

## ETUC Standardisation Newsletter - September 2024

Dear colleagues and friends,

The ETUC is pleased to share with you its newsletter on standardisation, bringing you regular updates on the ETUC's activities in this field. We are pleased to deliver information on European and international standardisation straight to your inbox. If you wish to receive additional information and/or documents related to the news presented below, feel free to contact us at [standards@etuc.org](mailto:standards@etuc.org).

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### Public Consultation on Regulation 1025/2012 on Standardisation

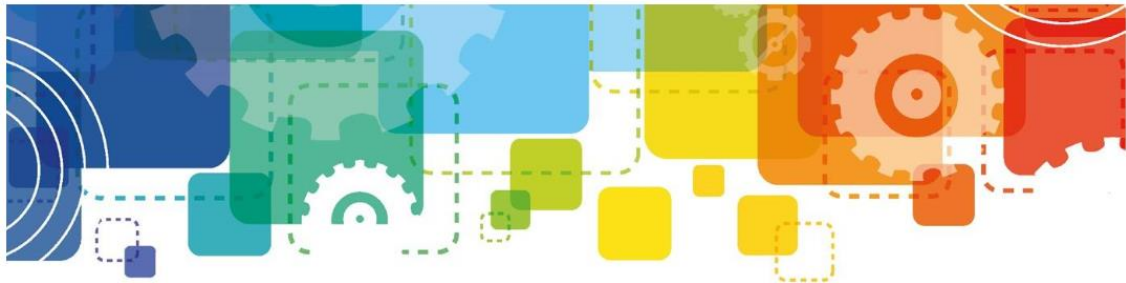


Regulation 1025/2012 on Standardisation was adopted over 12 years ago. The European Commission is currently evaluating its functioning, to determine whether the legislation is still fit for purpose as the basis for the European standardisation system. In order to conduct such an evaluation, the EC has consulted stakeholders by means of a public consultation on the Regulation itself. The [public consultation](#) closed on 25 July. Over 250 valid contributions to the questionnaire were made, including that of the ETUC (key comments can be found [here](#)). Almost half of all contributions came from business associations and companies. However, various trade unions participated in the survey, as well as public authorities and NGOs.

The importance of the EU framework around standardisation is also highlighted in the [mission letter](#) by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to Stéphane Séjourné, newly designated Commissioner, Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy.

It is expected that early next year, the European Commission will give an indication about the need for an overhaul (or not) of the Regulation on Standardisation.

## High Level Forum on Standardisation – Work Streams are Moving Ahead



The High-Level Forum on European Standardisation was launched in January 2023, after which different Working Streams (WS) started focussing on specific topics. After 18 months of hard work, different Work Streams are coming forward with their results.

WS 3 on “National Inclusiveness” housed a workshop on 5th June in Brussels. The main aim of the meeting was to present the outcome of a major survey and interviews conducted regarding national inclusiveness. The study revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the current work practices of the different national standardisation bodies. A key finding is that organisations require a high amount of resources in order to participate in such standardisation processes. Finding these resources is particularly problematic for organisations that do not generate revenues or income, as opposed to resource-rich organisations, able to offset their investments in standardisation. The findings are being finalised and will soon be published.

WS 1 on “Education on Standardisation” held a successful conference on 17-18 June 2024, in Delft. Participants – with backgrounds from academia and education, standardisation, and other areas – shared best practices in how to gear up and disseminate standardisation knowledge at universities, higher education institutes and through vocational training.

The ETUC actively contributes to a number of additional Work Streams; WS “Civil Society Inclusion at International Level”, “Artificial Intelligence”, “Fundamental Rights” and “Alignment of European and International Standards”. Also for these workstreams, findings are in the process of being finalised and conclusions will soon be published.

## Combating Stress at Work



The International Standardisation Organisation, ISO, revised standard EN ISO 10075-2 ‘Ergonomic principles related to mental workload – design principles’.

The standard gives guidance on the design of work systems and specifies design principles for tasks and equipment, but also the design of the workplace. The standard had been on the market for a while but needed to be updated. The revision of the document takes into account new social and organisational factors as well as technological developments.

The ETUC participated in this work. Thanks to our active involvement throughout the years, the ETUC has been able to include a more practice-oriented structural change, including the consideration of social interaction/interaction at work. The updated standard now also

foresees important aspects of interactive labour as part of daily work life. An example is nursing, an intense and emotionally challenging work with a high likelihood for burnout.

