In her written response, Ms. Lojk specified that "an audit report describes non-conformities and aspects to be improved, and this type of confidential document is between the SCC and the subject/party of the audit. Non-conformities must be resolved within a given timeframe. Audits are a useful process for SDOs because they can examine weaknesses and eliminate them; they also appreciate the observations on aspects to improve, and they retain them in many cases. In the accreditation process, it is not a reprimand as such, to use your expression. Accreditation is granted or not, and it may be withdrawn when circumstances demand. The four accredited SDOs have all respected the same criteria, and they all keep

We note, however, that the description of funding for interested parties required of SDOs, in Article 1.1 of CAN-P-1D, only mentions the guarantee of "sufficient resources" or "necessary resources (money, etc.)," and there is no system for measuring or determining what constitutes necessary or sufficient resources, so it is nearly impossible for the SCC to determine objectively if these highly subjective criteria are met or if a SDO is in default.

The document CAN-P-2E, which corresponds with the approval criteria of the National Standards of Canada, includes the provision to the public and Canadian consumers of a procedure for making appeals to the SCC, available to "all interested parties who believes they are adversely affected as a result of the methods used by a Canadian standards drafting organization for preparing a National Standard of Canada..."²⁶ (CAN-P-2E, Appendix F). Following the lodging of a complaint with the SCC, the Executive Committee may establish a special committee charged with settling the dispute between the complainant and the SDO involved in the dispute. All special committee meetings are open to the public.

If, in this way, Canadian consumers can avail themselves of officially recognized methods for articulating their dissatisfaction with the development of certain standards that must be consensual, and if the SCC is concerned with consumers' interest in standardization, it goes without saying that such an appeal procedure must be sufficiently accessible, transparent and equitable in order to work well and be simple and effective to use by consumer representatives. However, our study has shown us that few consumer associations are familiar with the SCC and that among those that are, the majority have only an imprecise idea of its role and responsibilities.²⁷ The organization's relatively widespread anonymity surely implies that there is a lack of awareness about access to its procedures. This lack of awareness could raise concerns about its real influence or effectiveness. It is, in fact, easy to extrapolate that there is a fairly widespread lack of awareness about the organization in the general public as well

Here again, we have found no document demonstrating that the SCC, as the result of a complaint, has ever revised a standard. However, during our phone conversation,²⁸ an SCC representative affirmed that, to his knowledge, the SCC has been able over the last few years to raise questions with SDOs or request review of the balance of interested parties in certain development stages of a specific standard.

us advised of any changes in their situations. Some SDOs decide to offer services beyond the accreditation criteria, and we applaud their initiative, but that does not mean that other SDOs must necessarily follow their example."

²⁶ See CAN-P-2E of the Standards Council of Canada, p. 8.

²⁷ In a survey of consumer associations in Canada, conducted by Union des consommateurs, 29% of respondents were not familiar with the SCC, 62% knew a little about it and only 9% knew the organization well.

²⁸ Phone conversation on 10/08/05 with Darryl Kingston, Senior Program Officer, Consumer and Public Interest

Rather than proceed with formal sanctions, the SCC prefers to handle these rare situations with discussion and adjustments.²⁹

The fact remains that a complaint lodged at a meeting with an SDO should, if it deals with a lack of balanced representation, bring about serious and urgent correctives, because this balanced representation is an essential and incontrovertible criteria for National Standard acceptance and the maintenance of the accreditation of the organization that developed that standard.

Consumer participation in the NSS is modeled and managed in the Canadian Standards Strategy (CSS). Some eight key elements defining CSS objectives clearly refer to consumers and their interests. For example, the sixth element, dealing with the establishment of steering mechanisms for standardization activities in the regulation of current and new social and economic issues, stipulates that such "mechanisms must take account of consumer strong points, weaknesses, opportunities and issues."³⁰ The seventh element, on the improvement of the ability of the system to act and the participation of Canadians in standardization activities, states that consumer representation among a balanced group of interested parties, formed of participants from government and industry, among other sectors, is essential for the consensual development and adoption of the country's standards.

Consumer participation is at the heart of CSS implementation. In fact, NGOs and consumer representatives are called upon to participate actively in the development of national positions on standardization to assure that their interests are defended in international forums on that subject. This participation is especially important because most international commercial treaties mention different standards and the obligation of member countries to use international standards as they develop their own national standards. Therefore, Canadian influence is essential for satisfying and defending the country's consumer interests in developing international standards, especially with regard to health, safety and the environment.

It is up to the SCC to take up the mandate of encouraging consumer participation in standardization processes. It is its duty to "contribute to sustainable development, improve the health, safety and welfare of workers and the public and help and protect consumers...."³¹

I.I.c) The Consumer and Public Interest Committee (CPIC)

Since 1999, the SCC has had an advisory committee to respond to consumer questions and needs on national and international standardization. The role of the Consumer and Public Interest Committee (CPIC) is to advise the SCC on questions related to the standardization interests of consumers and the public, specifically, issues related to welfare, health, safety and the environment. Due to its connection with the SCC, the CPIC can influence the content of national standards and solicit the SCC to better defend the interests of consumers and the public while encouraging their participation in different processes of developing standardization policies and assessing compliance with standards.

²⁹ In her letter of December 12, Ms. Lojk acknowledged the rarity of lodged complaints but insisted on the merit of the approach adopted by the SCC: "Incidentally, standards personnel regularly discuss concerns with SDOs when they arise or when the SCC becomes aware of them. The most effective mechanism in this context is dialogue and cooperation because we are not a regulatory body. That spirit of cooperation applies to all our work, and we believe that it is one of the attributes of the National Standards System."

³⁰ Canadian Standards Strategy. Government of Canada, 2000. p. 9, SCC website: http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/CSS_update_e.pdf (page visited July 10, 2005)

³¹ Canadian Standards Strategy. Government of Canada, 2000. p. 22, SCC website: http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/CSS_update_e.pdf (page visited July 10, 2005)

Nevertheless, CPIC members, named by the SCC following an internal SCC process specifically taking into account the interest group or work of the candidates and a geographically balanced representation, does not support the consumer cause. In fact, the committee includes consumers (4),³² environmental protection organizations (2), the union movement (1), the university milieu (2), government (2), occupational health and safety organizations (1), industry (1) and standards development organizations (SDOs) (4). The CPIC thus would like to show " a balanced geographical and interest group representation to ensure that no single interest benefits from a dominant position."³³ The weight and influence of consumers in standardization matters are diluted within the advisory committee implemented to respond to their questions and needs.

If the mission of the CPIC seems clearly defined (Attributions of the Consumer and Public Interest Committee, part D), it does not seem to be the case for their work and their organizational strategy. According to Jim Ferrero of the BNQ, the CPIC would have a completely adequate work plan, but the priorities in that plan, however, are not necessarily very well identified and focus on too many objectives to meet and research to be completed considering the human and financial resources the CPIC has at its disposal.³⁴

The CPIC budget, in fact, is rather arbitrary and poorly defined. Although financial aid is granted to consumer representatives for participation at meetings and conferences on standardization, funding for development and implementation of research projects is clearly insufficient. The lack of resources constitutes a serious hindrance limiting the ability of the CPIC to carry out its mandate and serve consumer interests adequately during development of consensual national and international standards.³⁵

Furthermore, with regard to international standardization, the CPIC has a sub-committee the mandate of which is advising the SCC on Canadian consumer issues in order to create recommendations for developing the positions of Canada in the Consumer and Public Interest Committee (COPOLCO) of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which we discuss in detail in Section IV. The Canadian Advisory Committee of COPOLCO, the CAC/COPOLCO, advises the SCC on the strategies and positions to adopt in the development of COPOLCO policies and activities and represents Canada at plenary meetings and COPOLCO workshops.³⁶

Canadian consumer influence on the world scene directly depends on the level and scope of their activities within different Canadian Advisory Committees directed by the SCC. It would seem that the mission of the CPIC is to encourage the public and consumer representatives to contribute to the development and certification of international standards while seeing to it that adequate financial and logistical support is put at their disposal.

³² Terms of reference of the Consumer and Public Interest Committee, part C. Standards Council of Canada website: http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/cpic_tor_e.pdf Canadian Standards Strategy. Government of Canada, 2000. p. 9. SCC website: http://www.scc.ca/Asset/iu_files/CSS_update_e.pdf (page visited on July 10, 2005) The figures in parentheses are the number of members in each interest group.

³³ Terms of reference of the Consumer and Public Interest Committee, 2003, part C, p. 2.

³⁴ Conversation with Jim Ferrero, BNQ, May 25, 2005, during the COPOLCO meeting in Toronto.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ CAC/COPOLCO Intranet, at: <https://forums.scc.ca/forums/scc/dispatch.cgi/COPOLCO/>

I.II Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

I.II.a) Description

Established in 1919, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA)³⁷ is the oldest and most important standardization organization in Canada. A private, non-profit organization accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), the CSA offers the services of standards development, testing, certification, registration of management systems and conformity assessment in a broad range of areas³⁸ to respond to the needs of industry, governments and consumers in Canada and on the international scene.

Some 9,000 members participate in CSA activities, 7,500 of whom are volunteer committee members, while 1,500 are sustaining members and corporate sustaining members.

Committee members are responsible for developing consensual standards in the CSA. Working in concert with CSA personnel, these volunteers guide the organization's development work and ensure that standards in development will respond to public and business needs. The committees are formed according to the principle of "balanced representation," which encourages the inclusive participation of consumer, industry and government representatives while avoiding the predominance of one particular interest group over the others. All committee members, including committee chairs, are also invited by the CSA to participate without charge in training sessions³⁹ to familiarize themselves with the implications, guidelines and fundamental aspects of the Association's current consensual standards development process.

Standards development is funded by the subscriptions of sustaining members and corporate sustaining members. Sustaining members contribute financially to standards development work through annual subscriptions. In exchange for these subscriptions, sustaining members regularly receive very useful information on the standardization areas that interest them most. They also have the right to discounts on information, standards and electronic products, guides, seminars and subscriptions to Info-committee newsletters.⁴⁰

³⁷ See information, CSA website: <http://www.csa.ca/Default.asp?language=English> (page consulted in January 2004)

³⁸ Electricity, electronics, occupational health and safety, health care, sports and recreation, energy, environment, business management, gas equipment, telecommunications, construction products and materials, etc.

³⁹ The CSA Learning Centre offers seminars, training manuals and guides on basic principles to help members familiarize themselves with standards and technical requirements and their application. This free training program focuses on providing familiarity with the guidelines and procedures of the CSA consensual standards development process. Programs offered to members are: 1) Member orientation - roles and responsibilities of CSA committee members 2) Management of the process - roles and responsibilities of CSA committee chairs 3) Personalized training program. See CSA Learning Centre page, CSA website: https://learningcentre.csa.ca/lc_site/beg.asp (page consulted in January 2004)

⁴⁰ See the Membership page, Sustaining members, CSA website: http://www.csa.ca/membership/membership_directory/Default.asp?language=English (page consulted in January 2004). In its FAQ, however, the CSA states that "financial support comes from the CSA and parties interested in the process. Those parties can be governments, industry and associations. In general, the financing of standards comes from all these sources. Our standards development process ensures that the funding source has no influence on the content of a standard." In the FAQ, "Who funds standards development at the Canadian Standards Association?" CSA website: <http://www.csa.ca/faq/default.asp?articleID=4399&searchType=exactPhrase&searchWordList=financeme nt&language=English> (page consulted in January 2004)

While sustaining members' annual subscriptions are \$350, the advantages of corporate sustaining membership cost from \$1,400 to \$5,999 a year. Those advantages may vary according to the size of their financial subscription.

Besides benefiting from the same privileges as other sustaining members, organizations choosing corporate sustaining membership obtain additional advantages, such as recognition of all company locations operating under the same name. Employees of all the establishments of the organization have the right to discounts on CSA publications, seminars and conferences.

- Market-specific program updates for current information on standards development initiatives in the area(s) important to their organization.
- Dues allocation. The ability to direct dues to support the standards development initiatives in a program area of choice. This support is recognized on our membership plaque.
- Voting privileges. This is dependent on the level of membership ranging from 2-8 votes.
- And more! Depending on the membership level chosen, different discounts may apply on new services, seminars and annual conference registrations.⁴¹

Obviously, these advantages allow the different organizations participating in the corporate sustaining membership program to enjoy a better strategic position in the CSA. The voting privilege, for example, gets them advantages when administrators are being elected, modifications are being made to Association regulations, etc. Furthermore, better access to relevant information and the ability to choose the specific standardization programs their subscription finances, without necessarily directly influencing the process, gives them a position of power in the sectors where they have an interest.⁴²

CSA activities depend on the will and participation of different interest groups affected directly or indirectly by standardization activities, which in turn depend, in a certain measure, on the financial involvement of some members. We add to this that each standard must be revised at least every five years in accordance with the CSA improvement and updating process.

I.II.b) Consumer Participation

Of all the standards development organizations (SDOs) accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is among those that grant the most

In a written response on September 13, 2005, sent to Union des consommateurs following a preliminary version of this report, Jeanne Bank, President for the International Consumer Product Safety and Health Organization (ICPSHO) wrote that "our standards work is primarily financed through the sale of our products and services, contracts and funding from a variety of sources for specific standards development projects and support from CSA Group Corporate Funds."

⁴¹ See Corporate Sustaining Membership, CSA website:

<http://www.csa.ca/membership/corporate/Default.asp?language=English> (page consulted in January 2004)

⁴² In her letter of September 13, 2005, Ms. Bank wrote that "all CSA members – committee members (volunteers) and sustaining members (dues paying members) are members of the association and as such have the right to vote at the association level. This includes voting privileges on such things as election of the Board of Directors, changes to bylaws, etc. In no way does this voting have any influence on the technical content of a standard. Only Committee Members may vote on the technical content of the standard.... Certainly timely access to standards information and involvement in the association as a Sustaining Member could provide a strategic advantage to organizations, but it does not mean undue influence on CSA's process."

importance to consumer representation in different standardization activities. The CSA invites them to submit comments about standards projects and even participate directly in the standards development process by sitting on various standardization committees. To demonstrate the importance it grants to consumer participation, the CSA states that consumer contributions "help us to produce standards that more accurately reflect the needs and expectations of the whole marketplace."⁴³

There are three main forms of consumer participation in the CSA: public scrutiny of standards, membership in the consumer network and participation in the committees representing consumers.

Public scrutiny of standards is a crucial step⁴⁴ in the standards development process for CSA. The fourth step of seven, public scrutiny allows the public to consult and comment on standards in development. Consumers thus have the opportunity to influence the content of standards significantly and take account of their concerns and needs. CSA also created the electronic publication *Info Update* to inform consumers about the latest developments in standards projects.

The CSA consumer network allows some 200 volunteer to participate in standards development activities. They take part in surveys, colloquia, think tanks, discussion forums and other consultation activities with the goal of defending the interests of consumers and users of products and services.

Nearly a third of the volunteer members of the CSA consumer network participate directly in standardization committee work. This strategic and privileged position offers consumer representatives the opportunity to make the positions of their clientele known and acquire an understanding of the issues around a standard in development from the point-of-view of the users of products and services. Participation of these representatives enables the formation of balanced standards development committees while supporting a consensual development process.

