ISO/IEC JTC1/SC 2/WG 2 **N2329**

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО СТАНДАРТИЗАЦИИ

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ЗЛЕКТРОТЕХНИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

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Title	**Multilingual issues concerning recycling symbols and symbols in general**
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Symbols should not contain human-language-specific information when not absolutely necessary

Canada strongly recommends that symbols due to be encoded as characters in the Universal Character Set (UCS) do not bear natural-language-specific wording unless absolutely necessary and when they only reflect a local usage which we know for sure no equivalent exists elsewhere.

Otherwise it might happen that these symbols have to be replicated many times due to national or even regional usage while the usage of the UCS is world-wide.

Document SC2/WG2 N2310 proposes to change the glyphs of U2673—U2679 as presented in PDAM1 to ISO/IEC 10646-1:2000 (SC2/WG2 N 2308, see figure 3) to show them with linguistic-specific characteristics. This is not only unwise, but it creates an immediate problem (possibly many legal problems) in Canada where the same glyphs exist with French abbreviation captions.

Note: Canadian federal government has two official languages, English and French, like New Brunswick, one of its provinces. Québec has one official language (with some

minority languages in practice, English having some legal privileges), and it is French ; Nunavut is a Canadian territory with three official languages [Inuktitut, English and French]; the other 2 territories and other 8 provinces use English as their common practice languages, officially or not [minority languages are more or less recognized in general practice in the latter cases]).

The differences presented hereafter graphically are based on French language usage and are the object of regulations or practices in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and Québec (states of the Francophonie, where the linguistic issue is alwa ys sensitive and where language is the object of legal requirements [as in many other countries: México, Lithuania, to give only two examples]).

In French-speaking countries, recycling symbols correspond to the case presented in figure 2.

We have seen regulations and practices concerning those symbols in the following URLs:
Canada : http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSGF/cp01074f.html (for French)
http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/cp01074e.html (for English)
The previous URL even presents a case of bilingual caption…

Québec (French) : http://ecoroute.uqcn.qc.ca/educ/etiquettes.htm
This one references ISO14000 symbols / ISO 14004 - trash management symbols etc.; following ISO 9000 quality model
There are also CSA standards documented on the topic.

Belgium (Fre nch) :
http://mrw.wallonie.be/dgrne/education/eau/maison/label/vaisselle.htm
This one quotes the EU directives and gives the wordings to be used in French along with the standardized symbols.

Example in Switzerland of German used with recycling symbols:
http: http://www.ferrorecycling.ch/fr/swiss_recycling.htm

France: http://www.ac-orleans-tours.fr/physique/phyel/phy3/pagmat/mater.htm#métal

Conclusion

Every time a symbol has to be encoded, the usage of human-language-specific should be avoided by all means. If necessary, the use of generic combining characters should be more advisable if technically feasible, the simplest solution still being to encode human-language-neutral symbols as characters. This principle follows worldwide requirements of cultural and linguistic adaptability in information technology and international trade in general.

This principle should be generally adopted as a a recommended practice by SC2/WG2 for the UCS.

By all means we advise SC2/WG2 not to accept the proposal made in SC2/WG2 N2310 without removing the language-specific captions.

Figure 1. The unwise (not linguistically-neutral) change proposed in SC2/WG2 N2310

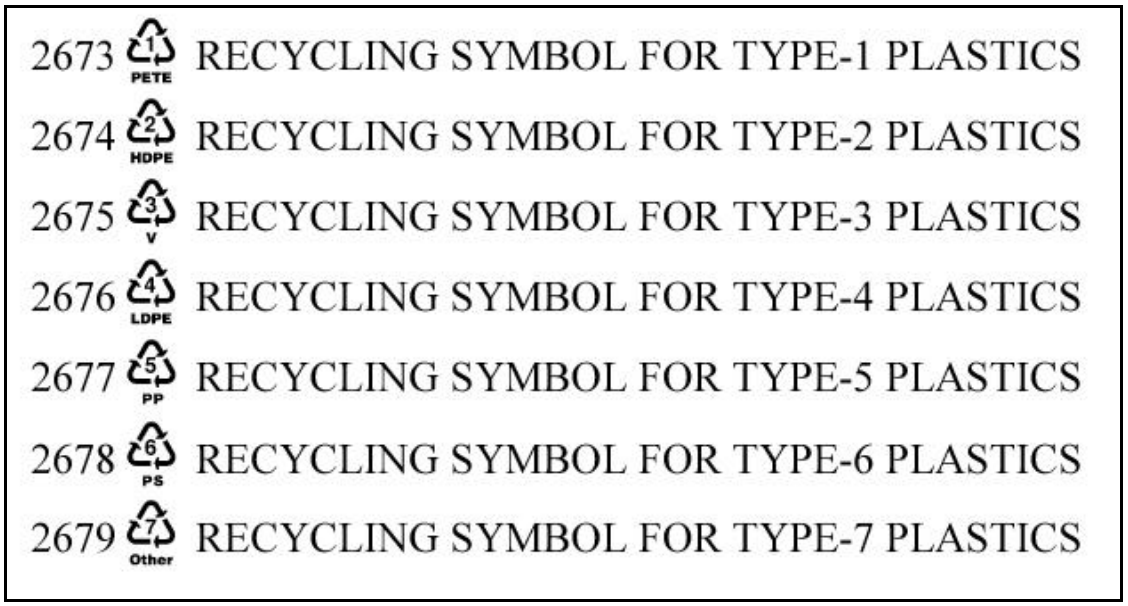

Figure 2. Example showing the use of these symbols with French abbreviations
(source: strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSGF/cp01074f.html)

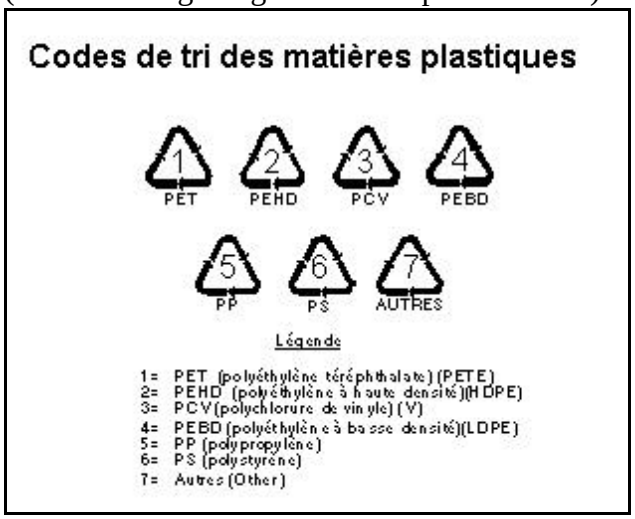

Figure 3. Glyphs used in the PDAM 1 to ISO/IEC 10646-1 (reasonably linguistically neutral)