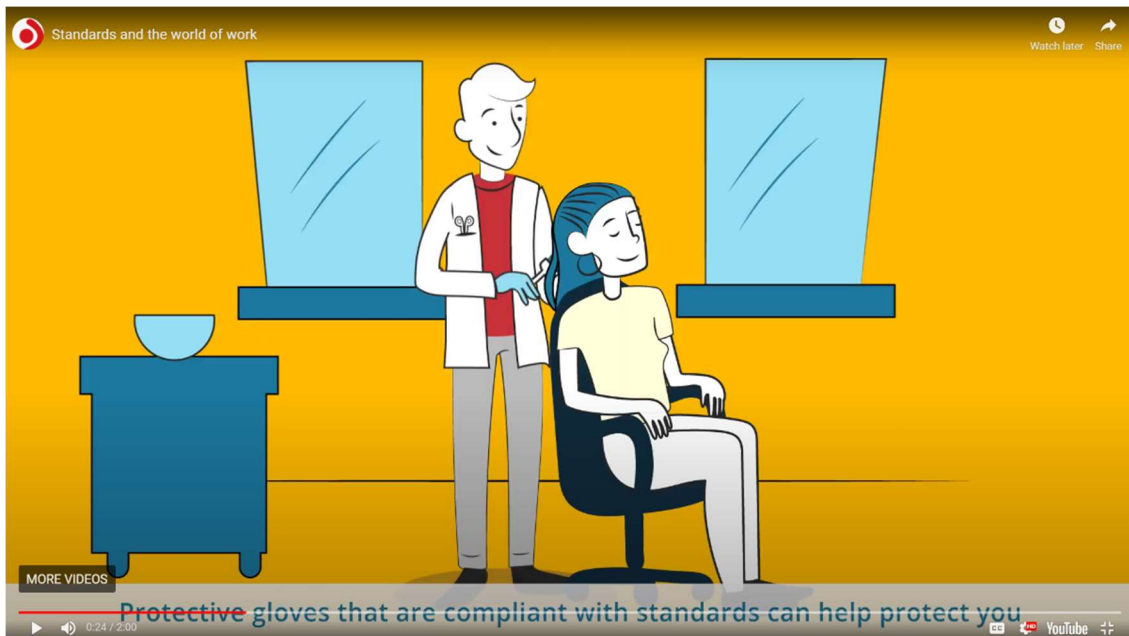


ETUC standardisation newsletter - June 2021

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.

New ETUC video on standardisation



ETUC Confederal Secretary, Ms. Isabelle Schömann, was invited to speak on 11 May at the high-level event ‘The impact of standardisation in the European economic recovery’ organised by the Portuguese National Standardisation Body in the framework of the Portuguese presidency of the European Union. ETUC took the opportunity to launch on that day its new video, meant to explain simply what standards are, why they can be important for workers, and the role of the ETUC in facilitating and strengthening the participation of trade unions in standardisation.

To know more about why standards may be important for workers, see our NEW video: <https://www.etuc.org/en/issue/standardisation>

**The ETUC speaks at the High-level event
'Standardisation in the European Economic
Recovery'**



On 11 May, the Portuguese presidency of the EU Council organised a high-level event around standardisation. The objective was to look at ***The Impact of Standardization in the European Economic Recovery.*** The meeting was opened by the Portuguese minister of State, the Economy and Digital Transition (Pedro Siza Vieira) and the European Commissioner for the Internal Market (Thierry Breton). ETUC participated in the second panel discussion, where Isabelle Schömann, ETUC confederal Secretary in charge of standardisation addressed the following key issues around standardisation:

- Trade Unions need to remain vigilant about standards, potentially addressing issues that are better addressed in legislation and collective agreements. Therefore, trade unions should be active in promoting standardisation, when relevant, with a focus on the activities where trade unions can actually exert influence. This is only possible by being well equipped when engaging in standardisation in order to shape it in a way that is compatible with legislation and collective agreements.
- Standardisation should deliver for people and the planet, not just for industry and competitiveness. This is where the EU makes the difference, where trade unions and civil society have a role to play.
- The “primacy of international standards” in the EU should be seriously questioned as it does not offer any guarantee that ISO standards comply with EU values and rights, nor does it provide for any role for trade unions and societal stakeholders to take part to standardisation, as is the case at the European level with the regulation 1025/2012, which has made the European standardisation system much more inclusive. As long as these issues are not thoroughly addressed in ISO, the EU should reconsider applying such a concept of “primacy of international standards”.
- ETUC believes that the control of legality in the “harmonised” standardisation areas offers advantages that should continue to be taken into account. Although the current HAS Consultant system can certainly

be optimised to meet the demands of all stakeholders in the European standardisation system, ETUC supports the review and approval by a democratically legitimised authority of the standards developed, to underpin legislation.

