



Towards better participation in Standardisation

ETUC standardisation newsletter - February 2018

Dear colleagues and friends,

The ETUC is pleased to send you its newsletter on standardisation that will keep you regularly updated on the ETUC's activities in the field of standardisation. It will deliver information on European and international standardisation direct to your desktop. If you wish additional information and/or documents related to the news mentioned below, feel free to contact us at standards@etuc.org.

The European Commission publishes its Report on the implementation of the EU standardisation policy



Background: In June 2016, the European Commission (EC) published the [Communication on the "European Standards for the 21st Century"](#). In this communication, the EC lays down its **new vision** for the European Standardisation system.

The [new report](#), published on 16 January 2018, aims to explain how the individual actions have so far contributed to the new vision for the European Standardisation system.

The policy elements of the new vision include a better integration of standardisation activities in research projects.

But it also aims to use standards as a tool to increase quality, safety, security and sustainability for goods and services. To improve the quality of specific service providers, several standards are under elaboration in these fields.

The provision of services often comes along with a workers/labour component.

Here, trade unions have a clear role to play: elements of training, competence, working conditions, etc. are often addressed in service standards.

The report also sets out that standardisation plays a vital part in supporting economic growth and job creation through their role in boosting productivity, competitiveness and encouraging prosperity.

The EC also addresses the use of international standards as a basis for regulations affecting key products and services, to improve the international competitiveness of EU businesses.

To achieve these policy objectives, the EC works closely with the different stakeholders and counts on their high-level commitment to standardisation. Therefore, it supports financially and encourages societal stakeholders (e.g. ETUC) to actively participate in the standard-setting activities, aiming for an inclusive standard-setting process. Actions are taken to allow societal stakeholders to participate in important Commission meetings such as the Committee on Standards, Joint Initiative on standardisation, Multi Stakeholder Platform on ICT, etc.

The ETUC STAND project aims to enhance the inclusiveness and awareness of standard-setting activities at both national and European level (while not losing sight of international standardisation).

Mid-term review of the ETUC STANDardisation project with the ETUFs

The ETUC STAND started in 2015. It is covered by a Framework Partnership Agreement of 4+2 years, between the ETUC and the European Commission. Being in the third year of activity, a mid-term review of the project took place in January. The ETUC invited its ten European Trade Union Federation (ETUF) members for this process. During the mid-term review process, the participants took a wider view on labelling, certification and standard-setting activities by other organisations than those which are formally recognised by public authorities. The participants also confirmed that standards should not encroach on national labour laws or collective bargaining. It is therefore important that trade unions remain vigilant and actively participate, especially during the standards drafting process, in influencing content.

It was concluded that the ETUC must continue to make sure that social dialogue oversees standards and that the ETUC STAND project must execute its work programme as confirmed by the Permanent Committee on Standardisation.

The European Economic and Social Committee publishes its opinion on the European Union 2018 Work Programme for Standardisation

On 17 January 2018, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted its [opinion on the European Union 2018 Work Programme for Standardisation](#). The Rapporteur – Juan Mendoza Castro – consulted a number of different stakeholders in preparing this report.



The report was unanimously adopted (195 positive votes, 1 vote against), which proves that the report was well balanced and to the point.

Of interest in the EESC recommendation is:

- *“simplify the procedures for Annex III organisations (i.e. Societal stakeholders and SMEs) to access the standards drafting process and as such 'lower the barrier' for effective participation”.*
- *“the EESC calls upon the European Commission to maintain the budgetary resources and staffing to meet the objectives of Regulation 1025/2012” on Standardisation*
- *“likes to point out that the Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy has important consequences for the organisation of the European labour market as a growing number of 'crowd workers' are working for platforms in often very short-lived and 'volatile' employment relationships”.*
- *“World-wide 'de facto' standards are driven by non-EU industry giants”.*
- *In the EU-Level study on the economic and social impacts, “to consider the indirect effects of the standard-setting activities, with a focus on issues such as dislocation of jobs, inclusiveness of society, education, etc.”*
- *The internationalisation of standard setting means that societal stakeholders – and others - can no longer participate as they do not have sufficient resources to actively influence the international standard-setting scene.*

- *That international standards can be directly taken over at national level, bypassing the European level, with a growing risk of de-harmonisation of the internal market (and thus the European social acquis).*

ETUC STAND Project joints twitter



As of this year, the ETUC STAND project is also on twitter. Besides sharing news from the trade union and standardisation community, we also inform about our own activities. Follow us at [@ETUC_standards!](https://twitter.com/ETUC_standards)

ETUC meets KAN

The ETUC STAND team has met with the [KAN](#), German Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardisation. The KAN represents the interests of several institutions - the social partners, the state, the German Social Accident Insurance and DIN - in the standardisation process on occupational health and safety. The KAN is putting forward recommendations on standardisation work at DIN and its standards committees if individual national, European or international standardisation projects are concerned. The ETUC and the KAN share similar positions and look forward to a fruitful collaboration.

Sharing economy and standards



One of the many aspects the ETUC is working on is the sharing economy. [Online platform workers](#) often report extreme levels of control, precarious working conditions and no health and safety protection. The ETUC therefore calls for European law to regulate working conditions for online platforms. In parallel, ISO has prepared a Workshop Agreement, [IWA 27:2017 “Guiding principles and framework for the sharing economy”](#), which was published in 2017. The guidelines cover principles such as accountability, inclusion, health and safety as well as privacy. IWA 27 is now being implemented and “tested” on the market.

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