



WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

Established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council
Créée en 1952 sous le nom de Conseil de coopération douanière

HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

NC0052E1

-
23rd Session

O. Eng.

H9-3

Brussels, 26 April 1999.

CLASSIFICATION OF A VIDEO CARD, SOUND CARD AND SOFTWARE THEREFOR

(Item VIII.15 on the Agenda)

Reference documents :

42.467 (HSC/22)

42.750, Annex H/16 (HSC/22 - Report)

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 22nd Session (November 1998), the Committee examined the classification of a video card, sound card and software therefor on the basis of Doc. 42.467.
2. Unfortunately, there were two different models of the article consisting of a video card and software. The principal difference between the two was that one model contained a TV tuner whereas the other did not.
3. During the intersession the Secretariat was informed that a classification decision was requested only for the "Video Wonder" model, which did not incorporate a TV tuner.
4. The Secretariat has also received information from the manufacturer, which confirms that the video card performs the function of converting video signals into computer-readable data, while the sound card performs the function of converting sound signals into computer-readable data.

II. SECRETARIAT COMMENTS

5. In Doc. 42.467, the Secretariat indicated, in order to facilitate discussion, that, the sound card, if presented separately, and the video card were potentially classifiable in subheadings 8471.80 and 8473.30 or in headings 85.17 and 85.43. The magnetic disc recorded with software was, however, classifiable in heading 85.24, by virtue of Note 6 to Chapter 85.

File No. 2747

For reasons of economy, documents are printed in limited number. Delegates are kindly asked to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

6. The Secretariat then pointed out the possibility of classifying the "Video kit" and "Multimedia kit" in one heading. It appeared that two alternatives could be considered : (i) functional units by application of Note 4 to Section XVI or (ii) sets within the meaning of GIR 3 (b). In the first case, the classification would have to be based on a specific function, covered by one of the headings of Chapter 84 or 85, to which the articles contributed together. In the second case, the classification would depend on the article which gives the set its essential character. The arguments are set out in Doc. 42.467, paragraphs 5 to 8.
7. In paragraph 9 of Doc. 42.467, it was pointed out that the question whether Note 6 to Chapter 85 allows recorded media to be classified together with other products by application of GIR 3 (b) still needs to be settled, given that this question is the subject of the reservation entered with regard to the classification of the Children's Bible Book and cassette tapes.
8. Having ascertained that the "Video kit" does not incorporate a TV tuner, it would appear that, for classification purposes, heading 85.28 could be ruled out.
9. The Secretariat would like to bring to the Committee's attention the fact that the description of the multimedia kit reproduced below has been slightly altered from the original version. The second sentence had previously read, "It converts analogue sound signals into digital signals which can be used by the PC and vice versa thus permitting the computer to be connected to microphone, radio, speakers, headphone, amplifier, etc." In re-examining the text, the Secretariat realized that this wording was not quite accurate and, for this reason, amended the text to read, "The sound card converts analogue sound signals, from a microphone, radio or cassette, into digital signals which can be used by the PC. Furthermore, the sound card converts digital signals into analogue signals that can then be sent to the amplifier, headphone or speakers."

[Video kit]

The product, which is put up for retail sale, consists of (i) a video card and (ii) a magnetic disc recorded with software.

The video card, consisting of integrated circuits and other electric components, is intended to be incorporated in a personal computer (PC) to enable the computer to produce image and sound. It converts analogue image and sound signals received from a VCR, LD, CCD/V8 camera, or camcorder into digital signals which can be used by the PC. Its input interface is digital for NTSC, PAL, and SECAM. The magnetic disc must be installed in the PC to permit the PC to act as a video display or a machine for videoconferences, videopublications, videopresentations, etc.

[Multimedia kit]

The product, which is put up for retail sale, consists of (i) a sound card and (ii) a magnetic disc recorded with software.

The sound card, consisting of integrated circuits and other electric components, is intended to be incorporated in a PC to enable it to produce sound. The sound card converts analogue

sound signals, from a microphone, radio or cassette, into digital signals which can be used by the PC. Furthermore, it converts digital signals into analogue signals that can then be sent to the amplifier, headphone or speakers. It also has ports for a CD-ROM drive and digital musical instruments (Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI)). The magnetic disc must be installed in the PC to permit the PC to record, compress and playback sound (voices or instruments).

III. CONCLUSION

10. The Committee is invited to rule on the classification of the "Video kit" and the "Multimedia kit", taking into account the additional information given above and the Secretariat's comments in this document as well as in Doc. 42.467, and to decide on what further action, if any, to take in respect of this matter.
-