



Paris, January 20th, 2022

Subject:

Consultation of: Supporting business through improvements to mandatory standards regulation under the Australian Consumer Law

Brief introduction of the association represented: GIFO

GIFO is the French Association of Optics Manufacturers. Our organisation represents 130 French companies which design, produce and distribute optical lenses, optical frames, sunglasses and equipment for opticians. Our members list is available at <https://gifo.org/entreprises/entreprises-membres>

Answer to the consultation

In June 2021, the Australian Government announced that it would look to develop amendments to the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) to make it easier to recognise up-to-date trusted overseas product standards in Australia.

According to option 2, a declared overseas standard would become mandatory under the ACL with mandated requirements for regulating specific consumer goods. Where a mandatory Australian standard exists, we consider that this would give businesses flexibility in complying with either the Australian standard or the declared overseas standard.

The ISO standards are made with the active contribution of many countries with the scope of defining the specifications that guarantee the covering of the Essential Safety Requirement to protect the users with good performing products, safe and affordable in terms of cost.

Allowing the Commonwealth Minister to more easily declare trusted overseas standards as mandatory Australian standards would have a positive impact to businesses through reduced compliance costs, particularly for the large number of businesses which import, or rely on the importation. It is also likely to have a net positive impact on consumers through increased product choice.

Q1. Do you agree with the identified problems?

Yes.

Q2. Are there any other problems that you think should be considered?

With regard to option 3, in this scenario companies would be allowed to comply with any standard, this would lead to consumer confusion, as consumers are not well equipped to identify the technical differences and therefore characteristics of products complying with standards.

Summary

We recommend the option 2: Amend the ACL to allow the Commonwealth Minister to more easily declare trusted overseas standards.

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