

ETUC standardisation newsletter - April 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.

Solidarity with Ukraine



In its Resolution on Ukraine from 17 March 2022, 'the ETUC reiterates its condemnation of the invasion of a sovereign nation, in breach of international law and calls on Russia to respect Ukrainian territorial integrity, demands the

immediate cessation of military operations, insists that Russian troops leave the country, and calls for dialogue and talks for peace be started. The ETUC expresses its solidarity with all people, workers, and trade unions of Ukraine. The pursuit of peace and democracy is a fundamental value of the trade union movement and an essential condition to secure safety, social justice and worker's and human rights. The ETUC supports all political and diplomatic initiatives and sanctions to secure peace and calls for humanitarian aid for the Ukrainian population in Ukraine and to welcome and support refugees in Europe. ETUC denounces and condemns the repression in Russia against those who oppose the war in Ukraine and pledges to support Russian trade unions, workers, activists and pacifists who non-violently oppose the war, and expresses solidarity with the Russian and Belarussian people hit by the repercussions of the sanctions or by forms of discrimination for a war they are not responsible for'.

ETUC funding has been made available for humanitarian aid to be provided to the Ukrainian population in cooperation with the Ukrainian trade unions, and to refugees displaced in EU Member States and countries of the region in cooperation with the trade unions of those countries. Furthermore, the EU project funds at the disposal of the ETUC UnionMigrantNet will be mobilised and redirected to help Ukrainian refugees on the EU borders and in the EU territory. The ETUC "Peace Task Force" to coordinate such actions and an ETUC "Peace Watch" to exchange information with and among affiliates have been established.

The ETUC, together with other trade unions organisation held demonstrations in Brussels to express its solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

ETUC speaks at EESC expert hearing on *"The role of standards for the twin transition and the competitiveness of the EU"*



On 18 March, Isabelle Schömann, ETUC Confederal Secretary in charge of standardisation, was invited to speak at the EESC expert hearing on “The role of standards for the twin transition and the competitiveness of the EU”, to provide the trade unions’ perspective on the recently published EU Strategy on Standardisation.

Ms Schömann highlighted in her intervention that standards are increasingly used today to underpin policy goals that fall in the wider public interest. Considering the digital and green transitions the EU is aiming to deliver, it is essential that European standards incorporate core EU democratic values, as well as green and social rights, values, and principles.

The ETUC welcomes that the EU Standardisation Strategy recognises the strategic importance of standards, and the need to reduce the influence of non-European interests on the decision-making process, especially as regards to standards supporting EU legislation and policies. In that sense, the ETUC stresses the need to shift the decision-making processes and priority setting to a balanced governance body to allow for trade unions concrete participation. The standardisation priorities for Europe cannot be left in the sole hands of technical experts, who come from industry and private –often foreign – companies.

As a general principle, a truly multistakeholder approach is essential to guarantee that standards actually meet the EU’s policy goals and reflect its interests, values and principles. With that aim, the ETUC calls for a more balanced representation of interests within the national standardisation bodies and has long called for improved access conditions for trade unions. National

delegations from the European standardisation bodies cannot only represent industrial interests if the standards are going to be used to show compliance with rules imposed in the general interest. The European standardisation system must deliver for all.

EUROSHNET conference: Artificial Intelligence meets Safety and Health at work



EUROSHNET, the European network of occupational safety and health experts involved in standardisation, testing and certification, invites you to its 7th European Conference to be held in Paris on 20 October 2022.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly finding its way into companies, their products and their services. This will undoubtedly also have a major impact on work processes and conditions and raises fundamental questions that will be addressed during the conference, for example regarding ethical aspects, legal responsibility and the verification of technical reliability. The use of artificial intelligence also has an impact on laws, rules and procedures. A representative of the European Commission will present the current state of progress in the development of an EU regulation governing artificial intelligence. What are the challenges for standardisation in underpinning the new requirements? What additional testing may be required for AI systems to attain certification? Representatives of the social partners and standardisation and regulatory bodies will address these issues in a panel discussion.

A reception at the wine museum on the evening of 19 October and an accompanying poster exhibition also form part of the conference programme and provide attendees with an opportunity to expand their professional networks.

For more information on the **programme and registration**, visit: www.euroshnet.eu/conference-2022.

The conference organisers foresee an **early bird rate** and register by **3 June**

2022.

Stay up to date by following EUROSHNET on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

New European pre-standard in the making on self-declaration on Diversity & Inclusion



The Dutch Standards Institute is preparing a European CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA) for diversity and inclusion (D&I). The objective of this CWA is to support organisations in creating a more diverse and inclusive organisational culture. The pre-standard will outline guidelines to organisations to develop, implement and continuously improve a policy for D&I. Eventually, the organisation can draft and publish a self-declaration. The CWA is therefore split into two parts: 1) Guidelines 2) Guidance on self-declaration.