As participants in standardization committees, consumer representatives benefit from the constant support of CSA, including:

⁴³ Consumer Section, CSA website:

http://www.csa.ca/consumers/get_involved/default.asp?language=ENGLISH (page consulted on March 13, 2005)

⁴⁴ In her September 13, 2005, response, Ms. Bank added some more specifics on this public scrutiny process: "All CSA standards must go through a minimum of a 60-day public review process in accordance with our accreditation requirements. These are publicized in our *Info Update* publication on the website and in addition, members of the public, including members of CSA's Consumer Program, are encouraged to review and comment on any draft standards during this period. Copies of the draft standards are provided on a complementary basis and all comments are reviewed by the Committee in finalizing the technical content of the standard. In addition, the CSA Consumer Program has also organized, on occasion, focus groups, online consultations, and advisory panel meetings where draft standards are reviewed by interested consumer and end user representatives to provide the committee with additional end-user input. This would be done where there is a strong consumer/public interest on the particular standard and where the committee has identified a special need for additional input. However, these are not formal 'public hearings' – they are simply consultative, advisory mechanisms to supplement the normal consensus process."

- training sessions for new volunteers;
- if required, financial support for out-of-pocket travel expenses to attend committee meetings
- information about CSA standards development policies, procedures and activities
- networking sessions with other volunteers
- access to research materials and reports
- help with consumer research to better represent consumer interests
- information about the activities of CSA's Consumer Services Program.⁴⁵

From the preliminary stages of the standards development process, the CSA simplifies committee meetings for consumer representatives by putting Internet work technology at their disposal—online standards development workshops allowing consumer representatives to reduce their representation costs and long-distance phone calls and easily and rapidly exchange information with other committee members.

If consumer participation in standardization processes is well-developed in the CSA, its consumer representation programs even comparable with those of the [European Association for the Coordination of Consumer Representation in Standardization] (ANEC), which we will discuss in Section II, serious problems of representation arise in practice at the CSA, however.

In fact, without rules on representativity, nearly half of those participating as consumer representatives in the association's different committees and standardization projects only represent themselves in reality because they are not part of any non-governmental group or organization working to promote and defend the rights and interests of the public and consumers.⁴⁶ Because they act without backing, oversight or mandate, have to answer to no one and are not disposed of the resources of an organization, such as democratically developed policies and strategies, it is difficult to believe that they can speak, act and defend a position legitimately and credibly in the name of the public and all consumers. We can also presume that the representative of a recognized organization is more likely to have more means and weight, due to the reputation of the organization and its available resources, not only in terms of

⁴⁵ Consumer Participation – Consumer Representatives, CSA website: http://www.csa.ca/consumers/get_involved/default.asp?language=ENGLISH (page visited March 13, 2005)

⁴⁶ Ms. Banks, September 13, 2005, responded in these terms: "While many of CSA's consumer representatives are not representing a consumer organization, they do not speak for just for themselves – they represent their interest group – consumer and public interests. Furthermore, they have access to the other members of CSA's Consumer Program as a sounding board and source of consumer research – this provides a constituency. These reps are chosen for their ability to represent the consumer interest at the committee level and many have experience in the academic sector, community work, regulatory fields, or single issue/specialized organizations (e.g. parents who have lost a child in a school bus accident). She added that "it should be noted that for many areas of specialized standards work, general consumer organizations are not interested in putting forward volunteers as these subject areas are not considered part of their priority areas. Nevertheless, these subject areas affect consumers and it is important to have a consumer voice represented at the Committee level. As a result, other targeted forms of recruitment are used to identify qualified representatives." These comments raise questions about the consumer group knowledge of standardization processes and the resources available for adequate participation, two problems discussed later in this report.

media visibility, but also in a discussion group including government and industry representatives, while an individual who, despite the resources CSA can put at his or her disposal (consultation, information) or his/her personal background (education, experience), only speaks, without a mandate, in his or her own name.

A large majority of these representatives being retirees, we also notice a problem in the aging of CSA volunteers and an unsettling lack of replacements, besides the risk of over-representation of the interests of elderly people, perhaps to the detriment of other age groups.

It seems clear that the CSA, although offering one of the best consumer participation programs in the area of standardization, must work to ensure that participants on its committees are guaranteed their representativity and that consumer representation better reflects a balanced microcosm of our current society.

In conclusion, the reputation of the CSA with Canadian consumer associations may grow, considering its importance. At present, however, 38% of those associations say that they are not familiar with it, 48% say they know a little about it and only 14% say they know it well.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Web survey conducted by Union des consommateurs for this project. Detailed results are appended.

I.III Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)

I.III.a) Description

Founded in 1961 by the Quebec government, the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) is a public⁴⁸ standards development organization accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). The BNQ offers a wide range of services, including standards development, certification of products, services, processes and people, registration of quality control and environmental management systems, accreditation of laboratories and conformity assessment. BNQ activities extend beyond the province of Quebec, and it provides its standardization services and expertise elsewhere in Canada and internationally.

BNQ funding depends on the principle of cost recovery. Like the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB), and contrary to the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC), the BNQ is not funded primarily by the sale of conformity assessment services, but rather by the acquisition of monetary contributions from stakeholders and interested parties via different standards development projects.⁴⁹

By signing the the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization (WTO) based on ISO/IEC Guide 59, the BNQ says it completely subscribes to the grand principles of consensual standardization, such as:

- ensuring that standardization projects under its responsibility are harmonized as much as possible with all Canadian national or international standards and all current Canadian laws and regulations;
- ensuring that its standardization projects create no barriers to trade;
- ensuring that it is oriented toward protecting the health and safety of people and the environment and promoting sustainable development;
- ensuring the maintenance of consensus among the interest groups present during consensual standardization work.⁵⁰

I.III.b) Consumer Participation

The four preceding general principles of consensual standardization clearly reveal the importance of consumer participation and non-governmental consumer representation organizations in standardization processes. The third principle, in fact, insists on taking consumer and public interests into account.

Consequently, the BNQ seems to reserve an important place to consumer participation during its standard development or review process. For example, upon the formation of a committee dealing with the technical content of a consensual document, it attempts to balance the number of representatives from three large interest groups affected by the standardization project: 1) suppliers 2) potential users and 3) public interest. Committee members, including consumer association representatives, are then called to make known their respective thoughts and positions on the standard's technical content in order to reach a consensus.

⁴⁸ Since 1990, the BNQ has been part of the Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec. Information on the Bureau de normalisation du Québec can be found at its website: <http://www.bnq.qc.ca/en/index.html> (page visited in January 2006)

⁴⁹ See Overview of Canada's National Standards System, Innovation in Canada website: <http://www.innovation.gc.ca/gol/innovation/site.nsf/en/in04933.html> (page consulted on January 13, 2006)

⁵⁰ BNQ 9950-099. 2004. Consensual Standardization – Procedure Policies and Rules. Foreword.

Following preliminary approval, a public inquiry of sixty days is initiated to collect comments and concerns from the greatest possible number of people and organizations interested in the standard being developed. Consumer and public participation is solicited at this stage; any person or organization interested in the BNQ standard project receives a copy of the consensual document in order to comment and possibly influence final development of the standard. Obviously, these comments may confirm and reinforce the position of consumer interest representatives upon the written vote on the final version of the consensual document.

Despite these procedures, we have not been able to assess the effectiveness of consumer participation in the BNQ's standards development process. The BNQ does not dedicate any section to consumers nor make any specific allusion to them in their standards committees' presentation. Neither have we found any announced policy of reimbursing the costs of consumer representative participation in standards development committees.

Conscious of the fact that the service industry is of considerable importance in the current economy and that standardization consequently must involve consumers, and concerned that barriers seem to exist against increased consumer group participation, the BNQ implemented the *Comité consultatif québécois pour les consommateurs* (CCQC) [Quebec Consumer Advisory Committee] in 2003. Funded very modestly by the BNQ,⁵¹ the CCQC's mandate is promoting consumer interests in standardization and identifying difficulties related to consumer participation in standardization processes. Holding one or two consultation and information meetings a year, the CCQC is based on the participation of eight consumer associations in a committee officially including eleven members, excluding the BNQ.⁵²

The CCQC is not always disposed of a plan of action encouraging consumer participation in consensual standards development, until now concentrating its actions on educating Quebec consumer representatives on standardization realities and issues. The absence of a specific strategy and concrete actions thus confines the CCQC to a rather empty role at present.

However, the BNQ has identified certain barriers that seem to hinder greater consumer participation in standardization processes. First, the participation of professionals and organizations in standards development committees is done on a voluntary and volunteer basis. In fact, according to subsection 4.3.4.7 of Consensual standardization – Procedure policies and rules of the BNQ, "the BNQ generally does not provide any financial support for the participation of delegates but may target, if needed, funding sources" (p.8). Second, consumers and the public who want to obtain any consensual document must pay the costs of publication and delivery.

Below we will return in more detail to these inadequate human and financial resources.

The BNQ could certainly benefit from increasing its notoriety with Canadian consumer associations. In fact, 33% of them said they were not familiar with the BNQ, 62% said they knew a little about it and only 5% said they knew the organization well.⁵³

⁵¹ Only the costs of committee member meals and transportation are reimbursed.

⁵² In this committee of eleven members, eight come from consumer associations, one from the government (a representative of the Office de protection du consommateur) and two from universities. Two of the eight seats reserved for consumer associations, however, are unoccupied for the moment.

⁵³ Web survey conducted by Union des consommateurs for this project. Detailed results are appended. In the case of the BNQ, of course consumer associations in Quebec are more familiar with this organization

I.IV Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)

I.IV.a) Description

Set up in 1934 by the federal government, the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) is one of the organizations entitled to participate in the National Standards System (NSS) of Canada and part of the government of Canada's Public Works and Government Services department.⁵⁴ Its primary role is to support the interests and mandates of the Canadian government related to the economy, trade, regulation, products, quality, the environment, health and safety. The CGSB provides standards development, certification, qualification, management system registration and conformity assessment services in Canada, the United States, Latin America, and South East Asia and at the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), the CGSB, like the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ), is financed by the contributions of stakeholders and parties interested by different standards development projects, according to the principle of cost recovery.

Section 2.1.2 of the CGSB Policy Manual for the Development and Review of Standards states that "the voting membership of all CGSB standards committees shall be balanced so that no single category of interest can dominate the voting procedures of any committee" *and*, Section 4.9: "A balanced committee is one in which no single category of interest comprises a majority of voting members of that committee."⁵⁵

I.IV.b) Consumer Participation

Publicity about consumer participation seems to be rather limited at the CGSB. In fact, the CGSB website does not dedicate any section to consumers nor make any specific allusion to consumers in its presentation of standards committees.

Standards committee members come from three main groups of stakeholders: manufacturers, users and the general public. Individuals, representatives or organizations possessing the desired technical skill or adequate knowledge in the standards committee's subject area may be part of that committee.

CGSB first invites interested individuals and organizations to join the committee. The list of possible members is based on several sources, such as different government levels, lists of associations and Internet research. Responses to this invitation may include suggestions of other possible members. Other individuals and groups may also indicate their interest in being part of the committee by communicating directly with the CGSB.⁵⁶

than are those outside Quebec. The analysis of results must take account of the fact that the Quebec groups are over-represented in the respondent sample.

⁵⁴ Information on the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) website: <http://www.tpsgc.gc.ca/cgsb/home/index-e.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁵⁵ CGSB Policy Manual for the Development and Review of Standards, December 2002, CGSB website: <http://www.tpsgc.gc.ca/cgsb/prgsrv/stdsdev/policy/toc-e.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁵⁶ Standards Development Process of the Canadian General Standards Board, CGSB website: <http://www.tpsgc.gc.ca/cgsb/prgsrv/stdsdev/notstd/process-e.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

All CGSB stakeholders, more than 4,000 people, are clearly identified as "volunteers." The website proudly proclaims that "volunteers are the essence of CGSB programs and services."⁵⁷ Therefore, it is astonishing that there is no mention of any policy of financial support for consumer representatives who dedicate their time, expertise and resources to participate in various standards committees and certification and qualification groups.⁵⁸

However, for several years, CGSB has tried to improve consumer participation, as indicated in the CGSB Policy Manual for the Development and Review of Standards. The organization offers its volunteers documentation on standards, training sessions and standardization activity notifications.

The public scrutiny stage of the standards development process, in accordance with good practice according to the World Trade Organization (WTO), always enables the public and consumers to be informed about standardization work and to comment on it.⁵⁹

Furthermore, although the CGSB praises standards being developed by committees balanced in representation of different interest groups, the actual participation of consumer groups still seems problematic. Besides the lack of financial resources of these organizations, the fact that the majority of CGSB committees focus on the technical side of standards, which demands an investment in time and training for participation to be effective, limits consumer participation still more.⁶⁰ We could add that the CGSB does not appear to have very well-developed oversight on the consumer participation program either.

Despite the fact that the "CGSB is one of the largest standards development and conformity assessment organizations in Canada," it remains almost unknown to Canadian consumer associations.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See the Committees page, CGSB website: <http://www.tpsgc.gc.ca/cgsb/com/index-e.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁵⁸ In its comments of September 13, 2005, the CGSB, however, asserted that "the CGSB has procedures and a work instruction regarding funding towards committee member participation," without, however, providing any additional information on this funding of which we found no mention in the CGSB Policy Manual for Development and Review of Standards.

⁵⁹ On some occasions, particular attention will be paid to this stage of the process due to greater consumer involvement. In its comments of September 13, 2005, the CGSB provided an example: "In the public review phase, CGSB has, for the high profile standard labelling of GE food, utilized the media for public review notification. Also for organic agriculture, there was more than one public review period. In both cases, CGSB provided the standards on its website for review, not requiring the public to request a copy. Frequently asked questions were also a part of the website."

⁶⁰ In its comments of September 13, 2005, CGSB acknowledged that the participation of consumer representatives could increase and offered some figures on consumer and public interest groups: "While in some consumer-product standards committees, the consumer representation could be greater, for recent standards of high profile, there have been a number of consumer representatives. CGSB has at least 13 different consumer and public interest groups on its committees and public interest groups have not been fully explored. Some 24 committees include consumer representatives."

⁶¹ According to the Web survey conducted by Union des consommateurs for this project, 90% of associations were not familiar with the CGSB, and 10% knew a little about it. Detailed results are appended.

I.V Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC)

I.V.a) Description

Created in 1920, Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC)⁶² is an independent non-profit organization accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SSC). ULC offers standards development services, product safety testing, certification, registration of management systems and conformity assessment in a wide range of areas. ULC is a pioneer in product safety in Canada, and several of its standards are references for the laws and regulations of different levels of Canadian government. Since 1995, ULC has also been affiliated with the international Underwriters' Laboratories Inc. (UL), which includes more than 5,900 employees across the world and an international network of affiliated offices.

Although its motto is consumer safety, ULC takes a customer-centred approach, focusing on the satisfying the needs of Canadian businesses operating mainly on an international scale. With partners in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, ULC can offer excellent service to Canadian businesses tempted by the challenge of international trade. ULC's 2002 annual report says that its fundamental value is a passion for customer service and that its mission is public safety. In this report, the organization asserts, under the heading "changes in all our activities," a message from the president that "the transformation now under way throughout our organisation is designed to help Canadian businesses expand their horizons, improve efficiency and open new markets... New training programs focused on managing costs and tightening schedules are helping our staff increase the value we deliver to our customers." Then: "A great deal has changed at ULC. We are developing new, more flexible and "customer-friendly" approaches, introducing innovative services, streamlining our processes and reducing the cost of safety testing and certification."⁶³ In their website's FAQ section, the prevalence of questions directly affecting their customers also seems to point clearly to this customer-centred approach.⁶⁴

ULC also works in cooperation with Canadian national regulatory authorities and governmental organizations responsible for acceptance decisions on product safety and with insurance companies, the risks of which they help to minimize.

