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**A5-0091/1999**

8 December 1999

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## **REPORT**

on the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending  
Council Directive 80/181/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member  
States relating to units of measurement  
(COM(1999) 040 – C4-0076/1999 – 1999/0014(COD))

Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy

Rapporteur: Giles Bryan Chichester

### ***Symbols for procedures***

- \* Consultation procedure  
*majority of the votes cast*
- \*\*I Cooperation procedure (first reading)  
*majority of the votes cast*
- \*\*II Cooperation procedure (second reading)  
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position*  
*majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend the common position*
- \*\*\* Assent procedure  
*majority of Parliament's component Members except in cases covered by Articles 105, 107, 161 and 300 of the EC Treaty and Article 7 of the EU Treaty*
- \*\*\*I Codecision procedure (first reading)  
*majority of the votes cast*
- \*\*\*II Codecision procedure (second reading)  
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position*  
*majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend the common position*
- \*\*\*III Codecision procedure (third reading)  
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the joint text*

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the Commission)

### ***Abbreviations for committees***

- I. AFET Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy
- II. BUDG Committee on Budgets
- III. CONT Committee on Budgetary Control
- IV. LIBE Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs
- V. ECON Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
- VI. JURI Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market
- VII. INDU Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy
- VIII. EMPL Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
- IX. ENVI Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy
- X. AGRI Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
- XI. PECH Committee on Fisheries
- XII. REGI Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism
- XIII. CULT Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport
- XIV. DEVE Committee on Development and Cooperation
- XV. AFCO Committee on Constitutional Affairs
- XVI. FEMM Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities
- XVII. PETI Committee on Petitions

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Procedural page.....	4
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL .....	5
DRAFT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION.....	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	6

## Procedural page

By letter of 5 February 1999 the Commission submitted to Parliament, pursuant to Article 251(2) (ex-Article 189b(2)) of the EC Treaty and Article 95 (ex-Article 100A) of the EC Treaty, the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 80/181/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement (COM(1999)040 – 1999/0014(COD)).

At the sitting of 24 February 1999 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred this proposal to the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy as the committee responsible and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy for its opinion (C4-0076/1999).

At the sitting of 23 July 1999 the President announced that, in accordance with the Commission's letter of 20 July 1999, the proposals to which the co-decision procedure applied pursuant to the EC Treaty and in respect of which Parliament had not yet delivered an opinion would once again be referred to Parliament.

The Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy appointed Mr. Giles Bryan Chichester rapporteur at its meeting of 14 October 1999.

The Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy considered the Commission proposal and the draft report at its meetings of 23 November and 7 December 1999.

At the latter meeting it adopted the draft legislative resolution by 47 votes to 1.

The following were present for the vote: Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza, chairman; Renato Brunetta, Nuala Ahern and Peter Michael Mombaur, vice-chairmen; Giles Bryan Chichester, rapporteur; Konstantinos Alyssandrakis, Alexandros Baltas, Niels Busk (for Colette Flesch pursuant to Rule 153(2)), Yves Butel, Massimo Carraro, Nicholas Clegg, Harlem Désir, Jonathan Evans (for Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl), Concepció Ferrer y Casals, Christos Folias, Glyn Ford, Jacqueline Foster (for Marjo Tuulevi Matikainen-Kallström), Carles-Alfred Gasoliba i Böhm (for Willy De Clercq), Malcolm Harbour, Roger Karoutchi, Alain Lamassoure, Peter Liese (for Werner Langen), Rolf Linkohr, Caroline Lucas, Linda McAvan, Eryl Margaret McNally, Nelly Maes, Erika Mann, Elizabeth Montfort, Luisa Morgantini, Simon Francis Murphy, Angelika Niebler, Hervé Novelli (for Guido Bodrato), Yves Piétrasanta, Elly Plooijs-Van Gorsel, John Purvis, Daniela Raschhofer, Imelda Mary Read, Christian Foldberg Røvsing, Paul Rübig, Jacques Santer (for Michel Hansenne), Gilles Savary (for François Zimeray), Umberto Scapagnini, Konrad K. Schwaiger, Claude Turmes (for Ilka Schröder), Jaime Valdivielso de Cué, W.G. van Velzen and Anders Wijkman.

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy decided on 24 November 1999 not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 8 December 1999.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

## LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

**Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 80/181/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement (COM(1999) 040 – C4-0076/1999 – 1999/0014(COD))**

The proposal is approved.

### DRAFT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**Legislative resolution of the European Parliament on the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 80/181/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement (COM(1999) 040 – C4-0076/1999 – 1999/0014(COD))**

**(Codecision procedure: first reading)**

*The European Parliament*

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(1999) 040 – 1999/0014(COD)<sup>1</sup>),
  - having regard to Article 251(2) and Article 95 of the EC Treaty, pursuant to which the Commission submitted the proposal to Parliament (C4-0076/1999),
  - having regard to Rule 67 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (A5-0091/1999),
1. Approves the Commission proposal;
  2. Asks to be consulted again should the Commission intend to amend its proposal substantially or replace it with another text;
  3. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 089, 30.03.99, p.8  
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## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The international system for measurement units (I.S.), usually known as "metric system", is the official system in use in all countries of the European Union. Its legal base is the Metre convention of 1875, amended in 1960.

The United Kingdom, where the "imperial system" was the only official one, started introducing the I.S. in 1965 ; it is now widely used, however traditional units are still in use because many people, your rapporteur included, are more comfortable with the existing system

Despite the involvement of the Member States with the I.S., the EU legal system requires a specific legal text to ensure a uniform and simultaneous implementation of the system and its periodic updates throughout the Single Market. This legal instrument is the Directive 80/181/EEC, last modified in 1989, which the current proposal intends to amend.

The content of the proposed modifications is twofold: most of them enact updates decided in the International Standards Organisation; they are of a technical nature and do not require an explanation here: interested readers may refer to the explanatory statement of the COM document

The article 1(1) of the proposal is of a different kind: it addresses the possibility of using a different system alongside the I.S (dual marking).

In theory, the use of the I.S. is meant to be exclusive. In fact the possibility of using other units is a necessity not only to help the ongoing transition in the U.K., as mentioned above, but also to cope with the needs of trade with the only country in the world that still uses a non-metric system as its official system, namely the United States, where it is unlikely that, notwithstanding the fact that some of the I.S. units are in use in many technical areas, the metric system will find its way into general use in the foreseeable future.

For these reasons, the use of additional labellings in non-metric units is included in the Directive, but as a provisional measure. As this provisional measure expires 31 December 1999, and as the reasons for its existence are still current, it needs to be extended. The Commission proposes a further period of ten years, which your rapporteur approves.

To avoid a legal uncertainty from the 1 January 2000, the Directive - which is subject to the co-decision procedure - should enter into force as soon as possible.

An approval of the Commission proposal by both the Council and Parliament without any amendments, would allow, according to the new rules of the Amsterdam Treaty, an adoption of the Directive with only one reading. This appears to be both feasible and desirable.