



Egypt adopts new standard for energy saving lamps

Following joint efforts by the Commission and EU industry, Egypt has amended its standard for energy saving lamps. This is an important step forward for EU companies which were experiencing difficulties in exporting to the Egyptian market.

Egyptian Standard 6313/2007 concerning "Energy efficiency of self-ballasted lamps for general purpose - Methods for measuring energy consumption" entered into force in October 2008 by means of Ministerial Decree 335/2008. This mandatory standard, which was not notified to the WTO, established two new criteria not foreseen by the formerly applied IEC standard for lamps with power under 25 W. In June 2008, the EU Delegation in Cairo was alerted by Member States on the difficulties encountered by EU manufacturers following the introduction of these technical specifications. EU manufacturers were concerned that these new specifications were not based on international standards and could force them out of the market.

The European Union Delegation took action by holding several meetings with concerned Member States' embassies in Cairo and EU business representatives. Following this, formal letters were sent by the EU Delegation in Egypt and by Commission headquarters in Brussels to the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Egyptian Organisation for Standards (EOS) to convey the concerns of our exporters. The EU also requested Egypt to notify the new Egyptian standard to the WTO and provide a reasonable time before the application of the requirements for European producers to adapt to the new specifications.

The combined pressure of the EU and Member States on the Egyptian government helped convince the Ministry of Trade and Industry to review the new standard. A Technical Committee involving the different stakeholders (including companies) was set up by the Ministry of Trade to draft new specifications. This resulted in the adoption by the Egyptian Organisation for Standards (EOS) of a new Egyptian standard for energy saving lamps in January 2010, which is based on the European standard.

The Commission welcomes this positive development and commends the swift reaction of the Egyptian authorities. Now that the new standard has entered into force, the Commission will monitor the situation closely to make sure that this decision secures a fair access to the Egyptian market.

The Egyptian market for energy saving lamps is estimated at €27 million, while EU exports to Egypt of this product amounted to €3.4 million.

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