ULC funding is assured mainly by the sale of standards and conformity assessment services.⁶⁵ It also offers private training seminars and workshops to businesses, "designed to reach experts

⁶² See information on ULC at the CGSB website: <http://www.tpsgc.gc.ca/cgsb/home/index-e.html> (page consulted in January 2006) and <http://www.ulc.ca/>

⁶³ ULC 2002 Annual Report, ULC website: [http://www.ulc.ca/downloads/2002_Annual_Report\(en\).pdf](http://www.ulc.ca/downloads/2002_Annual_Report(en).pdf) (page consulted in January 2006)

⁶⁴ Frequently asked questions, ULC website: <http://www.ulc.ca/fag.asp> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁶⁵ 2002 Annual Report revenue by line of business: Field services 47.1%; Electrical 25.0%; Fire protection 15.9%; Signal 6.1%; Quality Registration System 4.3%; Standards 1.6%. 2002 ULC Annual Report, ULC website: [http://www.ulc.ca/downloads/2002_Annual_Report\(en\).pdf](http://www.ulc.ca/downloads/2002_Annual_Report(en).pdf) (page consulted in January 2006)

and decision-makers from a variety of industries."⁶⁶ Online, ULC sells a variety of technical documents related to standards.⁶⁷

I.V.b) Consumer Participation

While ULC asserts that "all ULC Standards are developed by Technical Committees made up of a balance of manufacturers, users, inspection authorities and the general public, selected on representing major interests across Canada,"⁶⁸ the place devoted to consumers in its balanced committees seems somewhat limited. The organization seems to assume that its very real concerns for safety that it brings to standards development somehow automatically respond to consumer needs and concerns.⁶⁹

According to research conducted by Jennifer Hillard for the Consumers' Association of Canada⁷⁰, it would seem that ULC only included the time two consumer representatives as standards development committee members. Although these two representatives received financial support, the fact remains that consumer participation in ULC standardization activities limited to this number or which is only deemed necessary for the products consumers can obtain for their own personal usage from retail stores, seems clearly insufficient.

The ULC website has a section for the consumer which deals mainly with product safety. There is a form for reporting safety problems with certified products, safety advice and information and a list of recalled defective products from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Most communication designed for consumers deals with the publication of new standards in order to receive public comments.

The only mention of opportunities for consumers and the public to have some influence on standards content to be found on the section on standards development concerns public scrutiny of standards throughout their development, a mandatory phase under the National Standards Strategy (NSS) of the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). The site makes no reference to any specific program implemented to enable direct consumer participation in standardization processes in any way. There is a reference to technical committees formed with

⁶⁶ ULUniversity, ULC website: <http://uluniversity.com/ca/> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁶⁷ See ULC Online Store:

https://smp.gilmore.ca/smPage?level=noframe4/show_group&k=540205985&fc1=null&t=psr&z_id=182&back_level=noframe4/start_usr&pid=null&parent_id=null (page consulted in January 2006)

⁶⁸ See "How standards are developed" at the ULC website:

http://www.ulc.ca/standards/standards_development.asp

⁶⁹ In a written response dated September 26, 2005, sent to Union des consommateurs following a preliminary version of this report, Stephen H. Wenc, Vice-President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of ULC, asserted that "standards do not focus on all typical consumer products. Most ULC standards focus on industrial products or are of a trade or regulatory nature, for example, fire protection and construction materials standards. Consumers of these products are often professionals, for example, firefighters who use ULC-certified materials on the job, rather than less-specialized consumers buying these products in retail stores for their own personal use. ULC periodically solicits the participation of firefighters, code enforcement officers, entrepreneurs and other direct users of products covered by our standards in the context of our standards development process. When it is a question of standards on consumer products, we also solicit participation from various consumer organizations."

⁷⁰ Hillard, Jennifer. *Draft. Feasibility Study. Consumer Organizations for Standards in the Americas*, Consumers' Association of Canada, 2000, p. 15.

the balanced representation of the interests of manufacturers, users, public authorities and the general public, but without any other details.⁷¹

The lack of consumer association participation in ULC standardization work probably explains in part why these associations know little about the ULC.⁷²

⁷¹ How standards are developed; Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada:
http://www.ulc.ca/standards/standards_development.asp (page consulted in January 2006)

⁷² According to the web survey conducted by Union des consommateurs for this project, 62% of associations were not familiar with ULC, and 38% only knew a little about it. Detailed results are appended.

II. STANDARDIZATION FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES IN EUROPE

There are three European standardization organizations (SDOs) composed of different standardization organizations and recognized by the European Union (EU):

- European Committee for Standardization (CEN)
- European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC)
- European Telecommunication Standards Institute (ETSI)

The EU mandates these three private, non-profit organizations to produce voluntary technical standards and regulations acceptable to all member countries. Since adopting the "New Approach to Harmonised Standards" in 1985, the EU has limited itself, for the most part, to prescribing basic security rules to be followed during standards development.

II.1 European Committee for Standardization (CEN)

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN)⁷³ was founded in 1961 by national standardization organization members of the European Economic Community and by European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member countries. As the largest SDO in Europe,⁷⁴ the CEN's mission is developing standards to ensure worker and consumer satisfaction and safety, network interoperability, environmental protection, proper operation of research and development programs, free trade and customer supply.

Standards are produced by the efforts of participants representing all concerned interests: industry, civil authorities and society, which contribute mainly via their national standardization organizations.⁷⁵ Standards are developed by consensus.

The CEN standardization process employs balanced delegations of representatives from national standardization organizations from 28 member countries.⁷⁶ These representatives vote on the content of different standards and on their implementation as national standards. Furthermore, they fund most standardization work.⁷⁷

⁷³ Information on the European Committee on Standardization, CEN website: <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/index.htm> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁷⁴ In the year 2001, CEN developed 7,500 standards.

⁷⁵ Principles, CEN website: <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/aboutus/generalities/principles/index.asp> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁷⁶ Depending on specific terms of reference, the committees are also open to Associate Members, Counsellors, European trade federations and international organizations. See "How we work," CEN website: <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/aboutus/generalities/how+we+work/index.asp> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁷⁷ Annual expenditure for the CEN Management Centre in 2004: Membership fees: 54%; European Commission: 39%; Sales and miscellaneous: 2%; Specific contracts: 2%; EFTA: 3%. See: Budget, CEN website: <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/aboutus/information/budget/index.asp> (page consulted in January 2006). However, the CEN specifies that national members are largely funded by industry, the sale of standards and governmental grants. See National Members, CEN website: <http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/aboutus/structure+/nationalmembers/nationalmembers.asp> (page consulted in January 2006)

The process also calls upon 8 associate members from consumer, environmentalist, labour, SME and big business groups. They have no right to vote, but these associates can attend all standards development technical committees and receive all relevant documentation on that subject.

The technical committees, and the working groups they set up, develop most standards. The CEN Technical Board coordinates the standardization program.

The CEN also works in close collaboration with the CENELEC, the ETSI, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the [European Association for the Coordination and Representation of Consumers in Standardization] (ANEC).

II.II European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC)

Created in 1973 as a result of the fusion of the CENELCOM and the CENEL, the mission of the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC)⁷⁸ is to develop voluntary electrotechnical standards for businesses and the EU dealing with electrical and electronic goods and services on the European market alone to eliminate trade barriers, create new markets and reduce compliance costs. The CENELEC prioritizes product and service quality and safety, technological development, free trade and environmental protection.

The Technical Board ensures the coordination of technical activities. It is formed of one permanent delegate from each CENELEC member and observers and is directed by its president.

Technical committees responsible for standards development are composed of national delegations designated by CENELEC members. These committees are formed of representatives from 28 countries. They are members of national standardization organizations engaged in electrotechnical standardization. One sole organization per country may be a CENELEC member.

The CENELEC also works with some cooperative organizations charged with commenting on standards, proposing amendments to them and advising the various committees on standards development implications.⁷⁹

Development work is usually begun (80% of the time) by an initial document issued by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). CENELEC technical bodies may also submit such a document. The CENELEC may also examine drafts developed by its partners or the national committees.

The large majority of standards developed by CENELEC committees are similar to IEC standards.

⁷⁸ See "About CENELEC" at its website:

<http://www.cenelec.org/Cenelec/About+CENELEC/CENELEC.htm> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁷⁹ ANEC is one of these cooperative organizations.

II.III European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)

Established in 1988, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)⁸⁰ mission is telecommunications, radio and TV broadcasting, information technologies and electronic communications standards development requested by industry and the European Union. Furthermore, the ETSI has a top international role in the area of global mobile communications protocol, *Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP™)*.

The ETSI includes 520 members from 36 European countries. These members participate in different technical committees and have full voting power in standards development. The ETSI also counts on the support of 126 associates from 19 non-European countries that can participate in the standards development process without, however, the right to vote. The organization also includes 42 observers. The ETSI then relies on the participation of 688 representatives from national standardization organizations, the EU, the manufacturing sector, network operators, service providers and consumer groups.

55% of the organization's funding comes from member subscriptions, 9% from representative partners, 22% from contracts (EC/EFTA) and 13% from "commercial" activities.⁸¹

⁸⁰ See information on the European Telecommunications Standards Institute at the ETSI website: <http://www.etsi.org/> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁸¹ "How is the ETSI funded?" ETSI website: http://www.etsi.org/about_etsi/30_minutes/Sem-Chapter4.htm (page consulted in January 2006)

II.IV ANEC: the European consumer voice in standardization

II.IV.a) Description

The [European Association for the Coordination of Consumer Representation in Standardization] (ANEC) was founded in 1995 and is a non-profit international association under Belgian law.⁸² Funded by the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), this non-governmental, independent organization was set up by consumer organizations to defend consumer interests in the standardization and certification processes of three European standards development organizations (SDOs), the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). ANEC represents consumers⁸³ in the EU and EFTA member states (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland).

The main policy body of ANEC is its General Assembly (GA), which has a four-year mandate. The GA includes 27 national and 5 European members. On the one hand, national members (one member for each EU/EFTA country) are named⁸⁴ jointly by the national consumer organizations of their respective countries in order to represent them in the GA. On the other hand, the consumer committees of the EU and EFTA name the European members. However, these members, whether national or European, must achieve certain objectives set by ANEC. These performance criteria are used to assess the work of representatives to better direct and advise them in their work.

Thanks to a network of more than 200 consumer representatives from the EU/EFTA member states, ANEC contributes to the different standardization and certification processes of the three SDOs by directly providing technical expertise and advice to more than 60 technical committees, working groups and new "deliverables." Furthermore, ANEC has set up working groups that deal with the seven following areas identified as priorities by all members: electric household appliances, universal design, the environment, child safety, road safety and information services. These working groups coordinate the activities of numerous national consumer representatives and ANEC representatives in different technical committees of the three SDOs. ANEC is a full member of the ETSI, an associate member of the CEN and a CENELEC observer.

To contribute adequately in the standardization and certification processes of the three SDOs, ANEC develops research projects and tests and informs all consumer representatives of the results. Therefore, the consumer representatives can convincingly present their positions to the various technical committees and working groups, above all when important commercial and industrial issues are at stake.

ANEC works closely with the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC), a federation of 34 national and independent consumer organizations from the EU, eligible countries and the EFTA. The BEUC mission is to promote and defend European consumer interests to EU and European Commission political authorities, such as the Groupe consultatif européen des consommateurs (GCEC) [European Consumer Advisory Group].

⁸² See information on ANEC at its website: <http://www.anec.org/anec.asp?lang=en&ref=00-00> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁸³ Particular attention is paid to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.

⁸⁴ The nomination procedure is identical to that of the EU and EFTA consumer committees.

II.IV.b) Importance of consumer participation

ANEC considers consumer participation essential to the standardization and certification processes of the three SDOs, for the credibility of the European standards system and for consumer confidence in the European common market. This participation is important because the standards developed by the SDOs complement European legislation since the adoption of the "New Approach to Harmonised Standards" in 1985 and because consumer representation constitutes an absolutely necessary "counterweight to the industrial interests dominating standardization processes."⁸⁵

ANEC is also not alone in believing that consumer participation in standardization processes is mandatory for ensuring the credibility of the European standards system: the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission share the same vision. The European Commission asserts that "the participation of civil society (parties representing the consumer, health and environmental protection interests) give more weight to the consensus and render standards more representative and so more easily acceptable to the interested parties...."⁸⁶ For its part, the European Parliament "requests that the European Commission and member states ensure and improve the representation of consumer interests in standardization at the European, national and international levels and suggests, in reference to the international level, that measures are taken to develop the systematic and direct participation of consumers in international standardization bodies...."⁸⁷ And the Council of the European Union emphasizes that "interested parties, such as labour, consumer and environmental associations, must fully contribute to standardization processes at all appropriate levels...."⁸⁸

Despite the recognized importance of consumer participation in standardization processes, an ANEC study of national agreements on consumer representation in standardization published in 2001⁸⁹ reached the conclusion that this participation was clearly insufficient in Europe. In fact, consumer participation has only gained significantly in 8 EU countries and 3 EFTA countries.⁹⁰ However, consumer representatives polled during this study indicated that lack of human and financial resources is the main explanation for this low consumer participation in European standardization processes.

⁸⁵ "Pourquoi la representation des consumer dans la standardization est-elle importante?" ANEC website: <http://www.anec.org/anec.asp?rd=9495&ref=01-01.06-01&lang=fr&ID=87> (in French only) (page consulted in January 2006)

⁸⁶ See European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee. Integration of environmental aspects into European standardisation, COM(2004), 130 final, Brussels, February 2, 2004, p. 13.

⁸⁷ Phillip Whitehead, Report on the communication of the Strategy Commission for Consumer Policy 2002-2006, COM(2002) 0208 – C5-0329/2002 – 2002/2173(COS), Final session document A5-0023/2003, European Parliament, January 28, 2003, p. 12.

⁸⁸ See Council of the European Union, "Resolution of the Council on the role of standardisation in Europe, 12686/1999, Brussels, November 10, 1999, p. 10.

⁸⁹ ANEC: Report of May 2001 on consumer participation in standardization (ANEC2001/GA/014)

⁹⁰ These countries are Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

III. STANDARDIZATION FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES IN THE US

III.a) Description

Contrary to what we find in most other industrialized countries, such as Canada, the US standardization system is highly decentralized. There is no US public sector equivalent to the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), due specifically to the sustained opposition of hundreds of private standards development, testing and certification organizations to any such centralization.

Founded in 1918 by five engineering corporations and three governmental agencies and funded by industry,⁹¹ the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)⁹² administers and coordinates voluntary standardization and conformity assessment in the United States. This private, non-profit organization does not develop standards; its mission is to promote standardization by establishing consensus among more than 200 accredited standards development organizations (SDOs), including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration.

ANSI also has the mandate of administering and managing the National Standards Strategy for the United States (NSS)⁹³, the guiding framework adopted by ANSI in August 2000, that specifies US national and international standardization objectives, improves consumer health and safety and develops reliable and effective standards for industry.⁹⁴

⁹¹ ANSI's annual budget is about 18 million USD.

