

ETUC standardisation newsletter - October- November 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.

Slovenian event to raise awareness on standardisation takes place on 30 November



The ETUC is joining forces with the “Slovenian Association of Free Trade Unions” (ZSSS) and the Safety Engineers association of Ljubljana (DVIJ), in co-organising a national awareness event around standardisation, which will take place on 30 November. The main objective of the event is to inform the Slovenian trade unions about standards setting activities in Slovenia, in Europe, and beyond, and to raise awareness about the importance for trade unions to engage in standardisation.

The event will provide the opportunity for Slovenian trade unions to meet with the Slovenian standardisation body SIST, as well as with the European Commission to discuss the impact of standards on workers, their link with legislation and to share best practices for increased trade union participation. The guest speakers will bring forward practical cases where standards have contributed to achieve a safer working environment. The event is meant to be informative and interactive with Q&A sessions allowing the exchange with the wider audience. While this is a Slovenian event, simultaneous translation to and from English is foreseen.

For further information or possible participation, contact gdjeongh@etuc.org or lucka.bohm@sindikat-zsss.si

ETUC participates in the ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 42 "Artificial intelligence" meeting

The ETUC is participating in the ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 42 plenary and working groups meetings that are taking place virtually from 18 to 29 October. The ETUC was granted in September 2020 the so called 'A liaison status' to SC 42 and has since mainly participated in JWG 1 'Governance implications of AI' and WG 3 'Trustworthiness'. In these respective working groups, the ETUC has managed to successfully contribute to **ISO/IEC 38507 – AI – Governance implications of the use of artificial intelligence by organizations** and to the technical report **ISO/IEC 24368 – AI – Overview of ethical and societal concerns**. Both documents are being finalised.

Representatives from the European Commission's DG CNECT and JRC were guest speakers in the informative session of the opening plenary meeting and gave presentations on the proposed EU AI regulation and on the mapping study of the AI standardisation landscape. As the majority of standards addressing AI are for the moment being developed at international level, the EC is closely following the work taking place in SC 42

Preventing and managing infectious diseases



The International Standardisation Organisation, ISO, has officially started working on an international standard, [ISO/WD 45006 “Occupational health and safety management — preventing and managing infectious diseases – General guidelines for organizations”](#), which gives guidelines for organisations of all sizes and sectors, on how to prevent the exposure to, and manage the risks associated with, infectious diseases. The document covers diseases which present a risk of severe illness or death and that can impact the health, safety and wellbeing of workers and other relevant interested parties.

The proposal to develop this document was approved in September. While most European countries voted in favour, Italy, Norway and Finland opposed this new work.

Infectious diseases are increasingly recognised as major challenges to health, safety and well-being. This future standard is a response to the risks that infectious diseases present to workers and other relevant interested parties in all settings, including those working at home.

The ETUC follows this work. We proposed and strongly advocated to include ‘prevention’ in the standard, especially considering that the European framework on occupational health and safety focuses on prevention rather than on management. We welcome this has been accepted in the current draft.

A proposal for an international standard on gender equality



Last May, the French standardisation body AFNOR proposed to elaborate a new international standard on “gender equality”. The aim is to prepare guidelines for the promotion and implementation of equal opportunities in all types of organisations. The future standard – which is not intended for certification - will deal both with the identification of existing good practices and the definition of actions, strategies and policies on this topic.

AFNOR has clarified that its proposal differs from the new standard [ISO 30415 “Human Resource Management - Diversity and Inclusion”](#), as the latter is related only to human resource management. The link is rather with another international standard, ISO 26000 “Guidance on social responsibility”, which is the only ISO standard with an explicit reference to gender equality.

The Italian Trade Union CGIL voted against the proposal for two reasons: first, it is not clear what the added value of a new international standard on gender equality is. This very relevant subject must not be covered by a standard but by laws, international conventions and national or company collective agreements. Second, the approach on gender equality proposed in the standard affects, when it concerns the workplace, matters within the competences of social partners. Due to the lack of unanimity, the Italian standardisation body UNI decided to abstain.

Guest contribution by Ornella Cilona of CGIL, Italian General Confederation of Labour

ETUC language course focusses on standards



English is the lingua franca spoken in the European and international standard-setting contexts. To help trade union experts involved in standardisation improve their level of English, the ETUC has organised a virtual language course in November 2021. The course is hosted by the [Unilang International School of Languages](#), part of the General Workers' Union of Malta. The course is tailored to discuss topics of standardisation, with intensive training focussing on English used during (standardisation) meetings.

Reviewing ergonomics principles in the design of work systems?

