

## DIRECTIVE 98/34/EC

### TECHNICAL STANDARDS & REGULATIONS DIRECTIVE

*Procedure for the provision of information  
in the field of technical regulations  
and rules on information society services*

**Directive 98/34/EC** lays down a mechanism - a notification procedure - for the transparency of technical regulations and is intended to help avoid the creation of new technical barriers to trade within the Community.

It requires Member States to notify technical regulations, relating to products and information society services, to the Commission **in draft**, and then generally to observe a **standstill** period of at least **three months** before adopting the regulation, in order to allow other Member States and the Commission an opportunity to raise concerns about potential barriers to trade. The procedure also applies, in a simplified form, to EFTA countries that are signatories to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, Turkey and Switzerland.

The Directive impacts on products (defined as any industrially manufactured products and any agricultural products, including fish products) and information society services (defined as any service supplied at a distance, by electronic means and at the individual request of a recipient of services).

The Directive, through the notification procedure, is an important element in maintaining key principles of the Single Market, for example, acceptance in each Member State of products lawfully manufactured in the rest of Community and it allows a prevention based approach to monitoring national regulations.



During the initial 3 month standstill, if one or more Member States and/or the Commission consider there are substantial concerns, then the standstill period is extended.

Information on the notifications, as well as reference documents, is available to the public on the Commission's website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/comm/enterprise/tris>

In the UK, only *technical* regulations laid down by central Government (including devolved administrations, agencies or other bodies responsible on behalf of the Government) are required to be notified. Technical regulations laid down by local authorities are, in effect, excluded from the scope of the Directive.

All notifications and all subsequent exchanges of information are made between a 98/34 Central Unit in each Member State and the Commission. **For the UK, the 98/34 Central Unit is given below.**

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To find out the lead Government Department for any particular notification, please contact the Central Unit.

Further information is available on the internet and the website includes useful links and downloadable documents:

[http://www.bis.gov.uk/innovation/infrastructure/standardisation/technical\\_standards\\_and\\_regulations\\_directive](http://www.bis.gov.uk/innovation/infrastructure/standardisation/technical_standards_and_regulations_directive)

