

ETUC standardisation newsletter - August 2019

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 draft "European Quality Framework for Internships" is open for commenting



Quality internships play a key role for young people's integration into the labour market. Work experience allows work-related but also transversal and general skills to be gained which are positively assessed by employers at the moment of hiring. Many initiatives and legislations have sprung up at European and national level to regulate internships (traineeships, according to the European jargon) yet the evidence gathered by researchers and trade unionists proves that they fall short of providing a quality framework and of guaranteeing the professional development of interns. Nevertheless, the proliferation of various quality frameworks leads to a lack of credibility and hinders the mobility of young professionals, as different standards may apply in different countries, making it more difficult to identify "quality" internships.

Over the last 10 months, The Slovenian trade union "[Mladi Plus](#)" ("Youth Plus") as well as trade unions from Malta, Belgium, Italy and the ETUC have actively contributed to the shaping of the content of the pre-standard (which formally will have the status of a CEN/Workshop Agreement). One of the main objectives of this project is to bring best practices also to European level and to ensure decent working conditions for young interns. Some of the cases which have inspired the European Quality Framework for Internships are Slovenia, where, thanks to the union struggles, unpaid internships have been banned, and Belgium, where as an outcome of social dialogue, interns are offered a job contract of the same duration as the internship scheme.

The elaboration of this pre-standard is financially supported by the European Commission ([SPRINT project](#)). Mrs Tea Jarc, president of Mladi Plus and member of the ETUC Youth Committee, is one of the driving forces and states: *"Young people deserve quality internships and decent work. Internships present an important step in transition from education to employment and should therefore provide a quality and meaningful experience for young people in gaining practical working experience. Within the project we have conducted a research on existing national legislation and realised there is a lack of national legislation, collective agreements or quality frameworks in this area. Alongside many initiatives raised at the European level, this pre-standard will represent an important framework for employers on how to ensure quality internships for young people and will hopefully raise their motivation to improve their practices. This pre-standard can be used as a soft approach for improving internships, raising awareness among employers about its importance and will hopefully be as well an important step for providing legislative frameworks in the future."*

You can consult the draft document [here](#) and contribute with comments from 2nd September to 31st October.

EUROSHNET 2019 - Changing World of Work, Changing Standardisation Processes



The ETUC was one of the speakers at the 2019 EUROSHNET conference, an event organized by a network of organizations dealing with security at work and diverse aspects of OHS. The event took place in Dresden from 12-14 June and dealt with the standardisation, testing and certification in the field of occupational safety and health under the headline *"Be smart, stay safe together - innovative products and workplaces"*.

Various speakers presented their views on how digitalization is changing the world of work, and how the standardisation processes contribute and react to this development. "Fast" was the word heard most often. An interesting poster section provided practical examples about how testing and certifications change as products are increasingly sold as packages with services and maintenance (i.e. servitisation of products). In the panel discussion, Rolf Jaeger successfully explained the ETUC concerns and approach to standardisation during the discussion at the final round table.

Slovenian label on "Social Responsible Employer" is on the way



The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije – ZSSS) is a partner in a new three-year national project which is going to develop a new Slovenian certification system (and label) to identify socially responsible companies.

The certificate ISO 26000 “Social Responsibility” will be the starting point to lay down the certification criteria. Also the successful label [“Family Friendly Enterprise”](#) stands as a model for the new “socially responsible employer” label. While the system is intended for the Slovenian market, the reflections from it could also have a wider market use. Lučka Böhm – OSH executive secretary at ZSSS – stated: *“By being a partner in this project, the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia enters into a social dialogue in a different way, but in doing so, we maintain our core mission - to care for better working conditions and to monitor the implementation of measures. As representatives of the employees, which are the most important component of every company and together with other partners in the project, we will prepare criteria for four sectoral certificates (in the areas of reconciliation of work and private life, safety and health at work, intergenerational cooperation and on topics such as ethical management and non-discrimination in the workplace). In addition, in the certification phase, as representatives of the Audit Board, we will be overseeing the implementation of the set measures and objectives. ZSSS will put special emphasis on verifying agreed actions across companies. We believe that the actions and measures foreseen and the project activities, which also include an awareness raising campaign on the importance of social responsibility, will contribute to better working conditions.”*

We should note that also the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in

its Action programme 2019-2023 promotes mandatory accountability frameworks including CSR responsible business conduct.

The ETUC has launched a reflection on a need for an (ETUC) social label, with underlying criteria (set by trade unions) as well as on better workers' participation in the audit process of ISO 45001 on 'Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. In parallel, the ETUC will avoid the transfer of standard-setting activities to standardisation bodies.

Some additional information: The project Socially Responsible Employer is led by the [Ekvilib Institute](#) (creator of the label "Family Friendly Enterprise") in partnership with the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia, the Association of Employers of Slovenia and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. The project, which is co-financed by the European Social Fund, started in May 2019. The goal of the project is to review and improve the socially responsible management of companies and organizations, with a strong emphasis on the responsibility towards employees. In the first phase of the project we are currently preparing a set of measures for all four areas. The first companies will be included in the procedure of adopting the certificate "Socially Responsible Employer" in 2020.

Human Resource Management - ISO will start drafting an international standard on "compensation systems"



In early May, The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), launched a proposal to elaborate an international standard on “Compensation Systems”. This proposal originates from Iran and proposes to “*establish a set of principles and programmes to use as guidelines in context with organisational goals as well as practises, methods and tools to support effective total reward systems*”.

The outcome of the vote is quite clear: 17 countries approve the new standardisation proposal on compensation systems and only five are against. The five countries who disagreed with the proposal, are the ones where our national trade unions are actively involved in the national decision-making process. So, these efforts pay off and so we must ensure that we can do the same in other countries too.

The ETUC is of the opinion that human resources legislation at national and EU levels as well as collective agreements are the main legally binding instruments to respect and promote. They prevail over private standards. Therefore, there is a need to be cautious about any initiative dealing with standardisation work on “compensation systems”. Should you wish to intervene or have any question, please contact us at standards@etuc.org.

Safe the date: EESC organises an event on the inclusiveness of the European standardisation system



European Economic and Social Committee

In its latest Opinion on Harmonised Standards (INT/879), the EESC proposes to set up an ad hoc forum on the inclusiveness of standardization. This forum would be responsible for organising an annual public hearing to assess the progress made in this respect and act as well as a platform to promote the exchange of good practices. The EESC has now tentatively put forward

Tuesday 5th November as a date for such a first Ad Hoc Meeting, taking place in Brussels. More details will follow shortly.

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