



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

NR0463E1

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28th Session
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O. Fr.

Brussels, 10 July 2003.

POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE STRUCTURED NOMENCLATURE TO
HEADINGS 68.11 AND 68.13
(PROPOSAL BY THE SWISS ADMINISTRATION)
(Item III.B.14 on the Agenda)

I. BACKGROUND

1. On 8 July 2003, the Secretariat received the following note from the Swiss Administration, dated 25 June, concerning a possible amendment to the structured nomenclature to headings 68.11 and 68.13.

II. NOTE FROM THE SWISS ADMINISTRATION

2. "The Swiss Administration wishes to put forward, for the attention of the Harmonized System Review Sub-Committee, a problem it has encountered in respect of the structured nomenclature appended to the HS Convention in respect of headings 68.11 and 68.13.

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

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3. These headings should be amended as follows in the framework of the Third HS Review Cycle :

Delete existing subheadings 6811.10, .20, .30 and .90, and replace them with the following new numbering and corresponding subheading text :

68.11 Articles of asbestos-cement, of cellulose fibre cement or the like.

- Containing asbestos :
 - 41 - - Corrugated sheets
 - 42 - - Other sheets, panels, tiles and similar articles
 - 43 - - Tubes, pipes and tube or pipe fittings
 - 49 - - Other articles

- Not containing asbestos :
 - 81 - - Corrugated sheets
 - 82 - - Other sheets, panels, tiles and similar articles
 - 83 - - Tubes, pipes and tube or pipe fittings
 - 89 - - Other articles

Delete existing subheadings 6813.10 and .90 and replace them with the following new numbering and corresponding subheading texts :

68.13 Friction material and articles thereof (for example, sheets, rolls, strips, segments, discs, washers, pads), not mounted, for brakes, for clutches or the like, with a basis of asbestos, of other mineral substances or of cellulose, whether or not combined with textile or other materials.

- Containing asbestos :
 - 21 - - Brake linings and pads
 - 29 - - Other

- Not containing asbestos :
 - 81 - - Brake linings and pads
 - 89 - - Other

Justification for this proposal

4. In view of the health risks inherent in working and using substances containing asbestos, a prohibition on their importation, manufacture and sale is in force in **Switzerland** and in many other countries. Construction elements containing asbestos are having to be removed and destroyed at great cost. In a number of countries, there are outstanding claims against firms which are alleged to have endangered the environment and human beings through the inappropriate handling of materials containing asbestos.
5. This situation has caused the industry to develop and manufacture more and more substitute products not containing asbestos (for example, articles of fibrocement containing no asbestos, friction material made from mineral substances other than asbestos, etc.). The demand for asbestos-free materials has increased sharply in recent years. For this reason,

the relevant industrial sectors have expressed a desire for separate statistics on these products.

6. Despite the health risk concerns referred to above, many countries still have a preference for materials containing asbestos, because of their low cost and heat and fire resistance properties.
7. For the above reasons, we consider that separating articles which contain asbestos from those which do not is warranted in headings 68.11 and 68.13. This request is based on both commercial and environmental considerations."

III. CONCLUSION

8. The Sub-Committee is invited to examine Switzerland's proposal for the amendment of the structured nomenclature to headings 68.11 and 68.13, as reproduced in paragraphs 2 to 7 above.
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