

ETUC standardisation newsletter - February 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.

Webinar - 25 February 2021 - 10h00 CET

The new challenges for Health & Safety at work during pandemics

*Join the **3M/ETUC** webinar to look
at how standards can help
address the new challenges*

**3M/ETUC Standardisation
WEBINAR**

**Thursday 25 February 2021
10h00 CET**



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Although the COVID-19 crisis has certainly shown the important role standards play in our society, many challenges remain, such as the severe shortage of protective masks and medical equipment, and the need to ensure a smooth supply of critically needed safe material. The situation clearly raises important questions: What are the new challenges for Health and Safety during pandemics? How can standards help address these challenges, and what can trade unions expect?

These questions and more will be discussed at the upcoming webinar the ETUC STANDardisation project is organising in collaboration with [3M](#), a global supplier of, amongst others, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) products. The webinar will address topics such as :

- PPE (medical devices, respiratory devices and community masks) and their role during the pandemic;
- The shortage of PPE during the pandemic and its resulting problems and needs for the future;

- Standardisation activities on PPE and material used during pandemic (community masks) across Europe / national initiatives;
- ETUC work on ISO 45006 'Occupational health and safety management —preventing and managing infectious diseases –General guidelines for organizations'

The webinar will take place on **Thursday 25 February 2021 at 10h00 CET** (Brussels time) and will last approximately 1 hour.

For more information and to register: <https://bit.ly/2YYxXGd>

The ETUC stands for clean cabin air



Cabin air quality is an important occupational health issue that affects all cabin crew forced to breathe contaminated air while working sometimes long hours. The current design of aircrafts causes the air cabin to be intoxicated by engine fumes. Both short- and long-term health effects have been reported as a consequence of this, with the exposure to contaminated air resulting in crew impairment or less frequently, in crew incapacitation, and jeopardize flight safety.

The European committee on standardisation (CEN) Technical Committee 436 is working on a solution to ensure civil airplanes have clean air. It is developing the European standard prEN17436 "Cabin Air Quality on Civil Aircraft – Chemical Compounds" that defines requirements for chemical compounds in the cabin air of civil aircrafts. The standard aims to provide the technical

solutions to make the air cleaner and safe to breathe.

Between 4 March and 27 May 2021, the European [National Standardisation Bodies](#) will collect comments on the latest draft of the standard. The ETUC stresses the importance of this future standard that will help improve cabin air quality and mitigate health effects of all those flying on board of civil aircrafts.

Trade union representatives can have their say in the development of the standard by participating and contributing directly in the standardisation committees. After all, the health of workers – cabin crew – is at stake! The ETUC Secretariat can help ETUC affiliates, if necessary, make contact with their National Standardisation Bodies.

On 23 March, the ETUC and ETF will organise for its affiliates a webinar ‘**Clean cabin air – how to raise our voice**’ to shed light on this occupational health issue and on how to get involved.

More information is available [here](#) .

The graphic features a red vertical banner on the left with a yellow and black hazard symbol for asbestos fibers. The text on the banner reads: 'DANGER Contains Asbestos Fibers. Since 1991, the use of ASBESTOS IS BANNED IN THE EU, because it threatens workers' health and causes severe lung diseases'. To the right, an illustration shows a cabin crew member in a blue uniform standing next to a passenger sitting in a plane seat. A speech bubble from the crew member says: 'Yet in 2021, crew members still **BREATHE INTOXICATED AIR** on planes!'. At the bottom, a dark blue bar contains the text 'ETUC STANDS FOR CLEAN CABIN AIR' and the logo for 'SYNDICAT EUROPEEN TRADE UNION'.

Avoiding fatal accidents with ladders at work



Ladders are often used in the construction sector as well as in the cleaning industry. Although indispensable for this work, falling from ladders is currently the second deadliest occupational accident. In 2019, in Germany alone, between 17% and 25 % of fatal accidents at work were caused by falls from ladders ([1](#), [2](#)).

When on a ladder, workers should be able to stand with both feet on the step, level or platform. Standing and working on a ladder rung that is too narrow to stand with both feet can become dangerous. An easy solution to this problem would be to widen the steps ($\geq 80\text{mm}$), allowing workers to adopt a more ergonomic position and to work more securely on the ladder.

CEN/TC 93 'Ladders' is currently working on two standards: prEN 131-8 'Ladders with separate platforms' and prEN 131-9 'Window cleaning ladders'. Both standards are developed to support the implementation of the General Product Safety Directive (2001/95/EC), and will specify the requirements of the platform's width. The standards therefore intend to set the basis for the safety of ladders.

The ETUC calls for the future standards to ensure ladders are safe for all workers in Europe and contribute to decrease the number of occupational accidents with ladders.

New CEN Workshop on "Social Responsibility" - need for new social standards?



In 2020, the international Standard ISO 26000:2010 'Social responsibility' was adopted as an identical European standard. With this adoption, and because the standard was originally developed in ISO, all future decisions taken at the international level relating to social responsibility should be reflected at the European (CEN) level as well. The ETUC closely monitors the developments on the standard at international level to avoid any possible negative repercussions in Europe.

