ETUC standardisation newsletter - July 2022

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.

ETUC proposes amendments to the Regulation 1025/2012 on standardisation

Technical standards are a driving engine behind globalisation. Technical standard setting is one dimension of the EU's strategy to shape globalisation. On 2 February 2022, the European commission published the "EU Standardisation

Strategy". The aim is to enable global leadership of EU (technical) standards, promoting values as well as a resilient, green and digital single market. The EU Standardisation strategy is accompanied by a proposal to amend the regulation on standardisation (EU 1025/2012). The ETUC Special Committee "Standardisation" commented and elaborated the ETUC assessment of the EU Standardisation strategy and submitted a proposal for amending regulation (EU) 1025/2012. On 13 May 2022, the Council adopted the proposed Commission amendment to regulation 1025/2012.

The European Parliament's IMCO rapporteur Svenja Hahn prepared a draft report on the proposed EC amendment to the regulation 1025/2012, to which the ETUC submitted additional amendments. The ETUC further reached out to MEPs during the discussions on the draft report to further advocate its assessment. On 12 July, the IMCO adopted its position for the updated Regulation governing the European standardisation system, which is in line with the ETUC demands to strengthen the role of National standardisation bodies from the EU and EEA, and to ensure a balanced representation of interests, including trade unions', within the National standardisation bodies.

ETUC meets ISO and IEC Secretary Generals in Geneva

On 29 March, the ETUC and the representatives of the European consumers (ANEC), environmental NGOs (ECOS) and the SMEs (SBS), active in standardisation, met with the ISO Secretary-General Sergio Mujica and IEC Secretary-General Philippe Metzger. The main objective of the meeting, to which also several other representatives of the ISO and IEC Central Secretariats' management team participated, was to discuss future cooperation concerning the objectives of advancing inclusivity and diversity within the ISO and IEC system and how this fit with the ISO and IEC 2030 strategies. The European Standardisation Strategy was also briefly discussed during the meeting.
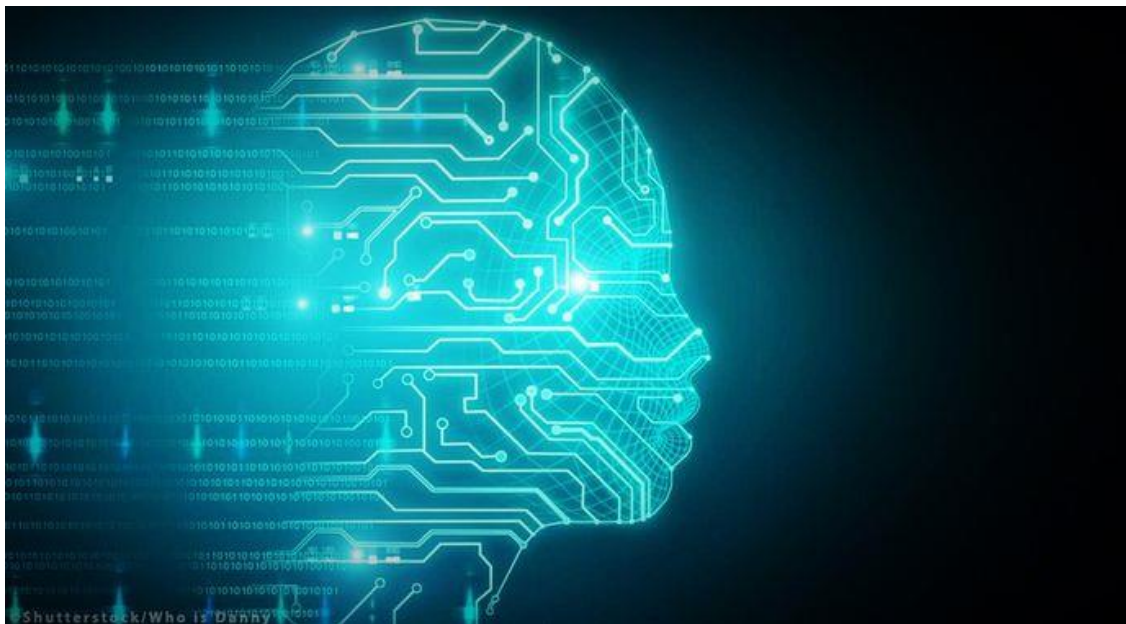
ETSI creates a new Working Group to better address inclusiveness

The EU Standardisation Strategy and its related proposed amendment to regulation 1025/1012, place particular emphasis on strengthening the inclusiveness of the standards development process in the European Standardisation Organisations (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI) and their national standardisation bodies. While not explicitly addressed, the focus is particularly on ETSI, which has a global membership structure. To better address the inclusiveness as an element of the ETSI Strategy, the ETSI Board has created a new working group (Board INCLU) with the aim of improving ETSI's inclusiveness towards all relevant stakeholders. The new INCLU working group is open to Board members, the Annex III organisations, the European Commission and EFTA secretariat among others. Several meetings are planned until the end of 2022, of which the first two have already taken place in April, May and June. The ETUC is participating in the newly created group, to assess and

contribute to the efforts deployed towards the modernisation of the ETSI governance in order to allow for an increased inclusiveness.

