

ETUC standardisation newsletter - August 2023

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 German Hans Böckler foundation study reveals the impact of HRM standards on the social dialogue and trade union policy.

NORMUNG DES HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERMENTS

Die Entwicklung von Standards zur globalen Vereinheitlichung des
Personalmanagements und ihre gewerkschaftspolitischen Implikationen

Rolf Jaeger und Jan-Paul Giertz



We are mostly familiar with norms and standards in the field of technology. This is where the origin of standardization lies - that is, with screws, plug constructions and paper formats. But standardisation has evolved: services and processes are now also being standardized, primarily in order to optimize economic cooperation. Standards exist alongside legal regulations, so employees and their representatives are also affected in many ways by their implementation in companies. Using the example of standardization in the human resources sector (HR), the authors – Rolf Jaeger and Jan-Paul Giertz - worked out this "concern" and provided initial recommendations for action for co-determination actors. The study, in German, is available [here](#) . An English version will be available by October.

Austrian trade union addresses standardisation in its action programme



The 20th Congress of ÖGB - the Austrian Trade Union and ETUC affiliate -- took place in June 2023. The ÖGB congress was opened by several speakers, including the ETUC General Secretary (Esther Lynch), the Mayor of Vienna (Michael Ludwig), the Austrian Chancellor (Karl Nehammer) and the Austrian president (Alexander Van der Bellen). Following the three day Congress, with over 600 participants, the [ÖGB Action programme 2023-2028](#) adopted. For the first time, the ÖGB action programme also addresses standardisation. On page 85, the ÖGB action programme observes that the standard setting activities have moved away from industrial products into social, societal and socio-political fields and that the ÖGB declines a further expansion of the standardisation activities in these new fields, which are better regulated by national or European legislation or collective agreements, especially in the field of OSH, working conditions and workload. To underpin a greater awareness on standardisation activities in the Austrian trade union movement, ÖGB, AK (Wien), the Austrian Standards Institute (ASI), and the ETUC co-organise an Austrian awareness event on standardisation. The event, in German, takes place on Friday 24 November 2023, at ASI. More information will follow in the next newsletter edition.

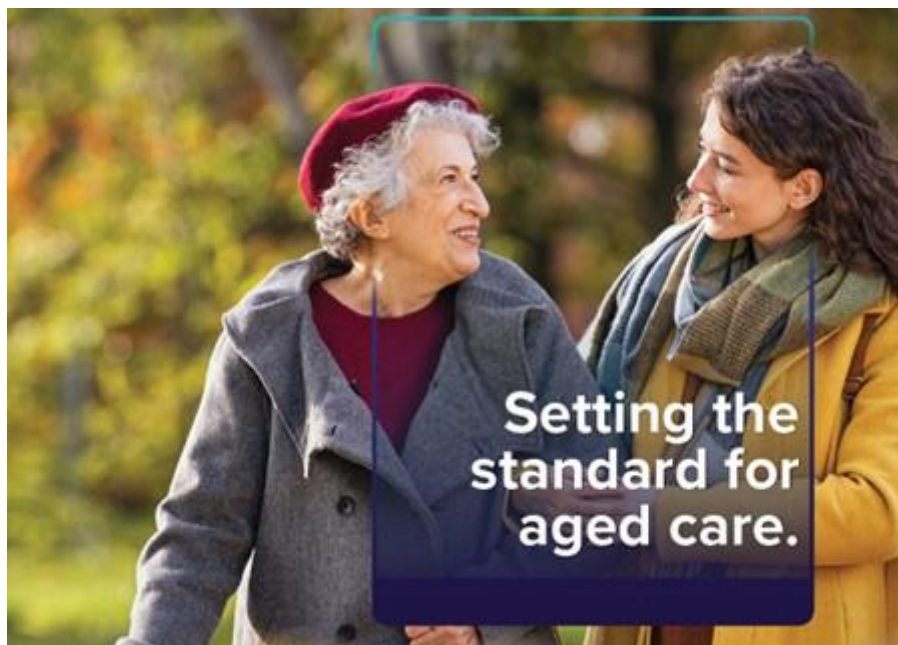
New French pre-standard for the agencies delivering OSH prevention services at work



On request of the French ministry of Work, AFNOR – the French Standardisation body – has elaborated a pre-standard (or “SPEC”) which lays down the certification requirements for agencies providing inter-company occupational health and prevention services (SPSTI). The certification aims at harmonising and if needed improving the services rendered to companies and workers. The Ministry’s approval to give this SPEC 2217 a legal status is on the way. The SPEC 2217 describes the requirements and good practices relating to the provision of the full range of core services defined by the French decree no. 2022-653 of 25 April 2022, whether carried out by the SPSTI itself or under its responsibility, with a view to certification based on successive levels of performance. Such services are the prevention of professional risks, the monitoring of workers’ health and the prevention of professional disinsertion. The SPEC 2217 was elaborated in an AFNOR workgroup, composed out of the five principal stakeholders, including the social partners representing the main three employers’ organisations, the main five trade unions (CFDT, CFE CGC, CFTC, CGT and FO) and the French ministries. This balanced participation – contrary to the “join all” approach in other standardisation fields - is one of the

key conditions for this successful elaboration. This is also reflected in the [ETUC governance proposals to for the European standardisation system](#) and the findings in the [ETUC study on the access conditions to the national standardisation committees](#). Our ETUC Expert, Philippe Saint-Aubin, was the CFDT representative in the workgroup.