The work was proposed by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and currently involves mainly companies such as KPMG Nederland, Supply Value, Accenture, etc.

A CWA is a type of pre-standard that is developed within one year. It has the life span of 3 - 6 years after which it can be transferred into another type of standard. The difference to a "normal" standard is that everybody can participate. This means companies, National Standardisation Bodies, universities, etc. within or outside Europe can participate and vote. The rules of the CWA are more flexible.

The ETUC perceives this new work as critical. first it duplicates work on an existing international standard ISO 30415:2021 on 'Human Resource

Management – Diversity & Inclusion', which is providing guidelines on D&I, to which trade unions participated and secured that this standard makes reference to collective bargaining and to consult and involve trade unions and worker representatives. second, the ETUC is concerned about self-declaration as this is no guarantee or proof of a real D&I culture in an organisation.

More information is available at: <https://www.cencenelec.eu/news-and-events/news/2022/workshop/2022-03-08-diversity-and-inclusion>

Online workshop on standardisation for design and use of smart Personal Protective Equipment



CEN-CENELEC Sector Forum (Personal Protective Equipment) PPE organises the workshop "Smart PPE – standardization for design and use". It will take place online on 2 June 2022.

Smart products have become part of our daily life – not only at home but also at work, for instance in garments and other (protective) equipment. Compliance with EU legal requirements, for instance on the protective functionalities, is key in providing good and safe equipment.

The workshop will see an update on the development and standardisation of smart garments, textiles and equipment, with feedback on the needs and expectations from users and testing authorities. Apart from technical aspects,

impacts from other legislative initiatives like data protection, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence will be discussed.

More information as well as the registration for this event can be found at: <https://www.cencenelec.eu/news-and-events/events/2022/2022-06-02-sector-forum-ppe/>

ILO Construction Code of Practise on Safety and Health



In March, the International Labour Organization (ILO) prepared a new code of practice with concrete guidance on improving health and safety in construction. Together, governments, employers and trade unions revised the existing 1992 code. They took into account new areas in the sector which require improved health and safety practices and other protective measures in view of the changes in working practices and conditions in the construction industry over the past decades. Key revisions introduced to the code of practice underline the importance of [Occupational Safety and Health](#) (OSH) management systems, maternity protection and waste and emissions management.

The revised code includes a new or improved language negotiated by unions, on issues including clauses on chemicals, carcinogens, silica, asbestos, biological hazards, ergonomics, procurement and, for the first time in an adopted ILO text, **psychosocial risks at work**. The code is due to come into

force after its approval by the ILO in November this year.

Assessing compliance with EU legislation: New HAS system



The European Commission can request that the European standardisation organisations draft a European standard, which will then underpin EU legislation and hence be mentioned in the Official Journal of the European Union. These so-called harmonised standards provide more detail on the implementation of the legal requirements and are a useful tool for organisations and industry to comply with European legislation.

Throughout the development process, the European Commission assesses the compliance of the standards drafted by the European standardisation organisations with legal requirements. For this, the European Commission set up an assessment process which is carried out by so-called HAS consultants.

Since March 2021, however, the meetings between HAS consultants and CEN/TCs have been interrupted. In October 2021, the Commission started prioritising the assessments of crucial standards, while many other requests were put on hold. As the current HAS contract had come to an end in March 2022, the European Commission is not only renewing the contract but also including improvements to the assessment. There is a new communication and information exchange with the standardisation bodies and the Commission services, in order to train and explain the functioning of the system to its beneficiaries. The Commission foresees also more resources to the HAS consultants and has introduced additional assessment stages. Once the new

HAS system is restored, the backlog of harmonised draft standards will be followed up.

Clarifying the concept of risks in standards



ISO has set up a Joint Task Force (JTF) with the International Electrotechnical Commission, IEC, on the Concept of Risk and Associated Terms.

The new JTF will share information among technical committees that develop standards dealing with the concept of risk. The work will also identify how risk should evolve in the standardisation community to meet the needs of standards users and will put forward solutions to address the difference in definitions, use and interpretations.

The clarification of the concept of risk is of particular relevance for occupational health and safety standards. European Directives in the field of safety and health at work set out minimum requirements and fundamental principles, such as the principle of risk assessment. A series of European guidelines such as the [CEN-CENELEC Guides](#) also provide guidance on the implementation of European standards including requirements on risks.

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