

CEN and CENELEC position on the EC Communication '*European standards for the 21st Century*'

25 November 2016

Background

On 1 June 2016, The European Commission released the Communication '*European Standards for the 21st Century*'¹ as part of the 'Standardisation package'. The Communication provides a vision for a single and efficient European standardization system, as well as a framework for the Joint Initiative on Standardisation (JIS)², and linking with the EC Communication on '*ICT Standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market*'³.

This document constitutes the contribution of CEN and CENELEC to the ongoing discussions in the European Parliament, Council and EESC on the Communication.

Executive summary

CEN and CENELEC welcome the EC Communication on 'European standards for the 21st century' and emphasize:

- the need to ensure a single approach from the EC and other Institutions on standardization, avoiding diverging initiatives and policies,
- the importance of preserving the voluntary nature of standards, whilst ensuring timely publication of references to standards in the Official Journal of the European Union,
- that industry engagement, inclusiveness and due process are essential pillars to ensure the market relevance of standards that support the implementation regulations,
- the contribution of the international dimension of European standardization as a tool for global competitiveness of European industry,
- that market driven standards play an important role in the digitization of European industry and to support the extension of the Single Market for services.

Regarding the proposal to establish an inter-institutional dialogue in the preparation of the Annual Work Programme for Standardization, CEN and CENELEC support the initiative and propose that the European Standardization Organizations are invited as part of the dialogue.

¹ COM(2016) 358

² http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=8852

³ COM(2016) 176

CEN and CENELEC contribution

CEN and CENELEC welcome the EC Communication on 'European standards for the 21st century' and would like to provide the following input:

A single standardisation policy in Europe

CEN and CENELEC emphasise the need for a single approach from the European Commission and other Institutions on standardization, in line with the statement that '*a single standardization policy in support of multiple economic sectors and stakeholders is crucial for European leadership*'⁴.

CEN and CENELEC propose to reinforce and improve the Annual Union Work Programme as the strategic document from the EC to identify policies and legislation where standards are expected to support their implementation. Moreover, CEN and CENELEC invite the EC to avoid duplication of initiatives regarding standardisation, as they are detrimental to industry engagement and inclusiveness of all stakeholders, including SMEs and societal interests' organizations, ensuring a more efficient use of the scarce resources available to stakeholders.

Voluntary standards supporting the implementation of smart legislation

According to Regulation (EU) 1025/2012, standards are voluntary. Approximately 5000 voluntary European standards support the implementation of European legislation and policies, by providing market-driven solutions that enable compliance with legal requirements. In addition, these standards are revised regularly to take into account innovation and technology developments, allowing legislation to remain up to date when making reference to the standards. CEN and CENELEC support this well-proven model of making reference to standards in a voluntary way as the preferred solution.

Industry engagement and inclusiveness of societal interests

CEN and CENELEC, together with their national members, invest significant resources in keeping industry (especially SMEs) fully engaged in the European Standardisation System, while improving the participation of the organizations representing consumers, workers and environmental interests. As standardisation work includes the international organizations, ISO and IEC, the focus of the engagement has to also consider the international dimension.

Timely publication of standards needs to be accompanied by timely citation of references to standards in the Official Journal

CEN and CENELEC agree with the principle contained in the EC communication that '*speed of standard development needs to be squared with inclusiveness and quality of the standard*'. In this context, industry engagement and inclusion following 'due process' are essential to ensure market relevant quality standards. This balance is extremely important for all involved parties.

Timely delivery of standards developed that support legislations has to be accompanied by timely citation of the references to standards in the Official Journal. The decreasing citation of the references to standards in the OJEU from the European Commission is generating

⁴ See section 2 'Standards together: a single platform serving multiple policies', page 6 of COM (2016) 358

uncertainty, mistrust and extra costs of compliance for European business, that cannot benefit from 'presumption of conformity' to affix the CE-marking on their products.

International dimension supporting global competitiveness of European industry

The long-standing cooperation of CEN and CENELEC with ISO and IEC has allowed the alignment of European Standards with international ones, contributing to the global competitiveness of European business. Strengthening this cooperation will facilitate the development of ISO and IEC standards to support European legislative and policy needs.

In addition, CEN and CENELEC confirm the importance to promote the European regulatory model in third countries based on voluntary reference to standards strengthening '*Europe's trade and investment potential*'. Moreover, CEN and CENELEC National Members often promote the voluntary reference to standards in national regulations in their countries as well.

Single Market for services

CEN and CENELEC welcome a closer cooperation with the EC to promote, where appropriate, the development and use of market driven European service standards to benefit European businesses and consumers. A strategy for standardization to support the services sector is currently under development, with the objective of increasing awareness and involvement of stakeholders, better understanding their needs and defining criteria to identify priority sectors.

Digitisation of industry

CEN and CENELEC confirm the crucial role of standardisation in the digital transformation of European industry, and their contribution along with their members, to support digitization of vertical business sectors. CEN and CENELEC, together with ETSI, are leading actions in order to engage with European and national initiatives, as well as other stakeholders, to identify digital standardization needs and consider the relevance of already existing digitization architectures (and the need for the development of new ones).

Supporting the implementation of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation

CEN and CENELEC strongly support the shared vision and values contained in the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, and are fully committed in the implementation of the JIS Actions, as a unique opportunity to improve, in a collaborative way, the interaction between standards, legislation and policies for the benefit of both industry and society.

The inter-institutional dialogue

Regarding the proposal from the EC to establish an *inter-institutional dialogue* that involves the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the CoR⁵ in the preparation of the Annual Work Programme for Standardization (AUWP), CEN and CENELEC welcome the initiative since it reinforces the Public-Private Partnership that links standards to public policies.

CEN and CENELEC would welcome to be given the opportunity to provide input and be consulted in this new governance cycle, both in the preparation of the annual single report by the European Commission, and during the interinstitutional dialogue itself.

⁵ See section 4 'Way forward', page 10 of COM (2016) 358

About CEN and CENELEC

The **European Committee for Standardization (“CEN”)** and the **European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (“CENELEC”)** are two officially recognized European Standardization Organizations under Regulation 1025/2012 on European Standardisation⁶.

CEN and CENELEC develop European Standards (ENs) and other technical deliverables through a transparent and consensus-driven process to meet the needs of European stakeholders, such as industry and service providers, including SMEs, public authorities and regulators, academia, research centres and societal stakeholders’ organizations.

In addition, CEN and CENELEC provide a platform for the development of *harmonized* European Standards (hENs) that may incorporate quality, safety, environmental, interoperability and accessibility requirements to support the implementation of the relevant European legislation.

CEN and CENELEC membership is composed of national standardisation bodies from 33 countries, whose national networks involves more than 100,000 technical experts from industry, business and commercial federations (including SMEs), research, consumer organizations, environmental groups and other societal stakeholders.

For more information, please see: www.cencenelec.eu

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European Standardisation, OJ L 316, 14.11.2012, p. 12–33