New international standardisation project on "*care for older persons at home and in residential care facilities*"



BSI, the British Standards institute, is proposing to elaborate a new international standard on "*Care for older persons at home and in residential care facilities*" (with as future number ISO 25557). This future standard would specify requirements and recommendations for the provision of health and social care services for older persons provided by healthcare and social care personnel, irrespective of whether the service is provided in the persons own home or in a care home. The services concerned would also include those offered to older people who do not reside permanently at a care home, such as temporary accommodations. Care services are provided in a variety of settings. While this

future international standard would focus on those delivered in care facilities including preventive, responsive, and palliative care, many of the requirements could also be applied to the provision of care services in any setting. This future international standard would seek inspiration in the already existing Canadian, British and international standards (CAN/HSO 21001:2022, CSA Z8004). The European CEN/Technical Specification 17500 “*Quality of care and support for older persons*” – to which the ETUC actively contributed during its drafting - is likely to be a basis for this new international standard.

New European standard on medical exam couches



The European Organisation for Standardisation (CEN) started the preparation of a European standard on medical exam couches, which are used in medical practice for examination and treatment.

In the past, accidents resulting in death were reported where the person was entrapped in moving parts. In some of the fatal accidents, an employee was underneath the couch and accidentally operated the height adjustment control on the floor. The couch descended and trapped the person. Other accidents

involving employees, patients and children across Europe, were reported to result in crushing, fractures or even death. Since a product standard for therapy couches did not yet exist, the German Standardisation Body (DIN) prepared a German document which is now proposed to become a European standard.

The proposed standard, called 'Medical electrical equipment - Part 2-52-2' will therefore address the basic safety and essential performance of medical couches and other couches with similar functionality. It also provides improved specifications for test procedures and to reduce the risk for patients, medical staff, therapists and other users.

The work is prepared in the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) in its technical committee TC 62 'Health'. The [German Commission on Occupational Health & Safety \(KAN\)](#), which participates in this work, provides more information. The ETUC does not follow this work.

The ETUC is contributing to preliminary standardisation work on climate change



The ETUC is a member of CEN/TC 467 'Climate change', which was set up in early 2021 to address standardisation in the field of both mitigation and adaptation to climate change, including related social and economic aspects. It aims to develop frameworks, requirements and guidance to support EU policies on climate change, in the perspective of a full implementation of the EU Green Deal.

The ETUC prepared and submitted to WG 1 'Mitigation' contributions on a preliminary Working Draft addressing **Industrial decarbonisation - requirements and guidelines for Sectoral Transition Plans (STP)**. The majority of the comments received were discussed at the online meeting on 20 April, where the ETUC suggested to include in the draft standard a normative reference to the ILO's (2015) guideline for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies for all, as well as a reference to the Paris Agreement regarding Just Transition. Also, and very importantly, the ETUC managed to add a requirement foreseeing the participation of workers and their organisations in the establishment of industrial STPs, and a note whereby it should be considered, that when establishing the STPs, the participation of the workers and their organisations may be regulated in labour laws, collective agreements and/or tri-party agreements.

ANEC-BEUC release a new study on the role of standards in EU digital policy legislation

The Role of Standards in Future EU Digital Policy Legislation

A Consumer Perspective

Hans-W. Micklitz

Crucial digital policy legislation being drawn up at the EU level, such as the AI Act, will rely heavily on technical standards. Consumers' protection of their privacy, autonomy and dignity will depend on technical standardisation, and how European Standardisation Organisations will interpret and implement legal concepts related to fundamental rights. This raises serious concerns among civil society representatives, given that standardisation bodies do not have the necessary institutional, procedural, and substantive governance structure to address the related questions such as the definition of an unwanted bias in AI-system decisions.

The [legal study](#), written by Professor Hans Micklitz (EUI), provides a pathway to reform the process through which harmonised technical standards are drawn up, and the way standardisation bodies work so that they are better able to address these challenges. It is also key to draw a line between what must be done via EU legislation and what can be delegated to standardisation bodies. Finally, standardisation must better involve representatives of civil society and not be driven only by private, for-profit interests.

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