⁹² See information on the American National Standard Institute at the ANSI website: <http://www.ansi.org/> (page consulted in January 2006)

⁹³ Text of the National Standards Strategy for the United States, ANSI website: http://public.ansi.org/ansionline/Documents/News%20and%20Publications/Brochures/national_strategy.pdf (page consulted in January 2006)

⁹⁴ The Strategy adopted by ANSI has several points in common with the Canadian Strategy. In his letter of December 12, 2005, written in response to a preliminary version of this report, Ms. Lojk of the SCC explained that the similarities between the Strategies adopted five months apart did not arise as the result of a concerted harmonization effort but rather that the Canadian Strategy served as a model for ANSI: "The SCC launched our Canadian Standardization Strategy in March 2000. It was meant to provide all Canadians participating in standardization activities with a common vision to help them optimize the results of their standardization efforts. It was not only a document written exclusively by the SCC but the fruit of very rigorous consultations with existing and possible partners in the National Standards System over a period of two years. After the appearance of the CSS, ANSI began a similar initiative, and we are flattered that the US opted to use a good part of the Canadian material for their own Strategy. We were also delighted to discover that the Strategies of Germany and Japan were also inspired by ours."

ANSI includes more than 1,000 members: industries, professional associations, SDOs, government agencies and labour and consumer groups. With the goal of facilitating dialogue between the representatives of various members, ANSI has set up four forums for the different interests:

- Company Member Forum (CMF)
- Government Member Forum (GMF)
- Organizational Member Forum (OMF)
- Consumer Interest Forum (CIF)

ANSI plays a top role in international standardization. In fact, the institute represents the US at the ISO⁹⁵ and the IEC. Its membership in these two organizations allows it to participate in nearly all phases of ISO and IEC technical programs, ANSI administering several main committees and working groups dealing with standardization at both organizations.

ANSI's international influence is easy to see when we know that numerous standards developed in the US are then adopted by the ISO and the IEC. ANSI describes its influence like this: "ANSI plays an important part in creating international standards that support the worldwide sale of products, which prevent regions from using local standards to favour local industries."⁹⁶

III.b) Consumer Participation

In the US, consumers participate very little in standardization processes, although each US SDO can, on its own initiative, invite consumer representatives if it desires. Consumer associations do not generally participate in regional or international technical committees, and the support available to them is generally very limited. Consumer participation is usually carried out in discussion groups, market studies and customer service reports.

The US National Strategy calls for greater consumer involvement, increased consumer awareness and support for consumers in their participation:

"3 - Improve the responsiveness of the standards system to the views and needs of consumers

The representation of consumer interests in the U.S. standards system is essential to ensure that the individual's needs are being considered and addressed. Today's consumers are concerned about such issues as product compatibility; quality of products and services; ease of use and accessibility; the environment, health, and safety; deceptive trade practices; redress; and social responsibility. The emergence of the online market means more information and more choices are available to consumers. With its emphasis on balance, openness, and transparency, the U.S. standards system provides a valuable forum for the consumer voice to be heard. However, more is needed to make consumers aware of these opportunities and to encourage and facilitate their participation. Tactical initiatives include:

- Standards developers should identify, encourage and support appropriate consumer representation on their committees, make virtual attendance at meetings possible through electronic means such as teleconferencing or collaborative meeting tools, and encourage consumer comment during public reviews. ...

⁹⁵ ANSI is a founding member of the ISO.

⁹⁶ Standards Activities Overview, ANSI website:

http://www.ansi.org/standards_activities/overview/overview.aspx?menuid=3 (page consulted in January 2006)

- Government should strengthen its consumer-related programs and initiate standards information and participation programs as appropriate.
- ANSI should work with consumer organizations to educate them about standardization and encourage and support their participation in standards development."⁹⁷

It should be mentioned that the US context has some particularities that explain this reduced consumer group participation in standardization processes and the choice of these groups to concentrate their limited resources on the regulatory process. Federal agencies have the legal obligation to take account of voluntary standards during development of regulation and to participate in the development of these standards⁹⁸. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, for example, which must refer to standards if their usage may help it obtain its regulatory objectives,⁹⁹ is involved in about sixty technical committees. Consumer concerns may then be heard through this means.¹⁰⁰

All the same, ANSI seems to attribute great importance to consumer participation in standardization processes. To ensure that the interests of the public and consumer are taken into account during standards development, ANSI created the Consumer Interest Forum (CIF)¹⁰¹ to promote consumer participation in standards development and conformity assessment activities.

Composed primarily of consumer representatives and federal officials of the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC),¹⁰² the CIF has the following objectives:

⁹⁷ The American National Standards Strategy 2005.

⁹⁸ Public Law 104-113, the *National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act* (NTTAA)

⁹⁹ *Consumer Product Safety Act* 1972

¹⁰⁰ It is worth mentioning that some consumer rights organizations, like the Consumers Union, refuse to accept financial support from the government or SDOs, and others refuse on principle to support standardization processes (e.g., Public Citizen), believing that regulatory and legislative processes are the only legitimate processes and the ones with which they must participate.

¹⁰¹ See information on the Consumer Interest Forum (CIF) on its page at the ANSI website: http://www.ansi.org/consumer_affairs/cic.aspx?menuid=5 (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁰² The CPSC is an independent federal regulatory agency the mandate of which is to inform the public and protect it from the risks of products on the market.

Outreach and networking: build stronger relationships between ANSI and national and international organizations to:

- Increase standards awareness among consumer representatives, including increased participation in CIF and ANSI by government, consumers, business, and trade associations;
- Build dialogue on key issues by providing a primary forum and information source on consumer interest issues related to voluntary standards and conformity assessment;
- Develop effective information exchanges among consumer professionals;
- Provide consumer feedback to the ANSI Federation;
- Represent consumers before COPOLCO and other international standards related activities.
- Policy development: facilitate enhanced consumer interest participation throughout the ANSI process and organization.
- Consumer participation: encourage consumer participation in the development of standards for consumer products and services to identify and meet consumer concerns and needs.

The CIF is also the US connection with COPOLCO, the forum on consumer participation in the international work of the ISO and the IEC.

Therefore, by creating the CIF and observing its objectives, ANSI reinforces the credibility of its ability to create consensus among interest groups affected directly or indirectly by standards. Nevertheless, ANSI does not provide any financial support to consumer representatives participating in the different phases of the standardization process. Furthermore, ANSI does not have any education and training programs for those representatives.

Consumer representation in standardization processes in the US may thus be characterized as significant if one takes into account the contribution of organizations that, although not consumer associations, have the mission of watching out for the public interest. In fact, although few NGOs and individuals are directly involved as volunteers in the various standardization processes, a great number of federal agencies and departments, as we mention above, are involved in these processes in the name of consumer and the public. Disposed of significant budgetary, technical and human resources, they thus play a top role in standardization in the US, a role subject to very strict rules of conduct and transparency: Circular A-119 of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)¹⁰³ requires agencies and departments to divulge all their standardization activities to the public, including which standards projects they are considering, the names of the different SDOs of which they are members and the number of their employees involved in each project. US consumers can thus get informed about standardization processes.

¹⁰³ OMB Circular A-119, Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities and *National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act* (NTTAA) 1995.

However, we observe what Schellinck and Russell write about an important difference between the approaches of Canada and the US:

- However, the notion of consensus is not the same in Canada and the United States. For the US, it simply means that the committee ensures a balanced representation of all interested parties. Consensus is obtained with the participation of all the representatives in the discussions preceding the vote (although there are only a few consumer delegates). In the voting, however, each representative has a voice, and the majority wins. Therefore, US positions usually prevail due to the number of their representatives at these meetings. The US system gives everyone the chance to express an opinion, but divergent ones are often ignored because they have few chances of modifying the outcome of the vote.

In Canada, the SCC sees to it that the committees reach a consensus, which requires that all negative votes are resolved during a formal vote. The only way to ignore opposition is to declare, after discussion, the arguments advanced as inconclusive or irrelevant. The desired goal is to satisfy all participants and, in fact, each representative has veto power. This method has the advantage of requiring that all opinions be considered and addressing all demands expressed in the discussions.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ SCHELLINCK, Tony, and RUSSELL, Brian R.: Canada faced with international standardization, Tony Schellinck, F.C. Manning Chair of Economics and Business, Dalhousie University, Halifax and Brian R. Russell, holder of a Fulbright Scholarship in business and economic policy, Institute for International Economics, Washington, IC website: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/pics/spf/fourf.pdf> (page consulted in January 2006)

IV. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDIZATION FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES

International standardization plays a particularly important role because various international agreements require Canada to consider established standards during the development of national regulations. For example, the Agreement on Internal Trade requires that different Canadian governmental levels refer to the National Standards System of Canada (NSS) or directly to international standards. Furthermore, the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade¹⁰⁵ of the World Trade Organization (WTO) specifies that "with a view to harmonizing technical regulations on as wide a basis as possible, Members shall play a full part, within the limits of their resources, in the preparation by appropriate international standardizing bodies of international standards for products for which they either have adopted, or expect to adopt, technical regulations." (subsection.2.6). The four Canadian SDOs must then ensure that there is not already an existing international standard on a subject before developing a new national standard.

Several international standardization organizations develop and coordinate the usage of standards on the international level. Here is a short description of two main international standardization organizations,¹⁰⁶ the IEC and Codex Alimentarius. Then we analyze the ISO in detail.

IV.I International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

Founded in 1906, the IEC's mandate is to promote standards development in the areas of electricity, electronics, electromagnetic compatibility, telecommunications and safety, while stimulating international cooperation on these issues. The IEC includes representatives from the national standardization organizations of more than 40 member countries accounting for 80% of world production and 95% of electrical energy production. The IEC has published nearly 5,000 standards to date.

IV.II Codex Alimentarius

Created in 1962 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), Codex Alimentarius includes all international standards dealing with food quality and trade, with different usage codes and other directives. Codex is an intergovernmental organization of some 150 members and is the UN food standardization body.

¹⁰⁵ Accord on Technical Barriers to Trade, WTO website: http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/17-tbt_e.htm (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁰⁶ International Telecommunications Union, International Organization of Legal Metrology, International Air Transportation Association, World Health Organisation, International Labour Organization, etc.

IV.III International Organization for Standardization (ISO)¹⁰⁷

IV.III.a) Description

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO)¹⁰⁸ is the largest network of national standardization institutes. Therefore, the ISO "is able to act as a bridging organization in which a consensus can be reached on solutions that meet both the requirements of business and the broader needs of society, such as the needs of stakeholder groups like consumers and users."¹⁰⁹ Since its inception in 1947, the ISO's goal has been to "facilitate the international coordination and unification of industrial standards."¹¹⁰

The ISO's main activities are technical standards development that, by providing a common frame of reference or technological language, allow it to promote the international trade of goods and services and exchanges among countries on scientific development, technological, economic and social matters. ISO standards support the improvement of quality, security, safety, environmental and consumer protection, as well as the rational use of natural resources. Among the most well-known ISO standards are ISO 9000, dealing with quality management (customer service and satisfaction) and ISO 14000, dealing with environmental management (reduction of negative environmental effects).

An NGO with its headquarters in Geneva, the ISO is formed of representatives of national standardization organizations from 156 countries, one member per country. There are three categories of ISO members. ISO participation is open to the national standardization institutes most representative of standardization in their countries. Full members (member bodies), which represent 101 countries,¹¹¹ each have a voice on all ISO technical and general policy committees. The ISO also includes two categories of members from countries that have not yet completely developed their national standardization activity. They pay reduced membership fees. Correspondent members (47 countries) have the right to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in all political and technical bodies. The status of subscriber members (8 countries) allows the institutes from countries with very limited resources to stay in contact with international standardization.

ISO participation is open to the most representative national standardization institutes in their respective countries. No individual or single company may become an ISO member, but they may contribute to ISO standardization processes via the national standardization organization of their country. Their participation in reaching national consensus to be presented by the delegation of that organization is then essential for international representation of their interests. International organizations, non-governmental associations and industrial sector representatives

¹⁰⁷ Because "International Organization for Standardization" would have different abbreviations in different languages ... , it was decided at the outset to use a word derived from the Greek isos, meaning "equal." Therefore, whatever the country, whatever the language, the short form of the organization's name is always ISO.

¹⁰⁸ See information on the ISO at the ISO website: <http://www.iso.org/iso/en/ISOOnline.frontpage> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁰⁹ Overview of the ISO system, ISO website: <http://www.iso.org/iso/en/aboutiso/introduction/index.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ The SCC represents Canada in the ISO.

can also request the status of liaison to a technical committee. They do not vote but can participate in discussions and consensus-building.

All ISO members meet in a general assembly once a year to make all strategic decisions. Proposals submitted to them are developed by the ISO Council, which meets twice a year. The ISO Council, composed of 18 rotating members—to ensure the representativity of all ISO members—governs the operations of the organization according to the policies established by the members. Five of the Council members are member bodies who contribute the most to the organization's standardization activities.¹¹² The members elect the thirteen others for a two-year period.

ISO funding is ensured in part by members' annual subscriptions. The size of each subscription is proportional with the GNP and trade volume of the participating country. Furthermore, the sale of standards, certifications and operating guides creates significant revenue for the organization. However, most of the main costs are borne by the member bodies, which manage the specific standards' development projects and the business organizations, which provide experts to participate in the technical work. These organizations are, in effect, subsidizing the technical work by paying the travel costs of the experts and allowing them time to work on their ISO assignments

The ISO standardization process responds to market imperatives. In fact, the initiative for developing a particular standard comes from the industrial or business sector that needs it and that communicates its request to a national standardization member of the ISO to be submitted. The national member then proposes the consideration of that new standard or sector of activity that could require the creation of a new technical committee. If the proposal is accepted, it will be submitted to a technical committee composed of experts chosen by the national standardization organization member of the ISO for the country from which emanates the need for a new standard. These experts may come from industrial sectors, government agencies, testing labs, consumer associations, etc. But according to ISO rules, the national standardization organization must ensure that its balanced delegation of representatives will take account of the points-of-view of all interested groups affected by a standard in development and present a concerted and consensual position on the subject.

Besides the numerous technical committees, which work in specialized and exact areas, the ISO includes three committees charged with providing a policy and strategy framework for standardization activities affecting all sectors of operations:

- CASCO (conformity assessment)
- COPOLCO (consumer policy)
- DEVCO (developing countries)

Besides its Code of Ethics and Action Plan for developing countries, 2005-2010,¹¹³ the ISO has developed for that same period a strategic plan that organizes the strategic objectives defined

¹¹² US, UK, Japan, Germany and France.

¹¹³ See ISO Code of Ethics, ISO website:

http://www.iso.org/iso/en/prods-services/otherpubs/pdf/actionplan_2005-en.pdf (page consulted in January 2006) and Action Plan for developing countries, 2005-2010, ISO website: http://www.iso.org/iso/en/prods-services/otherpubs/pdf/actionplan_2005-en.pdf (page consulted in January 2006)

by its members and the international organizations with which the ISO collaborates, with the goal of improving the organization's policies and mandate. This plan is entitled ISO Strategic Plan, 2005-2010, Standards for a sustainable world.¹¹⁴

IV.III.b) Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO)

The ISO recognizes the necessity of promoting participation in the standardization process. Furthermore, as it mentions at its website in the "ISO and the consumer" section:¹¹⁵ "When everyday products and services meet consumer requirements, then consumer confidence in them may be greater, creating a win-win situation both for consumer and manufacturer or service provider. This situation results when consumer representatives participate in the development of the standards that ultimately influence product and service specifications." It is with this perspective that the ISO set up the Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO) in 1978.

