

ETUC standardisation newsletter - December 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 ETUC speaks at the European Commission's High Level Forum on "Standardisation"



The second meeting of the European Commission's High Level Forum on "Standardisation" (HLFS) was held in Brussels on Thursday 30 November. The meeting, chaired by Commissioner Thierry Breton, gathered the various stakeholders involved in standards setting, such as the private standardisation bodies themselves, industry federations, National authorities, and societal stakeholders.

The HLFS gave the ETUC the unique opportunity, to give its support to standardisation activities, as they contribute in making the work environment safer. However, Oliver Roethig, Director of UNIEuropa speaking on behalf of the ETUC, conveyed ETUC's main concerns, namely the small but growing collection of international standards addressing social and ethical topics that often do not fit our European social model. In that sense, more rigidity should be required when transposing international standards. Moreover, the ETUC raised that the various existing and practical barriers trade unions face when joining the private standardisation bodies must be removed to ensure that European standardisation is truly inclusive and that standards deliver for all.

First meeting of the renewed ETUC Committee "Standardisation" in Vienna



The ETUC Committee “Standardisation” was held on 23 November in Vienna, with a renewed membership and chairmanship. The ÖGB – ETUC Austrian’s affiliate – hosted the meeting.

The ETUC Deputy General Secretary – Claes-Michael Ståhl – provided an update on various topics, such as the Social Dialogue negotiations, the forthcoming European elections and challenges for the social Europe. In the framework of standardisation, Claes-Michael Ståhl stated that the ETUC secretariat will engage more resources and staffing on the very topic, as standardisation activities are increasingly important. The ETUC standardisation team also provided updates on the various political activities related to standardisation, including the European Commission’s High-Level Forum on standardisation and their different workstreams, the evaluation of the regulation 1025/2012 on standardisation, and the technical work carried out on specific standards.

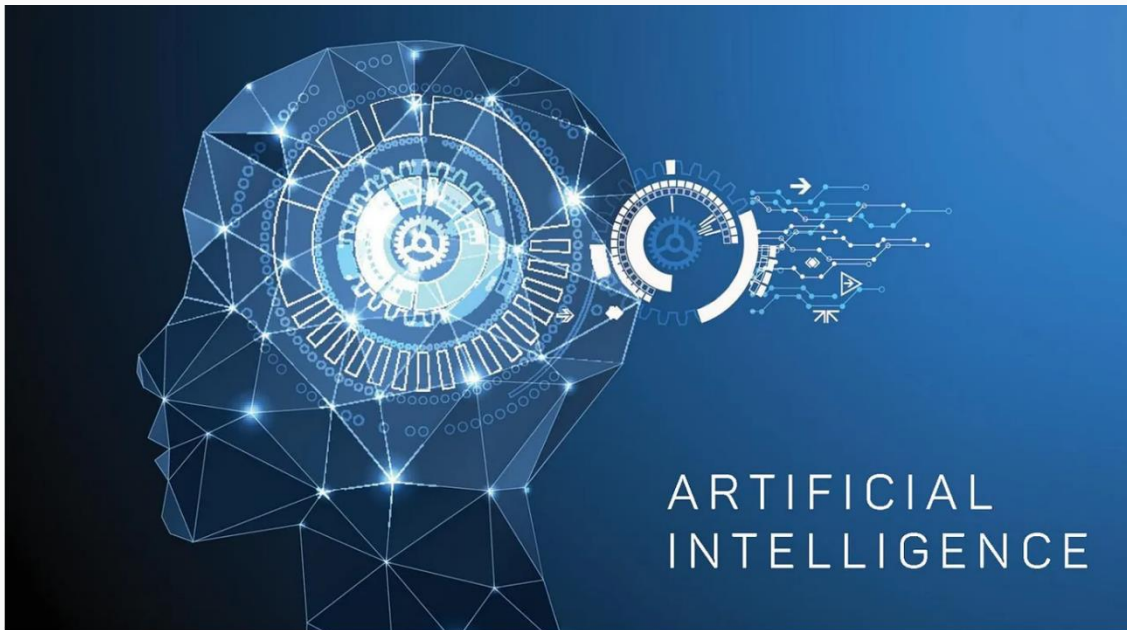
In coordination with the ETUC committee meeting “Standardisation”, the Task Forces on “Human Resource Management” and “Artificial Intelligence standardisation” had respective meetings on 22 November. Both Task Forces specifically focus on the standards in these field and provide detailed guidance and builds the technical ETUC positions to be taken in the standardisation bodies at European and International level.