Also in 2020, ISO submitted a proposal to set up a new Technical Committee on "Social Responsibility", which would be tasked with the elaboration of a series of international standards on social responsibility, in addition to the existing ISO 26000 standard. As the proposal was highly contested by many organisations, including the ILO, ITUC ETUC and IOE, a final ISO decision was postponed.

Meanwhile in Europe, a similar proposal to investigate the need for social standards has been brought forward in CEN. A newly created CEN Workshop "Future of Social Responsibility" will discuss the future needs on social responsibility, for Europe. The outcome of the work is expected in June 2021. Any interested party can join this Workshop and participate directly to the discussions. The ETUC intends to join to influence and shape its outcome. Full details of the workshop are [here](#).

The ETUC is critical of CEN and/or ISO developing a new series of standards addressing social responsibility. We believe that ISO and CEN, which have traditionally focussed on making technical standards for products and services, "by industry" and "for industry", are not suitable platforms to develop social

standards.

European Commission standardisation needs for 2021



In late December 2020, the European Commission published its 2021 Annual Union Work Programme for Standardisation (AUWP) ([Commission notice 2020/C 437/02](#)), which sets out the objectives and policies for European standardisation and lists the actions the Commission intends to take.

The ETUC welcomes the EC AUWP for European standardisation 2021, and that the priorities it lays down focus on the development of European standards to support the green and digital transition.

The ETUC further welcomes the Commission's intention to continue to follow the standardisation developments at international level, in particular in China and the United States of America. In the past years, multiple proposals for international standards on topics, which are traditionally in the remit of the social partners in Europe, were made by both China and US. The ETUC stresses the need to remain vigilant to the potential adaptation of international standards in Europe, as they often lack ambition and fail to support European social and environmental goals. Moreover, the international standardisation system does not recognise the inclusion

of underrepresented societal groups such as workers and trade unions, as formally recognised by the Regulation on European standardisation (1025/2012).

As regards the standardisation work foreseen on Artificial Intelligence to support the future Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council laying down requirements for Artificial Intelligence(AI), the ETUC believes that the introduction and use of AI are key issues for society, and for workers in particular.

In line with the [ETUC resolution on the European strategies on AI and data](#), the ETUC demands that next to the need for legislative actions, standards developed should maintain and reinforce workers' protection, prevent disproportionate and undue surveillance at work, prohibit discriminatory treatments on the basis of biased algorithms, and prevent abuse of data protection and privacy, ensuring compliance with - and going beyond – GDPR, and maintaining their privacy when not at work. It is of particular importance to address the specificity of the workplace, considering the bargaining inequality between workers & employers.

The ETUC contributes to the development of standards addressing AI, in order to ensure that they take into account the rights and interests of workers.

Guidelines for contactless delivery service



Following a proposal from China (SAC), ISO will soon start preparing an [International Workshop Agreement \(IWA 36\) on Guidelines for contactless delivery service](#). The first meetings are to take place online on 22-25 March and 1-3 June 2021.

The aim of this IWA is to improve the transparency of the delivery service and the understanding between consumers and providers (couriers). It further seeks to enable couriers to provide better value for consumers while reducing the risk in the delivery service. The outcome of this IWA is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the delivery industry and accelerate its development.

It is important to note that an IWA is a document developed with the direct participation of a variety of stakeholders coming from outside the traditional ISO country representation system. This enables market players to negotiate in an “open workshop” environment.

While the ETUC does not intend to participate in this IWA, it is critical of and concerned by the data and privacy protection of the workers, which may potentially be at risk. Indeed, the document aims at providing guidance on the visualization and traceability of the health and safety of the courier, through tools such as:

- a merchant safety card that records health information of commodity contacts, including packers, couriers, etc.) or,
- a courier safety card, which shows the body temperature of the courier,
- And the disinfection information of the delivery equipment.

CEN and CENELEC Work Programme 2021
released

WORK PROGRAMME 2021



CEN and CENELEC released its 2021 Work Programme, which gives an overview of the many thousands of standards that are elaborated, all sectors combined. One of the main aims of the standards is to contribute to shape and maintain the European Single market. And although many of these standards support the traditional sectors, there is increased activity in emerging sectors such as digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence, climate change and greening of the economy. The ETUC aims at participating in the new standardisation activity in AI and climate change.

The full work programme 2021 is available [here](#).

Learning more about standards: CEN 10-10
Webinars



Since 2014, the CEN-CENELEC Management Centre organises “10-10 webinars”, which are training sessions organised every 10th of the month at 10 o’clock. They are an opportunity to keep interested stakeholders updated on the latest developments in standardisation and on specific topics that could have a direct impact on technical work.

The 10-10 webinars focus mainly on the needs and interests of the CEN and CENELEC Technical Body Officers. However, all interested National Members, Partners and stakeholders are welcome to attend the sessions.

An overview of all seminars planned for 2021 as well as the video recordings of previous webinars can be found [here](#).

CEN-CENELEC strategy 2030 published



In 2021, CEN and CENELEC will start implementing their new **Strategy 2030**, which will guide the organisations in their activities over the next 10 years, and make sure they are fit for the future.

The ETUC, as well as many other stakeholders, contributed/commented to the shaping of this high-level strategy document. The strategy is available [here](#).

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