Robotics and intelligent autonomous systems – such as Artificial Intelligence – can relieve workers from doing dangerous, heavy or repetitive tasks. But the cooperation with automated systems also carries risks for workers. We therefore called for a transparent system design, changes to operating states and safe human-machine interaction.

The ETUC further achieved the inclusion of a clarification of roles in sometimes complex structures. While indirect forms of control like agile working require more decision-making leeway by workers, an unrealistic workload and the lack of transparency can result in workers failing to reach objectives and exhausting themselves in trying.

We were also able to clarify in the standard that guidelines are recommendations, and that the workplace designer should take applicable legal provisions into account when organising working hours.

Despite its participation in the revision of EN ISO 10075-2 to ensure its alignment with the trade union point of view, the main objective for the ETUC remains to pursue specific EU legislation on psychosocial risks at work. More than half of all workers in the EU report that work-related stress is common in their workplace. 89% of employers state that complying with legislation is the main reason why they manage occupational health and safety. Find more information on the joint trade union call for EU legislation on psychosocial risks at work at <https://endstress.eu/>.

## The Work of CEN-CENELEC JTC21 WG 1 Inclusiveness in AI Standardisation ‘In the Spotlight’

The image shows a webpage layout for CEN-CENELEC. At the top left is the CEN-CENELEC logo. To the right are navigation links: EUROPEAN STANDARDIZATION, GET INVOLVED, AREAS OF WORK, and NEWS AND EVENTS. The main content area has a dark blue background with a graphic of interlocking gears and a hand. The text on the page reads: 'IN THE SPOTLIGHT', 'CEN and CENELEC JTC 21 - dedicated task group on Inclusiveness', 'ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE', and 'CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee 21 on 'Artificial Intelligence' created a dedicated task group (TG) dedicated to inclusiveness to help facilitate the participation of all relevant stakeholders in AI standardization.' At the bottom left, there is a link: '→ READ MORE'.

The ETUC is leading a dedicated Task Group (TG) on Inclusiveness, set up within CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee 21 on Artificial intelligence, to assess the engagement of stakeholders and reflect on ways to increase their participation. The work of the TG is now featured on the CEN-CENELEC website, and will be '[In the Spotlight](#)' for the next 3 months. The new webpage provides more information on inclusiveness and outlines the specific objectives and expected actions of the Task Group.

The Task Group's activities are also seen by the European Commission as a test-case for better involvement of Civil Society in standardisation processes. Such involvement is widely promoted within the European Commission [High Level Forum](#) (HLF) on Standardisation, which JTC 21/WG1/TG 'Inclusiveness' works closely with, in a dedicated workstream on AI.

## CEN and CENELEC Push the ETUC Proposed Changes to their Internal Rules, to their Next Revision



When needed, CEN and CENELEC members – i.e. national standardisation bodies (NSBs) – update the CEN/CENELEC Internal Rules. These updates require deep knowledge of standardisation processes and rules, and are therefore de facto conducted by the NSBs only. The last step of this process is the formal adoption of the updated CEN/CENELEC Internal Rules by the CEN and CENELEC Technical Boards. Only at that occasion, are the CEN/CENELEC partners (including ETUC) consulted (but have no vote). ETUC (and ANEC)

submitted a proposal for incorporation into the CEN/CENELEC internal rules, to keep technical standardisation as “technical”, and to refrain from elaborating technical standards with social, societal and ethical content. As expected, the NSBs turned down the proposal, by referring the ETUC proposal to a future revision. The ETUC proposal can be consulted [here](#).

## New Work on Standards for Sustainable Raw Materials



In May 2024, the EU Critical Raw Materials Act was published in the Official Journal of the EU. The Act foresees a standardisation request by the EC to the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs), for the development of standards or European standardisation deliverables in support of the objectives of the Regulation.

Meanwhile, ISO has set up Project Committee (PC) 348 ‘Sustainable Raw Materials’, with a plan to specify criteria for sustainable raw materials (for mineral-, raw iron- and non-iron-metals), including the full upstream and downstream value chain. Through the resulting standard, ISO aims at providing a framework that can be audited, certified and benchmarked against environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria. Work is set to begin in October this year.