ÖGB-ETUC-ASI workshop on standardisation



The ETUC regularly organises national workshops and events in cooperation with the relevant national partners to increase awareness within the trade union movement about the world of standards, their influence at the workplace, and their development process. On 24 November, the ETUC co-organised a national workshop in Austria, in collaboration with ÖGB (ETUC's Austrian Affiliate), AKWien and ASI (Austria's standardisation body). Various speakers contributed to the workshop by providing background information on how standardisation processes work and how to (try to) influence the content of standards. ASI informed that, in its effort to ensure an inclusive standardisation process, Trade Unions can join ASI mirror committees, at no cost. During the morning session, practical experience cases on the elaboration of the standards for the air quality in civil airplanes, the mental workload and on use of standards in collective agreements were provided. The workshop was concluded with a high-level debate, complemented with contributions from the audience, on various topics such as the interactions between legislation and standardisation, interaction between international and European/national standardisation work and legal aspect regarding the citation of standards in regulations.

Standards for Artificial Intelligence in the making



The ETUC participated in the 8th plenary meeting of the CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee (JTC) 21 on AI, which was held online on 6 and 7 November. Participants were given namely updates from the Commission on the state of play of the ongoing trilogue negotiations on the AI Act, as well as on the standardisation request. Regarding the latter, the Commission insisted on the need to keep to the expected timing and on the participation of societal stakeholders. The Commission is very much involved in the technical groups and ensured its continued engagement in the different activities namely with possibly new documents and studies to contribute to the standardisation work.

The different working groups tasked with the preparation of the standards presented the development in their respective work. Of particular relevance for the ETUC is the standard on Trustworthiness Framework, which has been delayed since January 2023. The proposal for this European standard was again discussed at this plenary, where it was decided it should be submitted for ballot after its revision to take into consideration all the comments raised at the meeting. There is some resistance to speed up the pace of this work and the suggestion to shorten the ballot to 4 weeks instead of 8 was rejected.

Finally, the ETUC as the leader of the Task Group on Inclusiveness gave a brief update on its work and presented the ETUC with its main concerns on AI and its dedicated work on standards.

European standard on Climate Change to include an Annex on the Just Transition



The ETUC is participating in the development of a European Standard on **Industrial decarbonisation – requirements and guidelines for sectoral transition plans**, which is taking place in Working Group 1 of the CEN Technical Committee 467 on Climate change (CEN/TC 467). The justification to our engagement in this work is based on the fact that the industrial sector plays an important role in the European green transition in terms both of the climate emissions it represents as well as from a workers' perspective; the challenge being to ensure that the transition towards a fossil-free industrial sector is carried out while protecting a fair transition for workers.

In that context, the ETUC had initially requested to include in the standard a normative reference to the Just Transition. As this was not accepted, the ETUC prepared a dedicated Annex A with descriptions and definitions of the Just Transition, together with the goals/objectives it sets out for a Just Transition plan.

The ETUC contribution was discussed at the CEN/TC 467 WG 1 meeting on 7 November, where the ETUC succeeded in introducing in the standard the separate Annex on the Just Transition, with clear references to documents and agreements from the ILO, the European Commission and the UNFCCC that regulate various aspects of Just Transition. The Annex also includes a bibliography with hyperlinks that will make it easier for those who will use the standard. The ETUC finally managed to have requirements included in the

standard on the necessary cooperation with the workers in all parts of the Sectoral Transition Process.

Operational meeting to discuss "Annex III" recommendations to CEN and CENELEC



In the European Standardisation Strategy, published by the European Commission in February 2022, the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs) were asked to “*make proposals by the end of 2022 to modernise their governance to fully represent the public interests and interests of SME’s, civil society and users and to facilitate access*”. In that context, the ETUC, together with ANEC (Consumers), ECOS (environmental stakeholders) and SBS (SMEs) – the so-called ‘Annex III organisations - submitted a common [proposal](#) to CEN and CENELEC, where a number of issues were raised and possible actions identified for increased inclusiveness.

On 7 November, ETUC and the other Annex III organisations, met with CEN-CENELEC in Brussels to review the proposed actions and to devise a plan with the steps forward. The meeting was very fruitful and built on the good existing cooperation.

Starting the new year with the ETUC STAND Calendar



The new ETUC Standardisation Calendar for 2024 is out! The paper table calendar has interesting facts and ideas around standards and their link with the world of work. Feel free to pick up a calendar until 15 December at the ETUC offices, 20 Boulevard du Jardin Botanique, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

We wish you
a Happy
Holiday
season and a
peaceful and
safe New
Year



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