The COPOLCO has identified 15 priority sectors for consumers in international standardization and coordinates the participation of consumer representatives in the various technical committees dealing with those priorities, such as household appliances, services, water safety, needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, products for children, the environment, contraceptives, second-hand goods, bicycles, furniture, symbols designed to inform the public, fire protection, dentistry, health IT and world markets (e.g., electronic trade, codes of conduct, claims processing).

Via COPOLCO, the ISO focuses on various objectives:

- studying how consumers can benefit from standardization
- promoting consumers' input to the development of standards, both nationally and internationally
- encouraging the exchange of experience on standards work of consumer interest
- channelling consolidated views from consumers both on current projects and on proposals for new work in areas of interest to them.

All member bodies and correspondent members of the ISO can be COPOLCO members, which currently includes more than 80 countries. The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is also a COPOLCO member, as are the international organizations, Consumers International (CI) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),¹¹⁶ which have an official liaison with COPOLCO. While member countries have the right to send national delegations to COPOLCO meetings, their attendance fluctuates from year to year due to the location of the meeting and the themes of the workshops. For example, according to Bruce Farquhar, who participated that year, only 27 delegations were present at the 2004 meeting, only 13 of which seemed to include the representation of an independent consumer organization.

¹¹⁴ See Strategic Plan, 2005-2010, ISO website:
http://www.iso.org/iso/en/aboutiso/strategies/isostrategies_2004-en.pdf (page consulted in January 2006)

¹¹⁵ See "ISO and the consumer," ISO website:
<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/comms-markets/consumers/iso+theconsumer.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹¹⁶ "How ISO helps - COPOLCO," ISO website:
<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/comms-markets/consumers/iso+theconsumer-03.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

To ensure that the voice of consumers is well heard during ISO standards development, the COPOLCO selects consumer priority ISO areas and then coordinates the participation of consumer representatives in ISO technical committees developing standards in those areas.

The COPOLCO also develops publications promoting consumer participation in standardization and educating consumer representatives about that task.¹¹⁷

The fact remains that COPOLCO members are national standardization organizations also participating in all ISO work, so the participation of consumer representatives in COPOLCO work is only possible through a delegation of those same national standardization organizations.

The peak of consumer participation in the COPOLCO takes place during the workshop that the Committee organizes every year. Bringing together representatives of industry, consumers, government agencies, testing labs and other sectors involved in standardization, this workshop offers consumers a unique chance to make their opinions on a current subject related to standardization known to a broad international audience. That consumer voice allows the COPOLCO to formulate recommendations for actions and policy declarations and develop informative guides and documents for consumers and drafters of standards.

Consumer participation in this COPOLCO workshop has recently motivated the ISO to:

- Publish an International Standard on the handling of complaints, ISO 10002.
- Publish an ISO/IEC policy statement on the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Publish the ISO/IEC Guide 71 Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.
- Decide to develop an International Standard on corporate social responsibility
- Develop an ISO/IEC Guide specifying consumers' needs in the design of graphical symbols.

While workshops focus on assembling consumer representatives, public authorities, manufacturers and standardization experts, barriers to the participation of some stakeholders still arise, stakeholders who do not have the necessary resources to attend these meetings or to prepare adequately for them. The COPOLCO does not have a budget ensuring funding for these activities. Consumer associations not delegated by SDOs then find themselves obliged to find their own resources in order to participate in a significant way.

Canada, via the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and the Consumer and Public Interest Committee (CPIC), usually delegates representatives, who are members

¹¹⁷ "How COPOLCO works," ISO website: <http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/comms-markets/consumers/iso+theconsumer-04.html> (page consulted in January 2006). The COPOLCO, for example, puts out a brochure for consumers, *Your Voice Matters*, which focuses on increasing awareness of international standardization and gives some routes for greater consumer participation in ISO standardization processes. Available for free in paper or online at the ISO website, as are other COPOLCO publications: <http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/prods-services/otherpubs/Copolco.PublicationList?CLASSIFICATION=COPOLCO> (page consulted in January 2006)

consumer associations¹¹⁸ to participate in COPOLCO working groups and committees. These organizations thus have specialized delegates possessing the necessary skills for making the consumer point-of-view known to committees, which ensures their proper representation. Unfortunately, as we point out above, this consumer representative participation in standardization organization delegations to the ISO is not the standard.

Despite the fact that they know the ISO relatively well, consumer associations do not know the COPOLCO well at all,¹¹⁹ even though it is the ISO body affecting them most directly. This situation is probably explained by the fact that the ISO has made itself known in the last few years through businesses that post their ISO-certified quality management.

¹¹⁸ Geneviève Reed, for example, responsible for research and representation at Option Consumer, sat on the CPIC and participated in work on ISO10000 standards.

¹¹⁹ According to the Web survey conducted by Union des consommateurs for this project, only 14% of associations were not familiar with the ISO, 76% knew a little about it and 10% knew it well, while 81% of associations were not familiar with the COPOLCO, 14% knew a little about it and 5% knew it well. Detailed results are appended.

V. FROM STANDARDIZATION TO REGULATION

Over the last few decades, the interactions between voluntary standardization and state regulation have multiplied due to market imperatives. In fact, the governments of the industrialized countries have increasingly drawn on standards, developed voluntarily by consensus, to draft, complement or replace regulations.

In Canadian regulations, we find several direct and indirect references to existing standards. For example, since 1941, the *National Building Code* suggests the construction industry use of many approved standards. This Code serves as a model for different provincial regulations that in turn impose these standards on builders.¹²⁰ The *Hazardous Products Act*¹²¹ and the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*¹²² are other examples of the incorporation of references to existing standards.

Standards can be incorporated into the law in various ways:

- directly into statutes (i.e. the statute reproduces the wording of the standard)
- by reference into statutes (i.e. the statute refers to a particular standard, but does not reproduce the wording of the standard; section 10 of the *Food and Drugs Act*, for example)
- reproduced directly in regulations (e.g. the Processing and Distribution of Semen for Assisted Conception Regulations)
- by reference into regulations (e.g. the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations incorporate by reference numerous domestic and international standards)
- used as guidelines to elaborate rules found in statutes or regulations (e.g. s. B.01.056 (Sched. 923) of the Food and Drug Regulations).¹²³

However, over time, certain standards coexist with certain laws or regulations bearing on an identical or connected subject without being into adopted as legislation. For example, the *Textile Labelling Act*¹²⁴ imposes prescriptive rules on labelling stating the quantity of fibres a product contains but does not impose the application of established standards on product care, which thus remain largely voluntary.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the federal government

¹²⁰ Canadian construction regulation is under provincial jurisdiction. The *National Building Code* is not a law or regulation but rather recommendations by competent authorities of the establishment of "standardized" regulation. Quebec, for example, has adopted a *Code de construction* (R.Q. c. B-1.1, r.0.01.01), the technical content of which is based on the *National Building Code* of 1995, incorporating by reference some specific standards besides those included in the national code of 1995 "as well as all modifications or editions published by the organization that developed this code or standard."

¹²¹ *Hazardous Products Act* (R.S., 1985, c. H-3)

¹²² *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (1999) (c. 33)

¹²³ Using Standards Development Processes for Regulations, at Innovation in Canada, Government of Canada website: <http://www.innovation.gc.ca/gol/innovation/site.nsf/en/in04885.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹²⁴ *Textile Labelling Act* (R.S., 1985, c. T-10)

¹²⁵ Care labelling with symbols or explanations is not mandatory. The Canadian Care Labelling Program (national standard of Canada CAN1CGSB-86.1-2003) is a system of symbols indicating the most appropriate washing or cleaning method. The Competition Bureau lets businesses decide if they want to adopt this new standard and when. This standard is harmonized with the care symbols of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the ISO standard symbols in progress.

has not considered it necessary to incorporate the CSA standard on bicycle helmets into the *Hazardous Products Act*. Manufacturers are free to put helmets on the market that do not meet the national safety standard (CAN/CSA D113.2-M89).

The growing space occupied by standardization pushed the Canadian government to create the Standards Council of Canada in the 1970s to ensure a framework for and coordinated operation of voluntary standardization activities in the country. Into the hands of public officials, the government also put documentation on standards development, on conformity assessment and on the possibility of using standards as the instruments of regulatory policies.

Although the federal government strongly encourages using standards to replace or complement regulations, in Canada at present there is no obligation for the different departments and Crown corporations to turn systematically to standards for doing that with regard to existing regulations.

In the United States, federal agencies have the obligation to consider voluntary and consensual standardization as a means of attaining their regulatory objectives (partially or totally, depending on the case).¹²⁶ Various US laws also constrain government agencies to integrate certain standards when they are applicable to regulatory objectives, specifically when they deal with consumer health and safety.¹²⁷

In accordance with the "New Approach to Harmonised Standards" of 1985, several European Union countries have developed criteria for evaluating the usage of standards conforming to regulatory policies. This standardization framework then persuades some industrial sectors identified by legislative authorities to conform to the regulatory objectives favoured by the EU.

It is relevant to wonder, in the light of facts witnessed abroad, if Canada should increase its systematic usage of standards in its regulations. Would it be to the advantage of consumers if current regulatory policies included, like those of the US do, requirements that constrained regulatory authorities to consider voluntary and consensual standards as an alternative means of meeting regulatory objectives? Would it be desirable to require the mandatory presentation of feasibility reports on using a standard as a substitute for or complement to a regulation? It seems necessary to clearly identify the conditions supporting the usage of voluntary and consensual standards in the pursuit of regulatory objectives. These conditions could even be included in the *Framework for Evaluating Voluntary Codes* of the Office of Consumer Affairs of Industry Canada. They would also emphasize the importance of consumer participation in standards development processes and the strict requirement of implementing a framework that is transparent and balanced in its representation of interests.

The systematic application of standardization to certain specific governmental areas might be desirable in the context of implementing new regulatory policies in Canada. For example, in new health legislation, Health Canada might like to incorporate the extended use of standards into the *Canada Health Act*. Again, the systematic usage of standards as substitutes or complements to regulations would offer new opportunities to promote sustainable development

¹²⁶ Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-119, Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities and National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) 1995 (Public Law (P.L.) 104-113).

¹²⁷ *Consumer Product Safety Act* of 1972 and *Occupational Safety and Health Act* of 1970 (the OSH Act) (sections 6(a) and 6(b)(8)).

and fair trade. The External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation (EASCR), implemented by the federal government in May 2003, proposes that standardization play a greater role in certain industrial sectors. Therefore, an action plan on this subject, suggesting increased recourse to standardization in the development and application of regulation, has recently been delivered to the Prime Minister¹²⁸ following the recommendations of the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). However, these new approaches based on standardization as a substitute for regulation pose the challenge for authorities of better consumer representation, an essential condition for their legitimacy.

The harmonization of standards on the international level obviously complicates the links that must be established between standardization and regulation. In order to respect the numerous internal trade agreements and respond to numerous global market imperatives, regulatory authorities must also refer to international standards, as witnessed by Health Canada medical instrument regulations that conform to ISO standards on the subject.

If they are to be incorporated into national legislation, it is important that they do not infringe on countries' economic, political and social choices. In fact, the requirement of consensus established by all interested parties would ensure that these concerns are taken into account during development and acceptance of standards. However, the only guarantee is balanced representation, in number and in resources, of all interested parties. It then becomes imperative to ensure adequate consumer participation in national and international standardization processes when the health, safety and quality of Canadian society are at stake.

One could certainly argue that industry adoption of recognized applicable standards established consensually by all interested parties considering the health and safety of final users should not be left in any case to the discretion of industry. It seems logical that once improved design, construction, processing and other practices were established, governments could impose adoption of those standards on industry and ensure industry respects them and intervenes when they do not. But here again, any insistence on legally imposed adoption and respect of certain standards comes with the certitude that committees that are perfectly balanced in representation, including that of consumers, develop those standards.

The adoption of laws and regulations in a democratic society depends on elected officials who have the mandate of looking out for the welfare, health, safety and quality of life of the citizens while maintaining a strong economy and competitive market. It is elected officials who must respond to frameworks (i.e., standards) to be approved and enforced in their respective countries. That is why it would be unacceptable in a democratic society to impose standards by legislative, regulatory or other means without these standards having been developed and evaluated by a committee with a balanced representation of all of the social sectors affected in any way by such a standard. This process is a practical and strategic necessity and also an undeniable requirement of democracy.

¹²⁸ External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation. *Smart Regulation, a Regulatory Strategy for Canada*, Government of Canada, September 2004, Privy Council Office website: http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/smartreg-regint/en/08/rpt_fnl.pdf (page consulted in January 2006)

VI. THE NEW ISSUES IN STANDARDIZATION

The world is evolving, remaking itself, and standardization moves in the same rhythm. That is why new tendencies and sectors, such as environmental services and protection, are making an appearance in the national and international standardization milieu and creating interesting perspectives on standards development in a wide range of areas.

These new issues can only encourage consumer associations to participate more in standardization processes. Consumer interests must be raised and defended in the face of problems necessitating modern, efficient, responsible domestic and global consumption.

The survey conducted for this project of Canadian consumer associations indicates that despite their relative lack of familiarity with standardization processes (67% admit having a rather weak overall knowledge of these processes), these associations show a certain interest in the issue (52% said they had an average interest, 29% a fairly high interest, while only 14% admitted having a fairly low interest). They were unanimous in judging consumer participation in standardization processes to be important and generally thought that this participation should be undertaken by consumer associations.¹²⁹

Below are four new issues regarding standardization likely to motivate consumer associations.

VI.a) Corporate Social Responsibility

Ethics, compliance with legal instruments, respect for workers' rights, fairness in advertising and environmental protection: these are some of the values that business must incorporate into their practices and decision-making process before they can be considered socially responsible.

Corporate social responsibility will increasingly be under the microscope of standardization in the coming years mainly due to the fact that the public and consumers demand the inclusion of a social dimension in the corporate financial environment.

Consumer associations must be involved in this landscape where businesses label their packages with deceptive information, corporations empty their employee pension fund, multinationals use child labour in poor countries, retail store giants refuse to recognize their employees' right to unionize, the logging industry clear cuts and does not reforest, etc. It is obvious that areas for intervention are plentiful, and the need for greater consumer participation is crying to be met by a balance between the quest for business profits and the responsibilities that their activities can create.

