

**Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to hot-water meters**

The text referred to the Committee has been published in *Official Journal of the European Communities* No C 283 of 24 November 1977, page 6.

**A. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE OPINION**

On 8 November 1977, the Council referred the abovementioned proposal to the Economic and Social Committee in accordance with Article 100 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

**B. OPINION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Economic and Social Committee prepared its opinion on the above matter at its 159th plenary session, held in Brussels on 31 May and 1 June 1978.

The full text of the opinion is as follows:

**THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100 thereof,

Having regard to the request made by the Council of the European Communities on 9 November 1977 for an opinion,

Having regard to the decision taken by the Committee's Bureau on 22 November 1977, instructing the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services to draw up an opinion and a report on the matter,

Having regard to the opinion issued by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services at its meeting on 10 May 1978,

Having regard to the report submitted by the rapporteur, Mr Marvier,

Having regard to the discussions at its 159th plenary session, held on 31 May and 1 June 1978 (meeting of 31 May 1978),

**HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING OPINION**

by a unanimous vote:

The Committee approves the Commission's proposal and would make the following comments:

**1. General comments**

1.1. The Committee approves the Commission's proposal, as far as its aims are (a) to ensure that there is a common market in hot-water meters, (b) to align national laws concerning them, while preventing the erection of new barriers to Member States which do not yet have such laws.

1.2. Hot-water meters are being used more and more, especially as a means of saving energy and sharing out costs more fairly between users of hot water.

Hot-water meters reveal the real cost of hot water at once. Everybody then takes care to cut his costs and thus to avoid wastage and leaks. In some cases, very large drops in hot-water consumption have been registered as a result. In addition, defective boilers or boilers not in operation are spotted immediately from meter readings.

Hot water is very costly, being several times more expensive than cold water. Less hot water than cold water is consumed, yet hot-water bills are much higher than the bills for cold water. This difference will no doubt increase because of the expected rise in the cost of energy.

**2. Specific comments**

2.1. It appears that the Directive seeks to introduce a Class 'O' meter whose measuring characteristics differ from those of the other classes of meter so that such meters can be used as a component in thermal energy meters. But in so far as hot-water meters are still being used as such, it

must be realized that they are a specific type of instrument and intended to be used in an entirely different way. Accordingly, they must be just as accurate if not more accurate than cold-water meters.

2.2. For these reasons, and bearing in mind the technical advances that have been made since work was begun on the Directive – especially the big leap prompted by the energy crisis – and the high unit cost of heated water, it is in the consumer's own interest to have harmonization which keeps abreast of progress.

Done at Brussels, 31 May 1978.

2.3. The Committee therefore asks the Commission to take a fresh look at the various classes proposed in the light of the interests of the consumer and bearing in mind the comments made by some members in the report.

### 3. Harmonization solution

The Committee agrees with the generally held view that 'total harmonization' is desirable in this field.

*The Chairman*  
*of the Economic and Social Committee*  
Basil de FERRANTI

## Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning the general requirements of construction and certain types of protection for electrical equipment for use in potentially explosive atmospheres

The text referred to the Committee has been published in *Official Journal of the European Communities* No C 4 of 6 January 1978, page 2.

### A. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE OPINION

On 4 January 1978, the Council referred the abovementioned proposal to the Economic and Social Committee in accordance with Article 100 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

### B. OPINION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Economic and Social Committee prepared its opinion on the above matter at its 159th plenary session, held in Brussels on 31 May and 1 June 1978.

The full text of the opinion is as follows:

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100 thereof,

Having regard to the request made by the Council of the European Communities on 6 January 1978,

Having regard to the decision taken by the Bureau of the Economic and Social Committee on 31 January 1978, instructing the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts

and Services to draw up an opinion and a report on the matter,

Having regard to the opinion issued by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services at its meeting on 10 May 1978,

Having regard to the oral report made by the rapporteur, Mr Masprone,

Having regard to the discussions at its 159th plenary session, held on 31 May and 1 June 1978 (meeting of 31 May 1978),