

Joint Initiative on Standardisation
under the Single Market Strategy

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Context

Standards are key for innovation and progress in the Single Market and for its functioning: they are essential to support European competitiveness and growth and allow for Europe to maintain its leadership in technical development and global trade. Standards can also contribute to societal welfare (e.g. health, safety, and environment).

Regulation (EU)1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European standardisation sets the framework for the European Standardisation System. It entered into force on 1 January 2013.

Noting from the European Commission Communication on the Single Market Strategy¹ that: *"...the standardisation process faces challenges from the changing nature of the economy and diversification of business models, the ever-increasing role of information and communication technology, and the growing importance of services in today's global value chains, where goods and services are increasingly provided together in a package.*

The European Standardisation System needs to be up to these challenges, producing timely and market-driven standards in an inclusive way and consolidating Europe's leadership in international standardisation. European standards need to support EU policies and for digital innovations, they need to offer increased security and interoperability.

More generally, this means modernising the existing partnership. The Commission will therefore propose a 'Joint initiative on Standardisation' between the Commission, the industry concerned, European standardisation organisations and the standardisation community in general. The Joint initiative will aim to speed up and better prioritise standard setting across the board."

The involvement of the EFTA Member States, the European Free Trade Association, in the above-mentioned long-standing and successful (public-private) partnership is highly welcomed.

The participants of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation are the European Commission; the EU Member States; EFTA Member States; the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs): the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), the European Committee for

¹ COM(2015) 550 final, SWD(2015) 202 final

Electrotechnical Standardisation (Cenelec), and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI); the National Standardisations Bodies (NSBs); European industry also represented by their several associations including Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); and societal stakeholders, i.e. representing environmental interests, trade unions and consumers.

This Joint Initiative on Standardisation sets out a shared vision for European standardisation in order to take steps to better prioritise and to modernise the current European standardisation system, as well as to strive for the timely delivery of standardisation deliverables. It supports the relevant aspects of the ten European Commission Priorities and other policy objectives, while clearly respecting the distribution of different competences between the EU and the Member States.

This Joint Initiative on Standardisation will further enable Europe to strengthen its driving force in the global standardisation environment. This document therefore addresses the entire standardisation system, given its potential for growth and jobs on the European economy and its positive impact on competitiveness for European industry and SMEs and on society as a whole.

The participants of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation share the vision set out in this document of 13 June 2016 and will support the establishment of a Steering Group² to develop the list of actions in the Annex reflecting that vision and to monitor the entire Joint Initiative process.

Participants who take part in actions defined by the Steering Group will do so according to their interests, legal mandates and at their discretion.

² The Steering Group drives and monitors the Joint Initiative on Standardisation from start to completion. The Terms of Reference will be discussed at a later stage by the participants.

Joint Vision for European Standardisation

The participants share the following “Vision for European Standardisation”:

European Standardisation contributes significantly to growth, jobs and societal welfare by providing high quality standards and other deliverables. They are developed by industry and other market players in an inclusive and timely manner in accordance with the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade principles and Regulation (EU)1025/2012. Standards are used to meet market needs and, where appropriate, public policy interests, for example by supporting the implementation of national and European regulations. The European Standardisation System provides a coherent set of standards for Europe and globally and facilitates global market access by taking up international standards wherever possible. It also supports relevant aspects of the ten European Commission priorities and other European policies

The Joint Vision on Standardisation is based on the following values:

1. A deeper and fairer European Single Market with its free movement of goods and services, supported by one single standard for market access in Europe.
2. The benefits of the New Approach/New Legislative Framework concepts and of standards supporting the implementation of policies and legislation, including for better regulation and public procurement, both at European and Member State levels.
3. The contribution of standardisation to the European Digital Single Market, ensuring that Europe’s economy, citizens and businesses fully benefit from the digital revolution.
4. The voluntary, market-driven nature of standards.
5. Standards supporting European competitiveness in the global market, allowing for access to foreign markets and for the establishment of business partnerships around the globe.
6. The potential of standards to increase economic, societal and environmental welfare, including the health and safety of consumers and workers.
7. The capacity of standards to respond to the needs of the society and the economy as well as their ability to take into account public policy interests.

To initiate the process of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation the participants to this initiative:

1. Recognise each other as genuine strategic partners.
2. Recognise the need to ensure due consideration of both market needs and policy objectives in view of the broader use of standards:
 - a. By striving to strengthen public authorities' involvement in standardisation, with a special focus on areas where it supports the implementation of public policies, legislation and public procurement.
 - b. By improving the exchanges of all stakeholders with the European Standardisation Organisations in order to ensure appropriate reference to standards in policy and legislative proposals.
 - c. By further supporting inclusiveness at the European level process, involving all stakeholders, within their corresponding roles and mandates while respecting the national delegation principle for those concerned. It covers the European Standardisation Organisations, industry, the four stakeholders identified in Regulation (EU)1025/2012 (consumers, environment, SMEs, trade unions), public authorities (including market surveillance), academia, testing houses, persons with disabilities, etc. and this in all phases of preparation and objections to standardisation deliverables in support of Union legislation and policies (e.g. from the inception phase of standardisation requests to the resolution of the formal objection stage).
 - d. By further involving all stakeholders at national level thereby strengthening the low-barrier, direct participation and the conditions for their views to be considered.
3. Continue to maintain an open collaborative process by establishing a "Steering Group", an informal consultative body, to be chaired by the European Commission, in order to further develop concrete actions and to continue the work of the Editorial Committee including the monitoring the Joint Initiative on Standardisation. The European Commission shall consider whether to endorse other actions which might be proposed.

