



PRESS RELEASE

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'BE EUROPE': CEN AND CENELEC WELCOME THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL

Taking over from the Spanish Presidency, the [Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#) began on the 1st of January and will continue until June 2024. CEN and CENELEC, together with their Belgian members, [NBN](#), the Belgian Organization for Standards and Standardization, and [CEB-BEC](#), the Belgian Electrotechnical Committee, are committed to collaborating with the Belgian Presidency to ensure that European Standards are recognized as a vital tool for both present and future issues facing the European Union.

As two of the officially recognised European Standardization Organizations (ESOs), CEN and CENELEC look forward to the opportunity to reinforce some of the priorities of this Presidency through standardization:

- **Defending rule of law, democracy, and unity**

The Belgian Presidency will dedicate itself to democracy, rule of law, and fundamental rights. This will include focusing on strengthening citizen engagement, increasing the quality of education, promoting media freedom, and pushing forward the digital transition of the creative sectors. The Presidency is also dedicated to supporting candidate countries in preparation of future accessions to the European Union.

European Standards (ENs) are implemented as national standards in all the 34 countries that have National Standardization Bodies or National Committees with CEN and CENELEC membership. This includes [several EU candidate countries](#), such as the Institute for Standardization of Serbia (ISS) and the Standardization Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia (ISRSM). Other candidate countries have [affiliate status](#) to CEN and CENELEC, such as the Institute for Standardization of Moldova (ISM) and the Ukrainian scientific-research and training centre of issues of standardization, certification and quality (SE UkrNDNC). This cooperation can provide great support in creating links between the EU and candidate countries and making their accession procedures smoother.

- **Strengthening the EU's competitiveness**

The Belgian Presidency highlights the importance of the EU's long-term competitiveness and emphasizes the necessity of a coherent and simplified regulatory framework. To achieve this, the Presidency will focus on strengthening economic security, promoting European technology leadership, and enhancing the role of research and development to boost competitiveness.

European Standardization has a long history of enabling competitiveness within the Single Market. Harmonized standards (hENs) are developed to provide presumption of conformity to EU legislation, providing businesses with a simpler way to comply with EU legislation. Notable examples include the RED Directive, Low-Voltage Directive, Machinery Regulation, and the [Toy Safety Directive](#).

CEN and CENELEC also support the Presidency's emphasis on research and development. Standards can facilitate the transfer of knowledge from research to the market. More recently, CEN and CENELEC have been supporting the [European Commission's efforts](#) to raise awareness on how researchers can capitalize on the opportunities standardization presents.

- **Pursuing a green and just transition**

The Green Transition is essential to the future of the European Union and the whole planet. The Belgian Presidency will progress this energy and climate transition through the promotion of the circular economy, climate adaptiveness, sustainable water management, and ensuring a resilient supply of energy.

CEN and CENELEC are committed to leveraging the power of standards to achieve the green transition. Standardization work is taking place in several topics key to this transition. For example, CEN and CENELEC established a new Technical Committee on '[Circular Economy](#)' to increase the circularity of products. Moreover, the Technical Committees on '[Electrical energy measurement and control](#)' and on the '[Energy Performance of Buildings](#)' are examples of CEN and CENELEC working towards more efficient energy consumption through standardization.

It is important to recognise the important role of standards, often hidden to the customer, in introducing new technologies that facilitate the continuous evolution to a more sustainable and healthier society within a global, competitive framework. A significant contribution are the standards for an [all-electric society](#).

- **Reinforcing the EU's social and health agenda**

The Belgian Presidency aims for a more inclusive and fair European Union. Learning from recent health crises, it also sees the need for better crisis preparedness, with a more robust and resilient medicine supply chain and a plan to revitalise the EU's workforce in the healthcare sector.

CEN and CENELEC are dedicated to increasing inclusivity in standardization to better reflect the diversity of standards users. As a part of their commitment to the [UNECE's Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development](#), CEN and CENELEC implemented the Gender Action Plan. CEN and CENELEC also created standards for many health sectors, such as the Technical Committee on [in-vitro diagnostic medical devices](#). Harmonized standards have also been used to support EU healthcare policies, such as the Regulation on Medical Devices and the Regulation on In-Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices.

- **Promoting a global Europe**

Finally, the Presidency recognizes that the EU must play a key role in solving global issues and must embody the values of openness, dialogue and cooperation. To achieve influence at the international level, the EU must develop its economic, security and defence capabilities. A key aspect of this is multilateralism, which the EU must reinforce through its commitment to an open, sustainable, and assertive trade policy.

Standards reduce trade barriers and facilitate the access of European goods and services into the global market. The global influence of the European standardization system is based on agreements with the [international standardization organizations](#) (ISO & IEC).

CEN and CENELEC also have established partnerships with [standardization bodies outside Europe](#), for example, the African Organisation for Standardization (ARSO), the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), and the Standardization Administration of China (SAC), among others.

At the start of a transformative year, the CEN and CENELEC community is ready to engage with the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council to help making Europe safer, greener, and more competitive, building on the strength of the successful European Standardization System.

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