An ISO working group implemented in 2004 (ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility – WGSR) is currently dealing with corporate social responsibility standards development. This new standard, ISO 26000, will define practical and flexible guidelines on social integrity in the overall relations that companies have with their customers, the public, their employees, their shareholders, their competitors and government authorities, without, however, establishing performance criteria. The ISO standard, however, will not be a certification standard and will not

¹²⁹ Web survey, conducted by Union des consommateurs for this project, of Canadian consumer associations. Detailed results are appended.

include any requirements for companies, and it will be left to company discretion in order to avoid any restraint on their creativity and development, according to the ISO:

"There is a range of many different opinions as to the right approach, ranging from strict legislation at one end to complete freedom at the other. We are looking for a golden middle way that promotes respect and responsibility based on known reference documents without stifling creativity and development."¹³⁰

The working group supervising the development of these new standards on corporate social responsibility is the result of a new approach that the ISO has begun to encourage greater consumer participation in international standardization activities. In fact, this innovative approach ensures that national delegations assigned to working committees are composed of six representatives from six large interest groups, such as industry, labour, consumers, governments, NGOs and national SDOs. The ISO also invites international organizations representing each of the large interest groups to participate fully in committee work by permitting one or two of their representatives to sit on those committees.¹³¹ The ISO has decided that this working committee must be co-versed over by an industrialized and a developing country, both ISO members, in order to ensure a better sharing of technical and financial resources among delegations and guarantee that the interests of the poorest are taken into account along with those of the richest. The Secretariat of the working committee on ISO 26000 standards is under the joint responsibility of the Brazilian Standards Institute (ABNT) and the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS), presided over by Jorge E. R. Cajazeira of Suzano Papel e Celulose and co-versed over by Catarina Munck of Volvo. ISO 26000 standards will become effective in 2008:

"To facilitate the participation of experts from stakeholder categories with limited resources, such as developing countries, non-governmental organizations, consumers and others, a specific task group (TG 1) has been created within the working group to deal specifically with these stakeholders."¹³²

TG 1 (funding and stakeholder engagement) held a Donors' meeting on participation in social responsibility standardization in Geneva on November 24, 2005. This meeting focused on discussing priorities and coordinating resource usage in order to establish sustainable mechanisms for the participation of experts, and other parties with limited resources, interested in the international standardization of social responsibility.¹³³

¹³⁰ Social Responsibility, ISO website:

<http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/830949/3934883/3935096/home.html?nodeid=4451259&vernum=0> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹³¹ Consumers International, for example, was invited to participate. International organizations not previously identified by the ISO may emphasize to CI that they, too, would like to participate in committee work. An ISO council charged with this issue will analyze their requests and respond with its decisions.

¹³² Organization, in Social Responsibility, ISO website:

http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/830949/3934883/3935096/04_organization/org_str.html (page consulted in January 2006)

¹³³ See the TG 1 invitation letter, ISO website:

http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/830949/3934883/3935837/3959804/3959805/N3_-_Invitation_letter_to_Donors.pdf?nodeid=4742585&vernum=0 (page consulted in January 2006)

Although the representatives of potential donors welcomed the strategic framework¹³⁴ presented by the co-chair of TG 1, Dr. Sarmiento, they also insisted on the fact that it was up to each donor to determine how their support should be operationalized.¹³⁵ Participants also believed that the document should serve as a guide and justification to experts looking for funding at the national level for their participation in the process.¹³⁶

The ISO seems to deploy great methods for facilitating the effective and equitable participation of various groups with limited resources in the development and implementation of new standards on corporate social responsibility. However, despite the ISO's best intentions, problems in cooperation might arise between industry and consumer associations. Corporate social responsibility remains a delicate and controversial topic. Companies may hesitate to invest the time, expertise and money in such a project, the direct advantages and benefits they could draw from them being rather vague and poorly defined at present. It is up to consumer associations to redouble their efforts to present to business and industry credible arguments and undeniable facts to facilitate their understanding that they have an interest in being more socially responsible, that there are immediate advantages to be had by investing in this historical path and that consumer participation in the standardization of social responsibility alongside other interest groups represents a strategic advantage for them with the public which would justify their investment.

VI.b) Sustainable Development

Economic, social and environmental development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs: this is the definition of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission).¹³⁷ It is development based on efficient and careful use of the environment and all limited resources of society—natural, human and economic.

Among the objectives of sustainable development are:

- Promoting equity
- Improving our quality of life and well-being

¹³⁴ Based on the document "Justification of the need to increase participation by underfunded stakeholder categories in ISO/SR" (2005-10-12, rev. 2)

¹³⁵ See the minutes of the meeting on November 24, 2005, at which Canada was represented by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), ISO website:

http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/830949/3934883/3935837/3959804/3959806/N6_-_Minutes_of_the_Donors_Meeting_-_24_November_2005_-_Geneva_-_Switzerland.pdf?nodeid=4783436&vernum=0 (page consulted in January 2006)

¹³⁶ See TG 1 Status Report no. 2, July-December 2005, appendix 11, ISO website:

http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/830949/3934883/3935837/3959804/3959807/TG1-N04-TG_1_Status_Report_Ver_2_July-December_2005.pdf?nodeid=4962371&vernum=0 (page consulted in January 2006)

¹³⁷ Created in 1983 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the World Commission on Environment and Development filed its report in 1987 (*Our Common Future*). In Canada, the idea of sustainable development has been incorporated into federal legislation and in changes made to the *Auditor General Act* in 1995, which created the Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. Departments are thus required to establish sustainable development strategies and file them with Parliament. See "What is Sustainable Development?" at the SDInfo website site of the Government of Canada: http://www.sdinfo.gc.ca/what_is_sd/index_e.cfm (page consulted in January 2006) and, for departmental strategies, this page at the same website:

http://www.sdinfo.gc.ca/federal_sd_resources/strategies_e.cfm (page consulted in January 2006)

- Sustainability of natural resources
- Sustainability of jobs, communities and industries
- Meeting our international obligations

Consumer participation in different standardization committees and working groups seems essential in order to reach the objectives of sustainable development because it should be up to consumers to create the blueprints for this concept. In fact, today's consumers and their descendents will be directly affected by the investment and production decisions of business, the first priority of which is short- and long-term profit. Consumers must then be involved in enlightened standards development to ensure economic viability, social balance and sound environmental exploitation.

The environmental aspect of sustainable development seems to be the one most studied by national and international SDOs, especially by the ISO, as witnessed by the standards on environmental labelling (ISO 14024:1999 — Environmental labels and declarations — Type 1 environmental labelling — Principles and procedures) and ecological declarations (ISO 14020:2000 — Environmental labels and declarations — General principles **and ISO 14021:1999** — Environmental labels and declarations — Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labelling)). Consumer associations already insist that they be included in concerns about sustainable development, genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) and organic agriculture, so that standards are developed as soon as possible to address these concerns.

VI.c) Management of complaints and resolution of disputes

The customer is always right. The choices that customers make as they exercise their spending power can be seen in the success of some businesses—and in the sudden or slow death of others. The development of electronic commerce, market globalization and standardization of products and services reinforces this consumer power by increasing the available choices.

Companies must be at the service of customers and listen to them well, especially when confrontational situations arise when customers complain. It is not surprising, in this context, that complaint management and dispute resolution are the objects of an increased desire for standardization.

In order to ensure that new standards being developed or to be developed in this area (ISO 10000) respond to market imperatives, it is essential that consumers actively participate in the development processes of these standards, present their concerns and know their rights. Let us emphasize that the technical committee charged with discussing and developing this new set of standards¹³⁸ dealing with customer satisfaction seems relatively well-balanced, with a certain number of consumer representatives sitting on it.

VI.d) International standardization

National standardization systems are increasingly becoming feeder streams for international standards development systems: globalization requires that international standardization work have greater and greater importance, thus transporting the decision-making centres away from numerous national standards development organizations toward the ISO, the IEC and other international organizations.

¹³⁸ ISO 10001: codes of conduct, ISO 10002: management of complaints, ISO 10003: dispute resolution methods.

As ANEC states:

National and international standardization organizations generally stress that representatives (of consumers) may attend ISO and IEC standardization meetings as members of national delegations. But, for the time being, they are obligated to abide by the national consensus. Furthermore, on the international level, national delegations include only a few consumer association representatives. Many countries send members of public organizations and standardization organizations that assert that they represent consumers, but they are not independent.¹³⁹

Founded in 1960 by a group of national and regional consumer associations, Consumers International - CI (previously the International Organization of Consumer Unions - IOCU) is an independent NGO that supports, informs, defends and represents more than 250 consumer associations from 115 countries. The true international voice of consumers, CI's mission is to defend their rights and interests, specifically with regard to the development of international standards on products and services. CI participates in some ISO and IEC technical committees. However, some significant barriers hinder full participation, barriers that considerably limit the role CI could assume on the international standardization scene. First, under the participation rules jointly developed by the ISO and the IEC, the organization can only delegate observers to these technical committees.¹⁴⁰ Then, as mentioned in the 2004 evaluation report of the European Commission, Health & Consumer Protection Directorate-General Questionnaire on consumer representation in standardization activities,¹⁴¹ CI has only meagre financial and human resources to participate fully in international standards development and certification activities.

As pointed out by Bruce J. Farquhar in his revised report of background research on ISO and IEC ("Decision-making in the Global Market")¹⁴² prepared for CI, CI's influence with the ISO and the IEC is decreasing more and more due to the growing and direct participation of ANEC in different technical committees of these two organizations.¹⁴³ Although this increased ANEC participation beside CI may be considered, at first look, like good news for consumers in general, it may, in fact, be completely otherwise: if ANEC, affiliate member of CI, is the "European consumer voice in standardization," who will represent the interests of non-European consumers, those in developing countries or Canada?

¹³⁹ Les nouveaux défis, 3. La standardization internationale (in French only), ANEC website: <http://www.anec.org/anec.asp?rd=57951&ref=01-01.01-01&lang=fr> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁴⁰ See COPOLCO, Consumer priorities in international standardization work - Priority programme: Handbook, Annex 5 to COPOLCO 12/2005, April 2005 (Geneva: ISO), p. 11.

¹⁴¹ See European Commission, Health & Consumer Protection Directorate-General, Questionnaire on consumer representation in standardisation activities at national, European and international level: Evaluation Report, 2004 (European Commission: Brussels, Belgium), p. 3.

¹⁴² Farquhar, Bruce J. - Revised report of background research on ISO and IEC "Decision-making in the Global Market" http://consint.live.poptech.coop/shared_asp_files/uploadedfiles/D90670B6-FAC1-4589-A3AE-9132F9756229_Paper4ISOFarquhar.doc (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁴³ "Our experts contribute directly to the work of more than 60 technical committees, working groups and new deliverables of the European Standards Organisations (ESOs). We are full members of the ETSI, associate members of the CEN and observers at CENELEC." ("About ANEC"), ANEC website: <http://www.anec.org/anec.asp?rd=53342&ref=01-01&lang=en> (page consulted in January 2006)

It is important that CI retains its top role on the international standardization scene in order to ensure that non-European consumer rights are not further marginalized by international SDOs. CI must be able to continue to count on the expertise and credibility of its most important members, those of the national and regional consumer associations, to ensure a representation that goes beyond borders.

It is imperative that consumer associations develop effective channels of communication and participation allowing them to further involve themselves in international standardization. Consumers International could display the credibility, reputation and legitimacy necessary to ensure that the rights and interests of consumer associations related to standards are considered by international SDOs. It is incumbent upon international SDOs to consent to full participation and guarantee adequate technical and financial support.

VII. TOWARDS GREATER CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Standards are technical specifications or other exact criteria to which a product, service or procedure must conform. Ideally, they should enable consumers to find products, services and procedures on the market that are effective, high-quality, safe, reliable and compatible with other similar ones, that respect the environment, public health and other current social issues, such as workers' rights, sustainable development and fair trade.

To be credible, standards must have certain attributes:

- their development must be overseen by a recognized body
- the development process must be open to input from all interested parties
- the resulting standards must be documented and publicly available
- there is usually a method for monitoring and verifying that organizations are complying with standards.¹⁴⁴

Consumer participation in all phases of standards development is essential for the credibility of the standardization system. As ANEC emphasizes, "consumer representation is a counterbalance to industrial interests, which dominate the standardization process. Because there is no democratic control over the results of the standardization process, consumers and other groups must be able to represent their own interests in that process."¹⁴⁵ The legitimacy of standardization processes then depends in large part on consumer consent, which will only be possible if consumer interests are duly represented during standards development.

Furthermore, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) recognizes the true importance of consumer participation in standardization processes. The SCC also admits that this participation has been insufficient and inadequate up until now, and the National Standards Strategy (NSS) acknowledges that improving consumer participation in the work of various national and international standardization organizations is a priority.

For several years, numerous public interest groups have been discontented with the consumer under-representation in standardization processes.¹⁴⁶ Openly criticizing the lack of transparency and the recognition of consumers on the part of various standards development organizations, these groups have identified several barriers preventing them from participating fully in

¹⁴⁴ Office of Consumer Affairs, 2000. Participating in the Standards System—What are Standards? <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inoca-bc.nsf/en/ca01579f.html> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁴⁵ Pourquoi la représentation des consommateurs dans la standardisation est-elle importante? (in French only) ANEC website: <http://www.anec.org/anec.asp?rd=9495&ref=01-01.06-01&lang=fr&ID=87> (page consulted in January 2006)

¹⁴⁶ We refer to Bruce Farquhar, for example: Decision-Making in the Global Market: Trade, Standards and the Consumer 2005, in the CI-ROLAC report and to the Questionnaire On Consumer Representation In Standardisation Activities At National, European And International Level Evaluation Report European Commission. ISO 2005-2010 also recognizes the need to improve the participation of interested parties and mainly to identify funding sources for under-represented parties, such as consumers. Meaningful efforts have been made with regard to the social responsibility of ensuring that participation is better balanced, specifically the implementation of Task Group 1 - Funding and stakeholder engagement. ISO website: <http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink?func=ll&objId=3959804&objAction=browse&sort=name> (page visited in January 2006)

standardization processes so that they can properly defend consumer interests. These barriers interfere with the influence that consumer representatives could have on standardization and restrict them to making do with the role of passive observers as opposed to that of active participants.

VII.I Barriers to Greater Consumer Participation

As the result of our analysis of standardization processes and consumer participation frameworks in Canada, Europe, the US and at the international level above, and after reading various Canadian and foreign research reports on the difficulties encountered by consumer representatives trying to get standards development organizations to hear their points-of-view,¹⁴⁷ we have identified six broad categories of barriers to greater consumer participation in standardization activities.

VII.I.a) Funding

The chronic lack of resources, especially financial ones, available to consumer associations is the main barrier to greater consumer participation in standardization processes.

Fortunately, most SDOs offer some financial support to consumer representatives for their participation in different standardization activities. As a general rule, some key participation expenses (travel, lodging and meals) are covered, each organization having its own contribution policy.

Consumer representatives are not usually financially compensated for the time they devote to SDO standardization activities. However, some SDOs offer participants a "per diem," which can be as much as one hundred dollars. However, the time spent in preparation for participating, which can be considerable, is left to the consumer associations.

Some SDOs reimburse consultation fees paid by consumer representatives to technical experts or standards specialists to maximize what they get out of participation in technical committees or to get a better understanding of standardization processes. Some SDOs also cover representatives' mailing expenses and purchases of books, advisory documents, long-distance phone calls, office supplies, etc. However, it should be pointed out that contributions of this scope are the exception rather than the rule.

The financial support offered to consumer representatives is hardly better on the part of governments. In Canada, funds allocated to consumer associations are often attached to some particular project. The rarity of recurring resources dedicated to the basic operation of these associations compromises their ability to carry out a lasting involvement in standardization processes. Furthermore, governments are opposed to consumer representatives soliciting additional financial support that would allow them to participate properly in standardization processes and to the existence of SDO cost reimbursement programs.

It would probably be presumptuous to think that consumer representatives could acquire funding for their participation in standardization processes directly from businesses because that participation would have a high risk of producing additional constraints for those businesses. Obtaining adequate funding from SDOs and governments is then absolutely

¹⁴⁷ Specifically, see Bruce J. Farquhar's work mentioned in the mediagraphy.

necessary for the full participation of consumers in every phase of the standardization process and essential if consumer association involvement in standardization activities is going to survive.

