

# International Standardization European Experience

**Arnold Pindar**

***Head of Consumer & Societal Policy  
British Standards Institute  
11 November 2004***

## ***How does the European experience inform the international scene***

- Short history of product safety work in Europe (from a United Kingdom perspective)
- Some lessons learned
- Questions for discussion

## **Within the United Kingdom before joining the European Communities**

Mainly reactive to accidents plus some market surveillance

- *Take up with company that supplied the product*
- *Form an industry code or Standard*
- *Legislate*

## **Situation when the United Kingdom joined the European Union**

- *Laws and Standards different in the different Member States*
- *Some countries did not cover some aspects of safety or particular groups of products*

**Need to harmonise trade – improve safety and to act more consistently**

## Harmonisation Directives

- *Legal requirements and test methods established*
- *'New Approach' Established 1983*
  - *Directive defines the 'essential requirements'*
  - *Standards define the technical details*
  - *First 'New Approach' Directive – Toys Safety 1984*
    - *Toys shall be safe*
    - *Specified bio-availability data for 8 toxic elements*
- *General Product Safety Directive 1992*

# Lessons Learned

- **European model to use standards to underpin legislation is successful**
  - Involves (potentially) all stakeholders
  - More flexible than legislation alone
- **Different cultures and legal systems can result in difficulties**
  - Lowest common denominator standards
  - Imprecise drafting
- **Imbalance of stakeholder interests may affect the quality of the final standard**

# Food for thought!

## At international level

- Trade harmonization is one driver but is this enough to drive up safety provisions without a solid legal framework?
- Is safety an absolute? How can we balance the needs of developed and developing countries whilst ensuring safety?
- Broad stakeholder participation is important in safety-related standards work. Non-industry participation gets progressively more difficult - national-European-international. How can this be addressed?

# International Standardization The European Experience

*Thank You*

Arnold Pindar

Email: [arnold.pindar@bsi-global.com](mailto:arnold.pindar@bsi-global.com)

Tel: +44 (0)208 996 7390