A recording of this event is available on YouTube, at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3yHwR2c>. Isabelle Schömann's contribution is visible as of 2h28minutes.

European Commission publishes its updated 2020 industrial strategy



On 5 May 2021, the European Commission released its long awaited industrial strategy, which is an update from the Strategy previously communicated in March 2020. Following the emerging challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was indeed decided to update the 2020 industrial strategy taking into account recent developments.

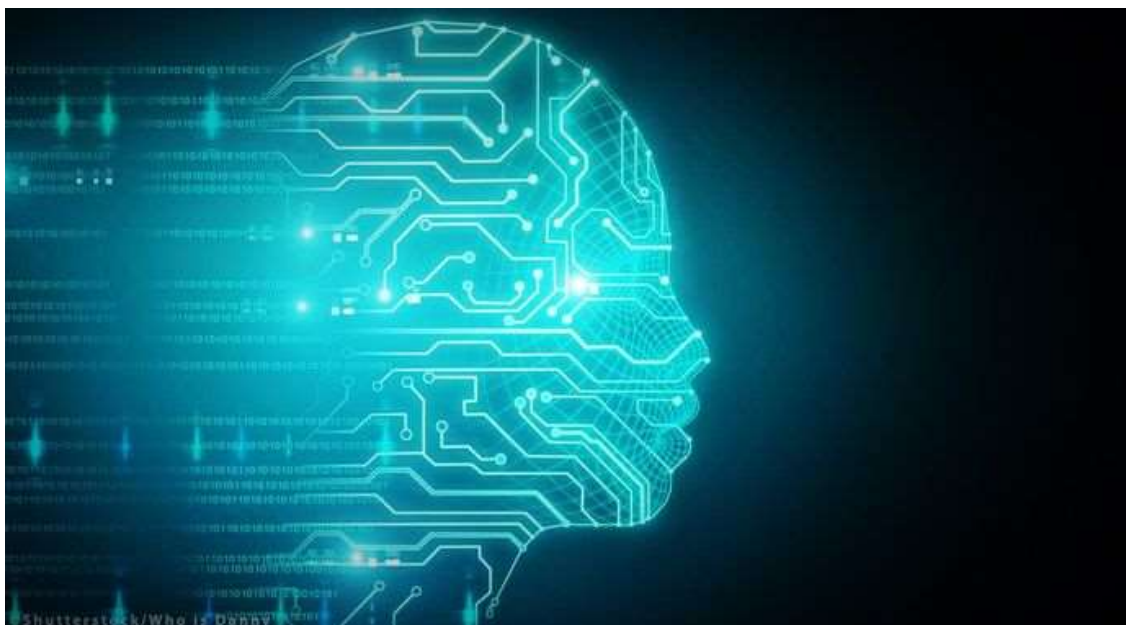
While the topic is not much visible to the larger public, standardisation activities

are an integral part of the industrial policy. The updated industrial policy now brings standards more to the front stage. In particular, it is proposed:

- following the success for products in the single market, in the field of services, *“to explore the merits of a legislative proposal for regulating key business services supported by harmonised standards”*.
- *To retain EU influence in the international standard setting*
- *To present a strategy on standardisation, expected by the end of 2021.*

ETUC has already prepared its initial position on the EU Standardisation Strategy, which it submitted in April to the European Commission.

ETUC's work on AI standardisation



At international level...

ETUC joined the ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1 Sub Committee 42 on Artificial Intelligence in November 2020 and has since essentially contributed to Working Group 3 'Trustworthiness' in the development of a technical report 'Overview of ethical and societal concerns'. At the last WG 3 meeting, held on 17

May, ETUC took the lead in providing content for the subchapters of the technical report on Labor practices and Sustainable environment. The draft technical report is expected to be ready for ballot at the end of the summer.

... **and** **in** **Europe**

Artificial Intelligence has raised much attention over the past years in Europe especially in the wider context of the digital and green transitions the EU is currently operating, and in particular considering the recent EC proposal for a regulation on AI. As the proposed regulation will follow the New Approach and the New Legislative Framework, standardisation will be used to underpin the essential legal requirements.