The European Commission launches a draft standardisation request in support of safe and trustworthy Artificial Intelligence
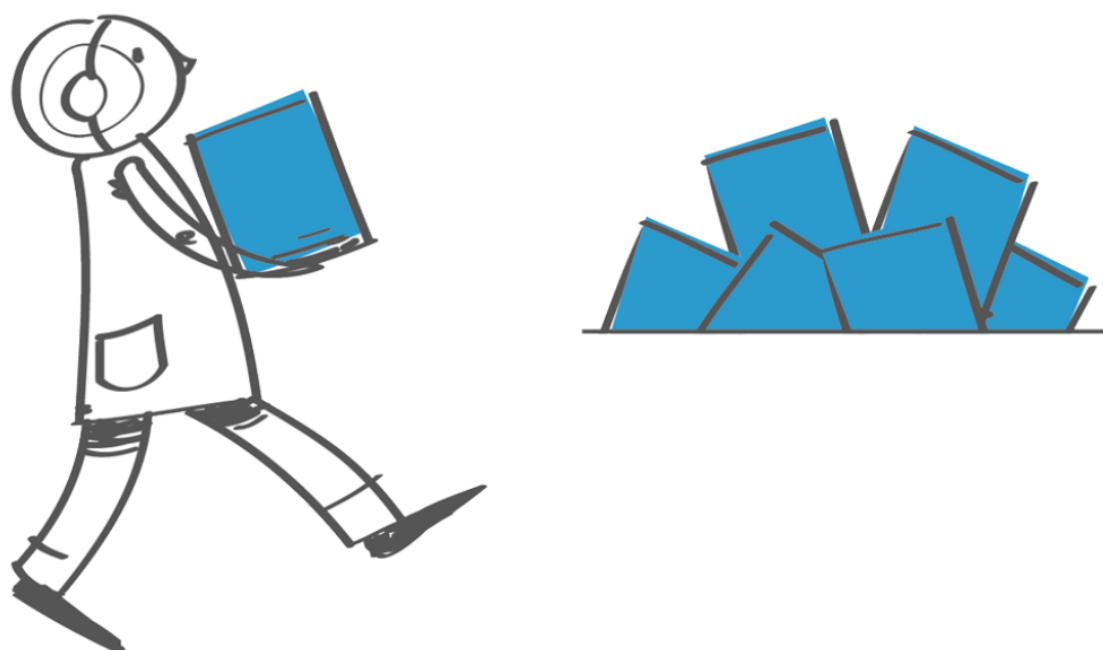

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While the legislative process on the proposal for a *Regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence* (AI Act) is still ongoing, the European Commission is seeking to speed up the development of standards on AI, with a view to having harmonised standards produced and available by the time the regulation is applicable at the end of 2024/beginning of 2025. To this aim, the Commission issued on 20 May a draft **standardisation request in support of safe and trustworthy artificial intelligence**. It is important to note that the standards to be produced following this first request will not be for citation in the Official Journal of the EU and thus will not provide a presumption of conformity with the legal requirements. Once the AI Act is adopted, the Commission will issue a second request, or an amendment to the first, that will mandate standards for citation. In any case, the standards developed now will serve as basis for the standards to be produced in the second phase.

Further to the draft standardisation request, the Commission launched a pre-consultation phase, with deadline 30 June, to collect feedback from a wide range

of stakeholders. The ETUC prepared and submitted its contribution. In parallel, CEN-CENELEC has set up a so called 'Standardisation Request Ad Hoc Group (SRAHG) on AI', tasked to steer the preparatory work associated with the request, and in particular in relation to its content and the timeframe. The ETUC, as a member of the ad hoc group, prepared comments on the draft request, which it submitted to the SRAHG ahead of its first meeting on 10 June. As a significant number of comments were received from the different National standardisation bodies and National committees, three additional meetings of the SRAHG were scheduled in June to resolve the comments and prepare a consolidated feedback that was submitted to the Commission for consideration and possible revision of the request.

