



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
31st Session
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NC0727E1
(+ Annex)

O. Eng.

Brussels, 28 April 2003.

POSSIBLE AMENDMENT OF THE EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEADING 44.11

(Item IX.12 on Agenda)

I. BACKGROUND

1. On 17 April 2003, the Secretariat received a note from the **EC**, comprising a proposal to amend the Explanatory Note to heading 44.11. The note is reproduced below.

II. NOTE FROM THE **EC**

2. "The **EC** notes that the Explanatory Notes of the Harmonized System (HS) do not correspond to the present situation of commerce because they only refer to medium-density fibreboards having a density between 0.5 and 0.8 g/cm³ but make no reference to those having a density lower than 0.5 cm³ or higher than 0.8 cm³.
3. In addition, these HS Explanatory Notes indicate that the different types of fibreboards correspond with the breakdown of HS heading 44.11 according to density (> 0.8 g/cm³ = hardboard, > 0.5 to 0.8 g/cm³ = mediumboard or MDF, > 0.35 to 0.5 g/cm³ = softboard or insulating board).
4. According to the information provided by **European** manufacturers the density of the different types varies in the following way: hardboard: 0.8 to 1.1 g/cm³, mediumboard = 0.5 to 0.8 g/cm³, MDF = 0.45 to 1 g/cm³, softboard = 0.25 to 0.5 g/cm³ which implies a certain overlap of these products according to the HS structure.
5. In order to remedy the above mentioned difficulties it seems necessary to undertake steps to amend the HS Explanatory Notes concerned with a view to improve the present situation in the short term before a possible amendment of the structure of heading 44.11 will be effected on the occasion of the entry into force of the new HS revision cycle foreseen for 2007.

Note : Shaded parts will be removed when documents are placed on the WCO documentation database available to the public.

File No. 2982

PROPOSAL :

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6. Replace paragraphs 2 to 4 by the following :

“The categories of fibreboard are as follows :

1. "Hardboard" is manufactured in the 'wet production process' in which the wood-fibres in suspension in water are compressed in the form of a mattress under high temperature and high pressure on a metallic mesh. In the unworked state this type of fibreboard has one smooth and one rough surface with a mesh pattern. However, it can sometimes also have two smooth surfaces obtained by special surface treatment or a special production process. It generally has a density exceeding 0.8 g/cm³. Hardboard is mainly used for furniture, in the automotive industries, for doorskins and for packaging, especially fruit and vegetable packaging.

2. "Mediumboard" is also manufactured in the 'wet production process' in a way similar to the one for hardboard but at a lower pressure. It generally has a density exceeding 0.35 but not exceeding 0.8 g/cm³. The main application is in furniture production and for interior or exterior walls.

3. "Softboard" is also manufactured in the 'wet production process'. However, this fibreboard is not compressed as the other types of fibreboard. It generally has a density of 0.35 g/cm³ or less. These boards are used mainly for thermal or sound insulation in building. Special types of insulating board are used as sheathing or sarking materials.

4. "Medium density fibreboard (MDF)" is manufactured in the 'dry production process', in which additional thermal-hardening synthetic resins have to be added to the dried wood fibres in order to assist the bonding process in the press. The density generally ranges from 0.45 to 1 g/cm³. In the unworked state it has two smooth surfaces. It can be used in lots of different applications such as furniture, interior decoration and in building.

Medium density fibreboard (MDF) of a density exceeding 0.8 g/cm³ is sometimes also referred to by trade as "high density fibreboard (HDF)".

III. SECRETARIAT COMMENTS

7. The Secretariat would like to draw the Committee's attention to the **EC** proposal to amend the structure of heading 44.11 with a view to separately identifying medium density fibreboard at the subheading level. The proposal, which was preliminary discussed at the 27th Session of the Review Sub-Committee (April 2003), will be further discussed at the Sub-Committee's next session.
8. With respect to the proposal concerning the Explanatory Note to heading 44.11, the Secretariat has refrained from commenting, given the recent receipt of the proposal. However, the Secretariat has slightly modified the presentation.
9. The proposed amendment is reproduced in the Annex to this document.

IV. CONCLUSION

10. The Committee is invited to consider the proposed amendment of the Explanatory Note to heading 44.11 as set out in the Annex to this document, taking into account the comments presented by the **EC** in paragraphs 2 to 6 above and the comments of the Secretariat in paragraphs 7 to 9 above.

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