



United States Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20401

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC PRINTER

August 20, 1997

Mr. Markus G. Kuhn
Apartment 1
120 Wiggins Street
West Lafayette, IN 47906-5851

Dear Mr. Kuhn:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the Government Printing Office (GPO) use of standard ISO metric paper sizes.

GPO is a provider of printing and binding services to all branches of the Federal Government pursuant to certain provisions of statute. Nevertheless, GPO lacks authority to mandate use of metric sizes in government printing. Rather, GPO supplies metric sized paper and products to its customers upon request.

Towards this end, GPO is well versed in the use of metric sizes, has a Metric Executive and participates with the Department of Commerce and other agencies in transitioning the Federal Government to a metric standard. In fact, subsequent to the passage of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, 15 U.S.C.A. § 205b (1997), GPO established an internal training program specifically geared to instruct GPO Customer Services personnel about agency requests for metric sized products. Since that time, GPO has supplied customer agencies with both copier paper and publications in metric sizes. For example, one of GPO's earliest metric sized products was the United States Passport which it continues to produce for the U.S. Department of State.

Agencies are regularly informed of the availability of A-4 and other metric paper sizes through courses offered by the Institute for Federal Printing and Publishing, GPO's in-house training center for customer agency personnel. Moreover, in 1993 when, after more than 40 years service, GPO replaced the

presses used to produce the Congressional Record and Federal Register, it, with the concurrence and support of the Joint Committee on Printing, United States Congress, specified that the new presses be configured to accommodate metric sizes at such time as those products are desired by their publishers.

Approximately 75-80 percent of products requisitioned through GPO are procured from the private sector in a competitive process. Therefore, GPO has participated with the Printing Industries of America in surveying suppliers in an attempt to identify those capable of producing metric sized products. Suppliers typically produce for private sector customers as well as the government and there has been some expression of concern that the specification of metric sized products could result in a diminution of competition since many suppliers do not have the necessary equipment to produce such products nor the private sector demand for metric sized products to warrant capital investment in such equipment at this time.

I hope this information satisfactorily responds to your inquiry, and again, thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,


MICHAEL F. DiMARIO
Public Printer