VII.I.b) Technical Expertise, Training and Knowledge

Serious gaps in the technical expertise, training and knowledge of consumer representatives have been identified as hindrances to enlightened participation in standardization processes.

It is rare that the representatives themselves have the technical knowledge required to defend consumer interests properly in highly technical standards development processes. In fact, representatives who participate in technical committees usually can only provide guidelines and criteria that should be taken into consideration by manufacturers and industry to respond to consumer needs. This lack of expertise may lead consumer representatives to accept compromises on consumer demands too often deemed technically "unrealistic" by businesses while sufficient expertise might have enabled the representatives to counter these objections or offer other solutions.

Although SDOs put educational tools on the process itself and on representation techniques¹⁴⁸ at the disposal of consumer associations participating in a variety of standardization work, those associations must also have technical research and objective, independent test results at their disposal to do an adequate job of representation. Canadian consumer associations have some sources for technical information in some subject areas. Hydro-Québec and Ontario Hydro can provide them with independent and objective tests on energy matters. However, some public and parapublic corporations may offer consultant services in some areas. Unfortunately, access to experts in all the areas affected by standardization is not offered to consumer representatives. Too often, consumer representatives must fall back on US technical information, which often means adapting that information to Canadian realities, which the associations are not always able to do. For Quebec associations, that adaptation also means translation costs.

VII.I.c) Balanced Representation

The management of balanced representation in standardization processes proves problematic for numerous SDOs, resulting in low consumer participation in standardization work.

First, we might ask ourselves about the perception of the place consumers should have in balanced representation. Several SDOs, in fact, seem to consider consumers as an interest group only in the case of the standardization of products for personal and direct usage, available in retail stores.¹⁴⁹ While some standards focus on technical specifics

¹⁴⁸ For example, let us quote Ms. Bank of the CSA, who, in a letter dated September 13, 2005, asserted that "CSA's Member Education activities for Consumer Representatives are designed to provide consumer representatives with process training – an understanding of CSA's standards development process plus training on consumer representative skills, such as: negotiation, consumer research, communication skills, etc. The overall objective is to assist consumer representatives in their role as committee members and consumer representatives."

¹⁴⁹ For example, Stephen H. Wenc Vice-President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of ULC, explained in his written response of September 26, 2005, to a preliminary version of this project, that "consumers of these products are often professionals, for example, firefighters who use ULC-certified materials on the job, rather than less-specialized consumers buying these products in retail stores for their own personal use. ULC periodically solicits the participation of firefighters, code enforcement officers, entrepreneurs and other direct users of products covered by our standards in the context of our

that will never have any influence on consumers, we can understand why consumer participation in developing these standards is deemed less relevant. However, we can ask ourselves who will decide how relevant consumers' contributions are if they are absent from the bodies that make such decisions.

Besides these considerations, and for a raft of other reasons, not the least of which is the lack of resources, meticulous respect for the principle of balanced representation can pose a problem for the technical committees and working groups of different SDOs. Consumer interests are often under-represented in these committees and groups in which we find, therefore, a greater number of voting members from industry, business and government agencies. The problem of unbalanced representation unfortunately has the effect of considerably limiting the influence of consumer representatives in standardization processes and minimizing the benefits of the principle of consensus, one of the strengths of the Canadian standardization system.

VII.I.d) Consumer Representation

On the one hand, access to the committees and working groups of the different SDOs is limited for consumer associations, and on the other hand, the rules enframing SDO choices of mechanisms for selecting members to represent consumers in the different standardization processes are yet to be established.

By analyzing the composition of several SDOs' committees, we are tempted to conclude that anyone can represent consumer interests because all of us are consumers in some spheres of our activities. Individuals who have no connection with consumer associations with designated officials and several people with no clear and uncontradictory mandate have in their possession a significant part of consumer representation due to the absence of a coherent, transparent and uniform selection process. Selection of consumer representatives from a pool composed of recognized representatives who have the advantage of being part of a network that enables them to hold realistic, strategic positions would certainly bring significant credibility to standardization processes. Furthermore, the visibility and credibility of these organized representatives could publicize standardization processes and accomplishments in order to facilitate their acceptance by the general public. Networking among these consumer representatives would also facilitate a more effective exchange of information and expertise, which would contribute greatly to proper participation in these processes, which, in turn, would give consumer representatives more opportunity to contribute effectively to standardization processes.

In order to finalize their mechanisms for selecting consumer representatives, different SDOs could, for example, borrow the delegate selection process of the Canadian Environmental Network (CEN),¹⁵⁰ an independent organization dealing with various environmental issues and working in concert with numerous environmental NGOs, Environment Canada and large international organizations. Cited by some as the model for credibility and transparency, the

standards development process. When it is a question of standards on consumer products, we also solicit participation from various consumer organizations." In its comments of September 13, 2005, the CGSB describes a similar approach: "CGSB committees are balanced. It is important to note that the CGSB current portfolio of standards includes many standards for products and services that are not used directly by consumers."

¹⁵⁰ Canadian Environmental Network (CEN), *Model Process for Delegate Selection*, CEN website: http://www.cen-rce.org/eng/consultations/delegate_selection.html (page visited on March 14, 2005)

CEN selection process establishes exact criteria for delegate selection so that a recognized selection group evaluates candidates in complete transparency.

As much as possible, SDO selection mechanisms must also support consumer representation by representatives from recognized and qualified NGOs toward whom they have an obligation to be responsible regarding the allocation of their time and the performance of their work while offering them the support necessary for proper representation.

VII.I.e) Consultations and Exchanges

Due to the lack of financial, material and human resources, the participation of consumer representatives is often compromised from the initial stages of standardization processes, which can be long and complex for consumer associations. The low number of representatives of different associations in advisory committees and their lack of solidarity does not foster the establishment of a collective action expressing the coordinated and coherent demands of consumers. Virtual consumer participation and the creation of a united NGO platform might indeed be the way forward.

Canadian consumer associations seem to accept the ANEC model spontaneously because they believe that improving their joint action on standardization is one of the best ways to improve consumer participation in standardization processes, the funding issue aside.¹⁵¹

VII.I.f) Information

The information on standardization work that consumer associations receive from SDOs can also pose a problem. Very short timeframes often exist between the transmissions of information and participation, which, frankly, often allows consumer representatives little time to prepare properly for committee and working group meetings. The quantity of information alone may also be problematic. Too little information, and representatives are in the dark. Too much information, and representatives are overwhelmed by massive amounts of documentation out of which they must single out the elements relevant to the execution of their mandate. In Quebec, add to these problems the fact that available information is often only in English, sometimes thwarting the understanding all the subtleties of the issues in different standardization processes in progress.¹⁵²

Another problem is that standards developed by SDOs are difficult for the public and consumer associations to access because the vast majority of the accompanying documents are sold by the SDOs, often at high prices. This limited accessibility is taxing on consumer participation in standardization processes. Furthermore, selling standards could be interpreted as contradictory considering the accessibility and transparency concerns so important to the parties interested in standardization. The standards themselves, as well as the preliminary studies that led to their development, should be free and public, accessible to all, just like laws and regulations.

¹⁵¹ See question 10 of the Web survey of Canadian consumer associations conducted by Union des consommateurs.

¹⁵² Begonia Lojk of the SCC, in her written reaction of December 12, 2005, to a preliminary version of this report, asserted that "the Governing Council of the SCC is in the process of reviewing its linguistic criteria for National Standards of Canada approval in cases which the international organization publishing the standard omits to do it in the two versions (English and French). It is worth noting that most standards developed by SDOs accredited by the SCC are published in the two official languages, even if they are not by their nature regulated by the *Official Languages Act* (with the exception of the CGSB, from the moment it became part of the federal government). As a Crown corporation, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) continues to provide its services to the public in both official languages."

VII.I.g) The Interests of Consumers and Their NGOs

Standardization remains an area that is unfamiliar to the public, and few people completely grasp its importance or know all its processes. The same is true for consumer associations, for which an interest in standardization is relatively new and not yet very widespread. This is how it seems for most Canadian consumer associations, at least according to the survey we conducted.¹⁵³

Furthermore, this report demonstrates the complexity of standardization processes and the number of participants involved. To the uninitiated, a complex subject covering such a variety of issues related to standardization cannot be mastered in a few hours; it requires several months of work before one can begin to understand the intricacies and stakes of standardization, let alone feel comfortable with the material.

Unfortunately, NGOs' relative unfamiliarity with standardization issues, in which they should take an interest and make one of their work priorities, prevents them from tackling that task.

VII.I.h) Consequences

These barriers in the way of greater consumer participation in standardization processes substantially limit the possibility of consumer representatives having a decisive influence on standards development work, hampering their defence of consumer interests.

From a wider perspective, these barriers could endanger the democratic principles that are the very foundation of the theories behind standardization processes. The low consumer participation at the national level, not to mention at practically all of the international level, could even risk a rollback of consumer rights in general.

VII.II Fostering Greater Consumer Participation

Although there are serious barriers ahead for consumer participation, there are several ways in which they might be pushed aside or at least pushed back significantly. Some work, being done by ANEC, the CPIC, the ISO/COPOLCO, Industry Canada and standardization consultants like Bruce J. Farquhar, former ANEC director, and others has suggested different formulas that could be applied to remove those barriers. Below is a wide range of solutions, based on diverse sources, which take up the seven large categories of barriers we discussed above.

Several of these solutions were presented to Canadian consumer associations during the Web survey conducted for this project. The groups were invited to rate how each solution would be likely to foster their participation in standardization processes. Overall, the solutions seemed to be welcomed by the groups. However, the reader can see from the appended survey results that some of these solutions got more support than others.

VII.II.a) Financial Support

In order to compensate for the lack of consumer representative resources, some measures must be put in place to guarantee the following:

- Reimbursement for travel, lodging and meals;

¹⁵³ See appended results of the Web survey of Canadian consumer associations conducted by Union des consommateurs.

- Reimbursement for consultant and legal advice;
- Reimbursement for mailing costs, phone calls, photocopying, printing, book and software purchases;
- Remuneration for time devoted by consumer representatives to standardization activities and the drafting of research reports;
- Increased financial support from different levels of government the regulation activities of which benefit from the work of consumer associations;
- A dual governmental funding system that would contribute some permanent financial support to consumer associations so that they can pursue their long-term standardization activities (grants) and funds for each submitted project, which would offer governments the possibility of requiring accountability (contracts);
- Redistribution of a part of the membership funds collected by SDOs from industry and business to consumer associations that want to participate in standardization work.

VII.II.b) Education and Preparation of Representatives

In order to improve the technical training of consumer representatives and enable them to ensure proper representation, while giving them access to basic technical knowledge, the following measures must be put in place:

- Offer of training and seminars by SDOs and putting their qualified personnel at the disposal of consumer representatives to respond to their technical questions about standardization processes in progress;
- Reimbursement for technical study costs and for tests ordered from independent laboratories, offices and organizations;
- Development of virtual tools on the websites of different SDOs, which will facilitate rapid familiarization with standards development processes.

VII.II.c) Respect for a Balanced Matrix

Because consensus through balanced committees is the foundation of Canadian standardization processes, some measures must be implemented to guarantee the following:

- Financial support for consumer representatives who want to participate in a variety of standardization work, regardless of the geographical distance;
- Financially and materially ensured participation of representatives, according to their interests, in all technical committees, policy development committees and working groups, not solely in public consultations and reviews;
- Establishment of a mechanism enabling consumer groups to participate in a timely manner in discussions on the composition of committees, working groups and other groupings of the different SDOs;
- Availability of interpreters and translators for representatives not familiar with one of the two official languages.

VII.II.d) Quality of Representativity

Some measures must be implemented to guarantee the following:

- Publication by SDOs of the names of individuals representing consumers during all standardization work;
- Encouragement of the participation of representatives of competent and recognized consumer associations and NGOs, who must respect the principles of accountability in order to make standards development and certification processes more professional and credible;
- To ensure transparency and respect for the mandate entrusted with them, the obligation of each consumer representative participating in standardization work to produce a report of

activities and transmit it to all other Canadian consumer associations participating or interested in standardization processes;

- NGO representation in SDOs at the strategic level and in advisory committees so that they can participate in defining the large strategic issues in standardization in its entirety (and not solely the standards) and so that they can communicate their opinions and visions on the scope and condition of standardization.

VII.II.e) Simplicity and Cohesion of Representation

Some measures must be implemented for guaranteeing:

- The financial means and supporting materials for the participation of consumer representatives throughout *all* phases of standardization processes;
- Consumer representatives are offered, during the different phases of standardization processes, the possibility of substituting their virtual presence for their physical one at some meetings via Internet transmission of studies, reports, press releases, comments, recommendations, etc. and ensuring the opportunity for video-conference participation;
- Support for the exchange and sharing of information via permanently open Internet discussion forums;
- The creation of meeting forums within all SDOs so that all consumer representatives can participate in standardization work. These forums would enable the various representatives present to exchange information and advice and above all, to foster discussion and collaboration, establish confidence in each other, gain political support (essential during voting on standards adoption) and develop consensus on strategies to adopt and actions to take;
- Coordination of the standardization activities of different consumer associations. A united platform could be created within the frameworks and processes of the present standardization system, according to the same principle adopted by ANEC. The goal of this platform could be to give a voice to consumer associations and NGOs so that they could express more powerfully their hopes, fears and reflections about large strategic standardization issues. It would give some weight as well to the rights and interests promoted and defended by consumer representatives against those defended by the representatives of industry.

VII.II.f) Effectiveness and Relevance of Information

Some measures must be implemented to guarantee:

- Advance communication of basic information on new standards development activities to enable consumer associations to prepare themselves properly for full participation;
- Rapid electronic distribution of information on all standardization work to all consumer associations;
- Generalization of technical information for easier comprehension of all consumer representatives;
- Reasonable timeframes granted to consumer associations for preparation, drafting and distribution of their reports and studies;
- Public Internet access to preliminary and final consultation reports;
- Documentation and information available in both French and English;
- No charge for written standards and the preliminary studies that led to their development.

VII.II.g) Development of a Greater Interest in Standardization

Because unfamiliarity with standardization processes and issues is a barrier to greater public and consumer association participation in those processes and impedes a wider recognition of standards, organizations involved in standardization must:

- Prioritize increased publication of information on standardization to raise public awareness about the importance of standardization and its accompanying issues;
- Facilitate the generalization of standardization issues and discussions about them, including consumer associations, in order to create greater interest;
- Establish exchange networks and spaces for dialogue about big standardization issues, specifically among NGOs, SDOs and the concerned government authorities;
- Create transparent channels and procedures for receiving and handling public complaints and comments based on ISO customer service and dispute resolution standards.

VII.II.h) Factors of Success

To conclude this section on solutions for the problems in consumer participation in standardization processes, we present a list of essential factors for all consumer associations to consider in order to help them achieve their objectives:

- A precise definition of defended interests;
- An effective, diplomatic and determined leadership;
- An ability to communicate positions clearly;
- A good knowledge of effective methods of soliciting public opinion;
- Identification of key actors in each SDO and each government agency involved with standardization;
- A sufficient quantity of monies for the proper funding of activities to be undertaken;
- Rigorous preparation from the first phase to the last;
- A team that knows both the technical aspects of standards and how standardization processes work.