With a view to starting the development of European standards on AI, a CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee was set up at the beginning of the year and ETUC nominated its expert to contribute to the discussions and work. ETUC participated in the very well attended CEN-CENELEC JTC 21 'Artificial Intelligence' kick off meeting held online on 1 June. The scope of the JTC was discussed at the meeting, which also saw the presentations of possible new work for European standards.

Finally, in order for Standard Development Organisations (SDOs) to better understand the concept and implications of the term sovereignty in the digital space, and to anticipate future associated standardisation requirements, AFNOR ICN standardisation strategic committee, VDE and IEEE Standards Associations have launched a CEN-CENELEC Workshop to contribute to build a shared vision of what "(regional) digital sovereignty" is and how it should be handled standardisation-wise. The first meeting of the workshop will take place online on 8 July, and ETUC will participate.

The future of work and AI series of conferences

ETUC was invited to speak at a breakout session on 'Inclusiveness' in the framework of the Conference ['The future of work and Artificial Intelligence'](#) which was held on 3 June. This was the first of a series of conferences organised by Geneva Macro Labs in partnership with the ILO and a number of other platforms.

ETUC focused its contribution on the role of standardisation in addressing AI, especially considering the recently published EC proposal for a regulation, and the participation of trade unions in shaping these standards. Finally, ETUC took the opportunity to briefly reiterate its [demands](#) on how to address AI, noting that the proposed EU regulation on AI fails to address the **workplace dimension**. Moreover, as regards to the low risk/high risk classification, the AI regulation as proposed only considers a limited number of AI applications. Any AI system implemented in the workplace and the data selected to contribute to the system should be considered high risk and be subject to the scrutiny of trade unions through the existing legal framework.

Wellbeing in local communities and organisations



Wellbeing is a concern for all people – Improving the environment of local communities and organisations means both improving its physical environment and fostering its culture. ISO, is now proposing to develop guidelines on how local

communities and organisations can contribute to improving wellbeing. These guidelines aim to provide benchmarks for local communities and organisations around the world, regardless of their size, to help them identify methods and procedures to improve their wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of their members. The purpose of this standard is the long-term health management of daily life from young to elderly people, with motivating activities, managing productivity and the quality and quantity of communication. For workers, the standard will propose supporting measures to make it easier for them to actively participate, and to strengthen a culture of responsibility, commitment, respect and dignity in all places where all people are valued irrespective of age. The proposal is out for vote until the beginning of July. The first meeting is planned tentatively at the end of August. The work is intended to complement ISO 45001:2018 '*Occupational health and safety management systems*' and ISO 45003:2021 '*Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Guidelines*'.

Managing psychological risks at work



ISO has published a new standard that provides guidelines to manage psychosocial risks in the workplace. The Occupational Health & Safety standard, ISO 45003:2021, addresses psychological health and safety at work and provides guidance via which organisations can prevent work-related injury and ill health of their workers. The guidelines also seek to promote well-being at work, and are applicable to organisations of all sizes and in all sectors, for the development, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of healthy and safe workplaces. ETUC participated in the development of this standard. The standard [ISO 45003](#) is free to read as part of ISO's COVID-19 response. On 7 July 2021 [ISO runs three “follow-the-sun” webinars](#) across time zones to mark the launch of the standard and to explain its relationship with ISO 45001. The ETUC will speak in the panel 'Using [ISO 45003](#) to build a better post-pandemic world of work' at 10h00 – 11h30 (CEST).

More safety for attic ladders



The ETUC strives to increase the safety level of loft ladders and avoid further accidents. These ladders are usually permanently installed in the floor ceiling of a building for several decades. They are used by those who live in the building but also by those who need to work on the roof or in the attic. During the entire period of use, these ladders are not maintained or checked. In the summer months, temperatures increase over 50 degrees in attics, especially those which are not insulated. This adds even more strain on the materials. At this moment, the standard for attic ladders – titled prEN 14975 '*Loft ladders – requirements*' is being revised. ETUC would like to use this opportunity to put forward amendments for ladders that are safer. After an appeal of the standard, more than 80 people affected in Germany who had accidents or had bad experiences with attic ladders came forward. The most common accident is the breaking of steps or entire ladder parts, followed by oncoming ladder parts, slipping, broken anchorages and bruises. In particular, the frequent breakage of steps indicates that a maximum load of 150 kg is no longer up-to-date.

In order to increase the safety level of loft ladders and avoid accidents and injuries in the future, ETUC is currently collecting evidence material. We would be grateful for further accident reports, statistics, experience reports and especially pictures of damaged ladders. If you have any, please contact the ETUC Secretariat at standards@etuc.org .

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