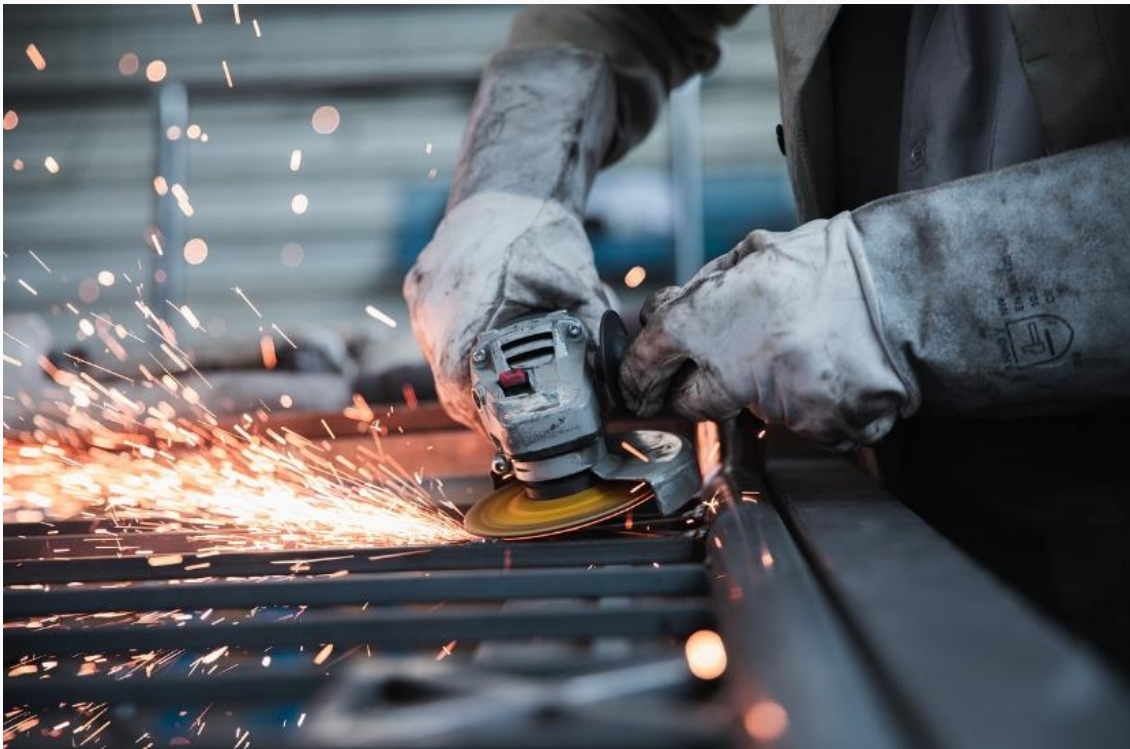
At the same time, CEN/TC 477, led by SIS, the Swedish national standardisation body, is set to work on standards covering sustainability aspects linked to the production of raw materials from mining related activities covering the whole value chain, including environmental, social, economic and governance aspects of the raw material production.

With activities being set up at both international and European level, interlinkages are expected between the work of the ESOs and ISO.

Alongside environmental and governance matters, future standards are expected to cover social aspects too. The focus of upcoming critical raw materials standards on working conditions and the expected link with binding legislation point to the need for trade unions to closely follow the work of ISO/PC 348, and that of CEN/TC 477.

The ETUC will participate in the kick-off meeting of ISO PC 348, taking place on 30 October in Berlin.

## Almost There – Request for Machinery Standards



Last Summer, Machinery Regulation (EU) 2023/1230 was adopted. It will replace the Machinery Directive (EU) 2006/42, which until 2027 will continue to lay down health and safety requirements for the design and construction of machinery in the European market.

The new regulation covers consumer and industrial machinery, ranging from heavy-duty construction machines over entire industrial production lines to robots. It will also cover new aspects such as Artificial Intelligence related provisions for safety functions, cybersecurity for safety control systems and mandatory conformity assessment for machines that have higher safety risks.

The Machinery Regulation follows the principles of the New Legislative Framework (NLF) and will be underpinned by standards. The regulation outlines essential health and safety requirements, which will serve as the foundation for the development of standards necessary for manufacturing and testing machines before they can enter and circulate in Europe. These standards, through presumption of conformity with the Machinery Regulation, will not only facilitate its implementation but also define crucial safety consideration when handling machines.

As of last Summer, the European Commission has been preparing a draft Standardisation Request (SReq) with the feedback received by the European Standardisation Organisations on the creation of new standards and the revision of existing ones. Working safely with machines is key to the ETUC and therefore we provided input into this work, focusing on the health and safety of workers.

In June, a revised draft SReq was presented to CEN and CENELEC. We welcome that our call for ergonomics of human-machine interface and psychological stress arising from human-system interaction was considered in this version.

We now await the finalisation of the EC SReq in second half of 2024.

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