CONCLUSION

In the course of this study, we examined standardization processes and frameworks in Canada, Europe, the United States and at the international level, while paying particular attention to consumer participation in all of them. Furthermore, we studied the connections between regulation and standardization and the four new standardization issues likely to motivate consumer associations—corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, quality of customer service and international standards. Last, we analyzed various factors impeding or fostering consumer participation in standardization processes.

There are some difficulties for consumer participation and representation in standardization processes. It is high time to implement mechanisms for encouraging consumer representatives to participate fully and effectively in this work in order to avoid any problems tied to a lack of participation, whether a lack of balance or representativity of committees. The reinforcement of this participation of consumer representatives is especially important because Canada is called to play an essential role in consumer representation on the international standardization scene, and the presence of consumer representatives at this level depends greatly on their participation at the national level.

The Consumer and Public Interest Committee (CPIC) of the SCC and CSA consumer representation programs are based in large part on ANEC's example, a model of consumer integration and improved participation in standardization processes.

While still waiting for the ensured availability of the resources necessary for full participation, consumer associations must now focus on establishing collaborative and united action among themselves in order to be more technically and strategically involved.

Increased consumer participation in standardization processes remains an undeniable necessity because its achievement depends in part on maintaining public confidence in the standardized products, services and processes on the market. Full participation will have the positive consequence of eliminating confrontations between the interests of consumers and those of industry, raising questions about safety, reliability, the environment and ethics, while ensuring a real balance between the demands and needs of all concerned parties. Only full consumer representative participation can ensure that issues, which are difficult for the population to negotiate, are handled in a consensual and balanced manner. That participation also encourages the transparency of standards development mechanisms and forces SDO decision-makers to work openly and seek consensus. Full consumer participation in standardization processes must at all costs be ensured so that consumers can maintain a strong position, force the discussion and protect their interests as they face the power of the State and the hegemony of the market. Their quality of life depends on it.

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APPENDIX 1 SURVEY OF CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS

A Web questionnaire was designed and implemented, and then invitations to respond were sent to ten (10) English Canada consumer associations and forty-two (42) Quebec associations. The over-representation of Quebec obviously tilts the results but also reflects the Canadian consumer protection milieu because there are so many more groups in Quebec identifying themselves as consumer associations as there are in the rest of Canada.

The period for responding was June 20 to July 20, 2005. A reminder e-mail was sent to all groups that had not responded a week after the invitation. A follow-up phone call was also made in the third week. In all, 21 groups responded out of the 52 invited.

The survey focused primarily on evaluating the level of familiarity that groups have with standardization processes, finding out about their perceptions of consumer participation in those processes and identifying which possible solutions they believe would most increase the participation of consumer groups.

General Knowledge and Perceptions of Standardization

The survey revealed that 67% of associations have little general knowledge of standardization processes, 24% asserted that they have average knowledge and only 10% have a fair knowledge.

However, a significant majority of associations (81%) asserted that they have an interest in the subject (52% have average interest and 29% high interest, while only 14% have little interest).

Only 29% of respondents claimed that their organization has participated in standards development in the past, while 62% said they have never participated in such a process.

However, associations are unanimous in believing that consumer participation in standardization processes is important (24%: moderately important and 76%: very important) and, in the same proportions, that it is important for consumer associations to be the intermediary for that participation.

Association opinions are slightly more moderate on the subject of participation in international standardization processes. In fact, when we questioned them about the international level, only 62% believed consumer participation to be very important, 29%, moderately important and 5%, not very important.

The associations had a fairly accurate perception of the current state of consumer association participation in Canadian standardization processes. In fact, 48% believed that the current level of participation is low, and 29% believed it to be average. No one believed that the level is high. It is worth mentioning that a significant proportion of associations (24%) said that they were unable to give a decisive answer to this question.

On the international level, a greater proportion (62%) said they believed that participation is low, while only 10% believed it to be average.

The number of associations that could not answer the question definitively is greater than it was for the preceding one: 29%.

To best gauge the level of the groups' knowledge of standardization, we attempted to measure how familiar respondents were with different standardization organizations. For each organization, respondents had to choose from: not familiar with it, know a little about it or know very little about it.

The majority influence of Quebec groups among the respondents is seen by the relatively high familiarity with the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (not: 33%; little: 62%; well: 5%). By comparison, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) received slightly lower grades (not: 38%; little: 48%; well: 14%) while the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) is practically unknown (not: 90%; little: 10%; well: 0%), and Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) was situated between those two extremes (not: 62%; little: 38%; well: 0%)

The notoriety of the Standards Council of Canada was relatively high (not: 29%; little: 62%; well: 9%). That of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) was more so (not: 14%; little: 76%; well: 10%), which is probably explained by the high visibility of its banners indicating a company's ISO compliance certification.

The Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO) of the ISO is also practically unknown by consumer associations (not: 81%; little: 14%; well: 5%), which is paradoxical because it is this body which is particularly occupied with standardization issues affecting consumers on the international level.

Toward Greater Participation

The last thing we tried to determine was the groups' opinions on which measures are the most likely to influence their participation in standardization processes. For each statement, the responses were divided as: little influence, average influence, great influence, don't know and not applicable (N/A).

A great majority of respondents believed that it would be useful to improve their knowledge of standardization issues (little: 5%, average: 29%, great: 62%, don't know: 5%, N/A: 0%).

Respondents were of the same opinion, but in slightly lower proportions, when we mentioned the improvement of their familiarity with standards development stakeholders and processes (little: 0%, average: 38%, great: 52%, don't know: 5%, N/A: 5%); when we suggested more information on standardization in general and on standardization processes in progress: little: 10%, average: 25%, great: 60%, don't know: 5%, N/A: 0%; and for training or informative activities about standardization: little: 5%, average: 33%, great: 52%, don't know: 10%, N/A: 0%.

Quebec groups said they considered it important to be able to work in their own language by having documents translated into French and interpreters available at meetings (little: 0%, average: 19%, great: 52%, don't know: 10%, N/A: 19%). Note: this question was not posed to Anglophone groups, which were not counted in the N/A category.

Reimbursement for expenses was among the most important participation factors to consider (little: 0%, average: 14%, great: 81%, don't know: 5%, N/A: 0%), followed by the financial compensation necessary to ensure proper and effective participation (little: 0%, average: 29%, great: 67%, don't know: 5%, N/A: 0%) and, in a greater proportion than that of the preceding

statement, was access to external experts: little: 0%, average: 29%, great: 71%, don't know: 0%, N/A: 0%).

Modern communication tools (Internet forum, video-conference) evoked a rather moderate enthusiasm (little: 10%, average: 43%, great: 38%, don't know: 10%, N/A: 0%), while, on the other hand, the idea of improved unity among associations on the subject of standardization seemed to be attractive (little: 5%, average: 29%, great: 62%, don't know: 5%, N/A: 0%).

APPENDIX 2 LIST OF ASSOCIATIONS INVITED TO RESPOND

a) List of 42 Francophone associations

ACEF Abitibi-Témiscamingue
ACEF Amiante Beauce Etchemins
ACEF de l'Estrie
ACEF de l'île Jésus
ACEF de la Péninsule
ACEF de la Rive-Sud de Montréal
ACEF de la Rive-Sud de Québec
ACEF de Lanaudière
ACEF de l'Est de Montréal
ACEF de l'Outaouais
ACEF de Québec
ACEF des Basses-Laurentides
ACEF des Bois-Francs
ACEF du Grand-Portage
ACEF du Haut St-Laurent
ACEF du Nord de Montréal
ACEF du Sud-Ouest de Montréal
ACEF Montérégie-est
ACEF Rimouski-Neigette et Mitis
Association pour la protection des automobilistes
APIC Côte-Nord
Association de protection des épargnants et investisseurs du Québec
Association des consumer pour la qualité dans la construction
Centre populaire de Roberval
CIBES (ACEF de la Mauricie)
CIRCCO
Club Pop. Consumer Pte-St-Charles
Coalition des associations de consumer du Québec
CRIC de Port-Cartier
GRAPE
Option consumer
SAC de Shawinigan
SBC de la MRC Maria-Chapdelaine
SBP d'Alma
SBP de Chicoutimi
SBP de Jonquière
SBP de La Baie et du Bas Saguenay
SBP de la MRC d'Asbestos
SBP de l'Estrie
SBP St-Félicien
Union des consommateurs

b) List of 10 Anglophone associations

Alberta Consumers' Association
Consumers Association of Canada
Consumers Association of Canada – BC
Consumers Association of Canada – Manitoba
Public Interest Advocacy Center (PIAC) – Ontario
Public Interest Advocacy Center (PIAC) – BC
Consumers Council of Canada
Pollution Probe
Car Help Canada
Canadian Toy Testing Council

APPENDIX 3 SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Standardization Survey Statistics

Total Number of Respondents	22
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1. How would you describe the level of general knowledge of standards development mechanisms and processes in your organization?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
fairly low	14	63.64%
average	5	22.73%
fairly high	3	13.64%
don't know	0	0.00%

2. How would you describe the level of interest in standardization?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
fairly low	3	13.64%
average	11	50.00%
fairly high	7	31.82%
don't know	1	4.55%

3. In your organization, have any individuals already participated in standards development processes?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
yes	7	31.82%
no	13	59.09%
don't know	2	9.09%

4. In your opinion, is consumer participation important in Canadian standards development processes?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little importance	0	0.00%
average importance	5	22.73%
very important	17	77.27%
don't know	0	0.00%

5. In your opinion, is it important that consumer participation in standards development processes be carried out through the involvement of consumer associations?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little importance	0	0.00%
average importance	5	22.73%
very important	17	77.27%
don't know	0	0.00%

6. In your opinion, is it important for consumer associations to participate in standards development processes at the international level?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little importance	1	4.55%
average importance	6	27.27%
very important	14	63.64%
don't know	1	4.55%

7. To the best of your knowledge, what is the level of consumer association participation in Canadian standards development processes?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
low	10	45.45%
average	7	31.82%
high	0	0.00%
don't know	5	22.73%

8. To the best of your knowledge, what is the level of consumer association participation in international standards development processes?

(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
low	13	59.09%
average	3	13.64%
high	0	0.00%
don't know	6	27.27%

9. What is your general knowledge of the mission, responsibilities and activities of the following organizations:

A- Standards Council of Canada		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	6	27.27%
know a little	13	59.09%
know it well	3	13.64%

B- Canadian General Standards Board		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	19	86.36%
know a little	3	13.64%
know it well	0	0.00%

C- CSA		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	8	36.36%
know a little	10	45.45%
know it well	4	18.18%

D- Bureau de normalisation du Québec		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	8	36.36%
know a little	13	59.09%
know it well	1	4.55%

E- Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	13	59.09%
know a little	9	40.91%
know it well	0	0.00%

F- ISO		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	3	13.64%
know a little	17	77.27%
know it well	2	9.09%

G- COPOLCO		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
not familiar with it	17	77.27%
know a little	4	18.18%
know it well	1	4.55%

10. Indicate which of the following would be most likely to increase interest in standardization and encourage greater participation from your organization in standardization processes:

Having a better awareness of the importance of standardization issues		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	1	4.55%
average influence	6	27.27%
great influence	14	63.64%
don't know	1	4.55%
N/A	0	0.00%

Having a better awareness of the role of stakeholders and standards development processes		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	0	0.00%
average influence	8	36.36%
great influence	12	54.55%
don't know	1	4.55%
N/A	1	4.55%

Receiving more information on standardization in general and standardization processes in progress		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	2	9.52%
average influence	5	23.81%
great influence	13	61.90%
don't know	1	4.76%
N/A	0	0.00%

Participating in training and informative activities on standardization		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	1	4.55%
average influence	7	31.82%
great influence	12	54.55%
don't know	2	9.09%
N/A	0	0.00%

Having French documents and simultaneous interpretation into French during meetings, as opposed to documents and/or meetings in English alone		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	0	0.00%
average influence	4	18.18%
great influence	11	50.00%
don't know	2	9.09%
N/A	5	22.73%

Receiving reimbursement for some expenses (travel, lodging and meals)		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	0	0.00%
average influence	3	13.64%
great influence	18	81.82%
don't know	1	4.55%
N/A	0	0.00%

Receiving financial compensation for work done, to ensure proper and effective participation		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	0	0.00%
average influence	7	31.82%
great influence	14	63.64%
don't know	1	4.55%
N/A	0	0.00%

Being able to confer, if needed and free of charge, with external experts		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	0	0.00%
average influence	6	27.27%
great influence	16	72.73%
don't know	0	0.00%
N/A	0	0.00%

Having access to information tools facilitating long-distance participation, such as Internet forums and video-conferences		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	2	9.09%
average influence	9	40.91%
great influence	9	40.91%
don't know	2	9.09%
N/A	0	0.00%

Participating with other consumer organizations in united strategy and discussion sessions on standardization		
(22 responses/22 respondents)	Number	Percentage
little influence	1	4.55%
average influence	6	27.27%
great influence	14	63.64%
don't know	1	4.55%
N/A	0	0.00%

11. Do you have any comments or additions?

Consumer involvement is very important. There is a great need to balance the industry and government perspective. To involve consumers, there needs to be recognition (in dollars) of their volunteer time - just paying expenses is not sufficient! There is often a lot of technical knowledge needed, so there is a steep learning curve for the consumers - and using retired industry people, as currently often happens, is not a satisfactory solution - it probably would be easier to find people to work on standards committees if there was a financial "honorarium" involved.

Canadian consumer associations working together might improve their knowledge of standardization issues and increase their participation in standards development that is particularly important for Quebecois and Canadian consumers both nationally and internationally.

Experts should also be independent.

APPENDIX 4 ABBREVIATIONS

ANSI	American National Standards Institute
ANEC	The European Consumer voice in standardization
ATBT	Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade
BEUC	Bureau of European Consumer Organizations
BNQ	Bureau de normalisation du Québec
CAC	Consumers' Association of Canada
CCC	Canadian Consultative Organization
CCQC	Committee consultatif québécois pour les consumer
CEA	Canadian Economics Association
CEN	Canadian Environment Network
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CFI	Canadian Foundation for Innovation
CGSB	Canadian General Standards Board
CI	Consumers International
CIF	Consumer Interest Forum
CMF	Company Member Forum
COA	Canadian Office of Consumer Affairs
COPOLCO	Committee on Consumer Policy: ISO member organization for liaison with consumer interests.
CPIC	Consumer and Public Interest Committee Mandate: Issues of consumer & public interest: health, safety.
CPSC	Consumer Product Safety Commission
CSA	Canadian Standards Association
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CSS	Canadian Standards Strategy
EACSR	External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulations
ECCG	Consumer Consultative Group
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations
ESO	European Standardization Organization
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
EU	European Union
GMF	Government Member Forum
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IEC	International Electronics Commission
IEEE	Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers
ISO	International Standards Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSO	National Standardization Organization
NSS	National Standards System
OCED:	Organization of Cooperation and Economic Development
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMF	Organizational Member Forum
PAC	Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
SCC	Standards Council of Canada

SDO Standards Development Organization
SDOAC Standards Development Organizations Advisory Committee
ULC Underwriters Laboratories of Canada
WTO World Trade Organization

APPENDIX 5 SMART REGULATION

The document is available at the following address:

http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/smartreg-regint/en/08/rpt_fnl.pdf