



HARMONIZED SYSTEM  
COMMITTEE

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26<sup>th</sup> Session  
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NC0306E1

O. Fr.

H11-3

Brussels, 22 September 2000.

CLASSIFICATION OF « ROAMABOUTS »

(Item VIII.2 on Agenda)

Reference documents :

42.448 (HSC/22)  
NC0160E1, Annex G/17 (HSC/24 - Report)

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 24<sup>th</sup> Session in October 1999, the Harmonized System Committee examined possible amendments of the Explanatory Note to heading 84.71 (Doc. 42.448). Following these discussions, the Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare separate documents for the classification of 12 categories of products, including «roamabouts» (see Annex G/17 to Doc. NC0160E1).
2. The Secretariat has attempted to obtain information about these products through the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). On 11 July 2000, thanks to the ICC, one such system («Bluetooth») was demonstrated at WCO Headquarters. Details of the demonstration will be published in an information document to be distributed to delegates during the meeting.
3. In the absence of input from administrations, the following comments represent the Secretariat's position on the classification of «roamabouts».

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## II. SECRETARIAT COMMENTS

### **Preliminary Remarks**

4. First of all, it should be noted that the term "roamabouts" comes from information supplied by EUROBIT. In the initial proposal, this term was specifically applied to systems that allow subsidiary computer devices to be connected to the main computer (cf. Doc. 42.448 - HSC/22).

### **Scope**

5. According to the technical documentation consulted by the Secretariat, it appears that for signal transmission the systems in question generally employ infrared rays, radio waves, microwaves or a satellite.

#### Infrared systems

6. The infrared systems use infrared light rays to transmit the information. They are based on the same technology as remote controls for television sets. The devices send infrared signals to a receiver mounted in the middle of the ceiling. This receiver then sends the signal back to other apparatus. This apparatus must be so positioned as to be able to send and receive signals easily.

#### Radio systems

7. Radio waves are often used to enable different pieces of equipment to communicate without having to be connected by wire. For example, they can enable pieces of equipment located in two different buildings to communicate with each other. In this case it is only necessary to equip each building with a receiver and a transmitter to permit radio signals to be exchanged. Radio systems use radio frequencies for transmitting information.

#### Microwave systems

8. Microwave transmission systems make it possible to transfer information very easily between two pieces of equipment whose transmitter and receiver face each other. The signals are picked up by parabolic antennas.

#### Satellite systems

9. The above general considerations concerning the characteristics of signal transmission and reception by means of electromagnetic waves also apply, on a larger scale, to apparatus in this category.

### Characteristics of the "Bluetooth" system

10. "Bluetooth" is a short-range wireless communication protocol (speed : 1 Mb/s).
11. The necessary devices can take the form of a chip, a module, a plug-in card or even a stand-alone interface.
12. They are intended to equip mobile phones, laptop computers, headsets, and database access points.
13. Other applications are also envisaged, for example, in the following fields : commerce (remote electronic payments), medical equipment, transport (car equipment), home automation (domestic appliances), etc.
14. By incorporating suitable "Bluetooth" devices it is possible to adapt cabled machines to enable them to connect with a wireless network. Obviously, this requires an interface, that is to say the machines in question must themselves be run by an automatic data processing unit.

### **Comments**

15. In view of the ability of the « Bluetooth » system to take the various possible forms described above, the Secretariat considers that four classification methods could be envisaged for « roamabouts » :
  - (a) individual components (sensors, signal generators, for example),
  - (b) elements designed to be built into apparatus (chip, plug-in card, for example),
  - (c) systems for connecting different automatic data processing machines (networks) or an automatic data processing machine with peripherals,
  - (d) systems for connecting different apparatus with different functions.
16. Leaving aside the situation in which the components of a "roamabout" are presented individually, in which case they should be classified as elements falling in various specific headings of Chapter 85, the Secretariat understands that the devices in question are intended to replace the physical links (cables) that connect different pieces of equipment with each other.
17. With reference to the proposal to mention the devices in question in the Explanatory Note to heading 84.71, the Secretariat would point out that control and adaptor units, such as those to effect interconnection of the central processing unit to other digital data processing machines, are already cited in the Explanatory Note to heading 84.71, page 1406, Part I.D(2), 4th indent.
18. Heading 84.71 is a residual heading for automatic data processing machines in so far as the scope of the heading is determined by Note 5 to Chapter 84, in particular by Note 5 (B), subject to Note 5 (E). This latter Note excludes from heading 84.71 all machines performing a specific function other than data processing. The first question to arise is

therefore whether these devices can be considered to have a specific function other than data processing.

19. Finally, as another interpretation might suggest that the devices at issue are accessories giving the apparatus in which they are incorporated additional functionalities, the Secretariat would draw the Committee's attention to the fact that a study concerning the demarcation line between units of heading 84.71 and accessories of heading 84.73 has been placed on the Agenda for the present session as Item VIII.1 (see Doc. NC0305E1).
20. Given that, in the light of the information so far available, it is difficult to tell in exactly what form the various devices are being marketed, the Secretariat considers that it would be premature to mention "roamabouts" as an example of products falling in heading 84.71 in the corresponding Explanatory Note.
21. In the light of the above, the Secretariat concludes that it would first be necessary to examine this question on the basis of specific examples of apparatus that administrations may wish to submit to the Committee.

### III. CONCLUSION

22. The Committee is invited to decide what further action should be taken with respect to this study, taking into account the Secretariat's comments, in the context of :
  - (a) the question of the classification of apparatus to which this description might apply, and
  - (b) the proposal to mention "roamabouts" in the Explanatory Note to heading 84.71.

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