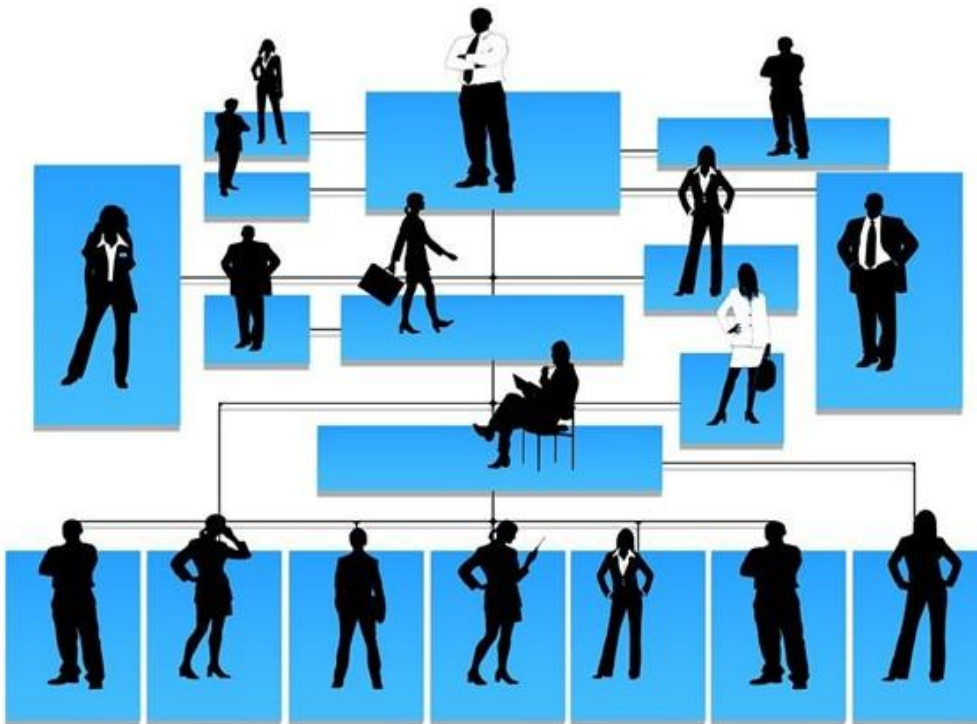


The standard [ISO 6385:2016 'Ergonomics principles in the design of work systems'](#) is currently under systematic review. The international standard was prepared by ISO/TC 159 'Ergonomics' and has been in use since 2016. In order to see if the standard is still fit for purpose or whether it needs updating, ISO has launched a review. ISO/TC 159 members will decide, until beginning of December 2021, to either withdraw, revise/amend or confirm the standard.

ISO 6385 establishes the fundamental principles of ergonomics as basic guidelines for the design of work systems and defines relevant basic terms. It describes an integrated approach to the design of work systems, where ergonomists will cooperate with others involved in the design, with attention to the human, the social and the technical requirements in a balanced manner during the design process. The intention of ISO 63856 is to assist in the improvement, (re)design or change of work systems, which is a large variety of working situations, including permanent and flexible workplaces. A couple of other standards refer to it such as [EN ISO 10075-2 'Ergonomic principles related to mental workload — Part 2: Design principles'](#).

The ETUC is member of [ISO/TC 159 'Ergonomics'](#) and recommends confirming the standard. The standard is well known and a basic document for the field of ergonomics. Should a revision however take place, „new forms of work“/new aspects like Artificial intelligence (AI) on the tech side or flexible work on the organizational side needs to be added.

Certifying Human Resource Management



ISO has put forward a proposal to develop a certifiable management system standard in the area of human resource management. This was proposed in the Strategic Business Plan of ISO/TC 260 'Human Resource Management', which is an introduction to the strategy and operation of ISO/TC 260.

[ISO/TC 260](#) has been set up in 2011 to prepare standards that assist organisations in the preparation and execution of HR practices such as recruitment, retention, development, engagement, and deployment of their workforce. The aim of the HRM standards developed by ISO/TC260 is to contribute to sustainable performance and value creation for stakeholders.

The ETUC and Business Europe, in a joint letter to the ISO, raised their concern about and opposition to ISO developing standards on social issues that enter in conflict with national legislations, national industrial relations systems and trade union prerogatives to negotiate collective agreements. This initiative intends to create certifiable standards that would undermine social dialogue and collective bargaining in dealing with working conditions, which in turn play a key role in the design of companies' human resources policy and practices. Similar concerns have been expressed to ISO jointly by the DGB and BDA as well as by the ITUC and IEO.

Following its plenary meeting held at the end of September, ISO/TC 260 has prepared a draft resolution in order not to include such certifiable standards in

its Business Plan for now. However, it foresees an annual review.

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The ETUC STAND project is financially supported by the European Commission and EFTA



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