ETUC contributes to international standards on Artificial Intelligence

In November 2020, the ETUC joined the ISO/IEC JTC 1 SC 42 on Artificial Intelligence, and has since contributed to a number of standard-setting activities. In Working Group 3 'Trustworthiness', the ETUC participated in the development of the technical report (TR) ISO/IEC 24368 '*Overview of ethical and societal concerns*', which deals with ethics and societal concerns relative to AI systems and applications. The document provides information in relation to principles,

processes and methods in this area. The ETUC took the lead in providing content for the subchapters of the technical report on **labour practices** and sustainable environment, which were included in the document. The Technical Report was approved in March and is now pending publication. The ETUC further welcomes the adoption of ISO/IEC 38507 '*Governance implications of the use of AI by organizations*', which was also approved in March. The standard is meant to provide guidance for the governing body of an organisation that is using, or considering the use, of AI. The ETUC was successful in including significant improvements to the document that takes into account workers' rights and interests, namely references to the fundamental rights of workers, stakeholders' participation, and to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Linking the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with European Standards

[17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)](#) outline objectives and strategies for peace and prosperity across the globe. The SDGs range from different areas such as ending poverty, improving health and education, reduce inequality and more. To implement the global goals, SDGs should be translated into a strong commitment by all stakeholders. The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Standards could contribute to the SDGs when they foster the dissemination of best practices and contribute to the three pillars of economic, environmental, and societal sustainability. In the framework of the twin digital and green transition for Europe, the European Standardisation Organisations – CEN and CENELEC -

therefore committed themselves to the global implementation of the SDGs. Over the past months, these organisations prepared a [mapping of how standards help achieve the SDGs](). This overview provides a tool to raise awareness among the European standardisation community on SDGs. It will be continually updated in the upcoming years. CEN and CENELEC also changed its 'New Work Item (NWI) form' to include the SDGs. The form is being used when a new standard is proposed. The proposer hence needs to indicate whether and to which SDGs the new standard will contribute. An [overview of how international standards contribute to SDGs]() can be found on the website of the international standardisation organisations, ISO and IEC.

Internal Investigations

Bribery, fraudulent activities, harassment or discrimination - these are all forms of misconduct that can happen within an organisation. What needs to follow is an investigation to find out what happened, the potential risks but also solutions. For this, the international standardisation, ISO, is preparing a technical specification that provides guidelines for organisations conducting an internal investigation. The standard gives recommendations on the steps an organisation needs to do to find out what triggered the incident and how to take appropriate measures. The work is carried out in ISO/TC 309 WG 7 'Governance of organisations – Internal investigations'. This is the same technical committee,

which prepare the international standard on whistleblowing management, to which the ETUC contributed. The new specification in development, ISO/WD 37008 'Internal Investigations of Organizations-Guidance', was proposed by China, which is also leading the work. Several European countries participate in the development and are mainly represented by companies providing expertise/consultancy to organisations on governance/investigations such as Baker & Mc Kenzie, Global BPA, Specialist Association for Corporate Investigators, etc. The ETUC recently joined the work through Eurocadres and is currently the only union represented. We are primarily concerned that ISO/WD 37008 does not make reference to the participation and consultation of worker representatives such as union representatives. Internal investigations already exist in organisations and its procedure need to be aligned with European directives, national regulations or collective agreements. In particular, we are concerned that the standard is in conflict with the European Directive on Whistleblowing (EU 2019/1937). The ETUC had contributed to preparation of this directive, calling for protection of whistleblowers.

First international initative dedicated to promoting citizens and eployees' rights to access emergency numbers is available

InfoCons, part of Consumers International, has launched the European Global Mobility Project (www.consumers-protection.org) on transparent access to emergency/useful numbers for citizens in each country. This is the first international initiative for unifying the access to information in the context of global   digitization.
In the context of global citizens mobility, it is imperative to have correct, direct, rapid, transparent and easy access to information on the institutions that are put at the service of citizens and workers, in order to support them in case of emergency.
In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and Civil Rights, as well as International and European Regulations on transparent access to information and complaints, the International Consumer Information Program provides citizens and workers around the world with access to accurate, direct, prompt and   transparent   information.
The International Information Program provides all citizens and workers with unrestricted access to contact state institutions in order to receive information or solve their problems. The program is intended for the citizens and workers of their own country, but also for the citizens and workers that are in transit either for   working,   visiting   or   other   activities.
By scanning the QrCode, citizens and workers have the possibility to access the emergency numbers in the country directly from their mobile phone, thus ensuring an easy and fast information in an emergency situation.
In accordance with the United Nations Transparency and Information Objectives, institutions/organizations/companies can list the Unique Information Plate by accessing the official website www.consumers-protection.org and put it in a visible place, in order to promote transparent access to information. In this way, citizens can have a direct and transparent access on the emergency numbers of your country.