Follow-up of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation

The European Commission's Standardisation Policy is based on five strategic objectives identified in the European Commission's 2011 Communication [COM(2011)311final]: timeliness/speed, competitiveness, support to EU legislation and policies, inclusiveness and global market impact. These were identified in that Communication as areas where standards can enhance and accelerate the sustainable growth of the European economy by 2020. These objectives were assessed in the Independent Review (2015)³ which built further on the recommendations of the Express Report of 2010⁴.

The participants of this Joint Initiative on Standardisation,

- *within the legal framework provided by the European Standardisation Regulation (EU)1025/2012,*
- *reflecting the public-private partnership in European standardisation,*
- *referring to the scope of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation under the Single Market Strategy,*
- *recognising these strategic objectives of the European Commission and the recommendations of the Express Report,*
- *and noting that the Independent Review has also made recommendations,*

will strive to follow up on the Vision expressed under the Joint Initiative on Standardisation by setting up a Steering Group, ideally composed of the Editorial Committee and others wishing to contribute to the Joint Initiative on Standardisation.

This Steering Group will consider actions, expected to be carried out by the end of 2019, addressing the various aspects of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, as expressed in the Single Market Strategy of 2015: prioritisation, modernisation and the appropriate speed for timely standards.

To put in motion the prioritisation, the modernisation and the appropriate speed for timely standards, three cluster domains have been identified for improving the European Standardisation System:

1. Awareness, Education and Understanding about the European Standardisation System i.e. increasing the relevant use of standards and participation in the process at all levels;
2. Coordination, Cooperation, Transparency and Inclusiveness, i.e. ensuring adequate, high-quality, user-friendly and timely European standards;
3. Competitiveness and International dimension, i.e. standards supporting European competitiveness in the global markets.

A first set of actions, accompanied with pilot projects (to illustrate the effectiveness of the horizontal actions), under those three cluster domains, can be found in the Annex, which forms an integral part of this document.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/10444/>

⁴ <http://www.anec.eu/attachments/Definitive%20EXPRESS%20report.pdf>

1. Awareness, Education and Understanding about the European Standardisation System

- 1) Study on the economic and societal impacts as well as access to standards in the EU and the EFTA Member States
- 2) Linking research and innovation with standardisation
- 3) Programmes for education in standardisation/Training and awareness on standardisation
- 4) Improvement of standardisation awareness at national public authorities level specifically
- 5) Pilot Project: Enhance the support of standardisation to the Construction Products Regulation (CPR)

2. Coordination, Cooperation, Transparency and Inclusiveness

- 6) Standards Market Relevance Roundtable (“SMARRT”)
- 7) Optimisation of operational aspects of Regulation (EU)1025/2012
- 8) Provide high-quality standards delivered and referenced in a timely manner
- 9) Inclusiveness, transparency & effective participation of all stakeholders in the European Standardisation System
- 10) Facilitating participation of all stakeholders at national level
- 11) Pilot Project: Increased use of standards in Public Procurement and a better compliance with the public procurement Directives

3. Competitiveness and International dimension

- 12) Encouraging the greater development and use of European service standards to help integrate Europe’s service markets
- 13) Promote the European regulatory model supported by voluntary standards and its close link to international standardisation in third countries
- 14) Standardisation to support digitisation of European industry
- 15) Pilot Project: Improve the representation of European SMEs and societal stakeholders' interests in international standardisation processes

These actions are without prejudice to other items which could be included by the European Commission in future **Annual Union Work Programmes for European Standardisation** on the basis of Article 8 of Regulation (EU)1025/2012.

The complete list of actions, their respective detailed descriptive fiches and the participants involved, will be presented on the occasion of the “World Standards Day 2016” (mid-October 2016).

Each participant commits to supporting the actions falling within their remit, taking into account their respective competences, and is welcome to contribute to others. If additional actions are to be identified, prior to their announcement on World Standards Day 2016, this may require an additional endorsement by the European Commission.

Delivery and assessment of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation

This Joint Initiative on Standardisation will start on 13 June 2016.

This Joint Initiative on Standardisation is established in good faith between the participants, on the basis that it is a fair and honest representation of their intentions. It is not legally binding. It shall not be construed in any way as replacing or interpreting the existing legal framework.

The signature of this Joint Initiative on Standardisation will be followed by a delivery period of 42 months.

During this period, the participants will meet yearly, under the auspices of the European Commission, to assess the progress, implementation and functioning of this Joint Initiative on Standardisation.

The participants will meet at the end of the delivery period to evaluate the effectiveness of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, to discuss the continuation of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation and, if appropriate, to discuss and propose appropriate follow-up actions.

Building upon the reporting obligations under Regulation (EU)1025/2012, the European Commission will regularly inform the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the state of play of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, highlighting – inter alia – the progress achieved on the ICT Standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market in order to take stock of progress on the deliverables as well as on the Annual Union Work Programmes.

Done in Amsterdam - The Netherlands, 13 June 2016

Annex
to the

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Annex: proposals of the Editorial Committee to the Steering Group for a first draft set of actions, accompanied with pilot projects under the three cluster domains as referenced under the Joint Vision for European Standardisation

Domain 1: Awareness, Education and Understanding about the European Standardisation System

Action 1 – Study on the economic and societal impacts and benefits of standards as well as access to standards in the EU and the EFTA Member States.

It is acknowledged that standards play a vital and sometimes invisible role in supporting economic growth through their role in boosting productivity, competitiveness and innovation as well as societal welfare. Also, the impacts of standards within businesses and their supply chains are less well understood. The same applies for the public sector, not always being well aware and informed about the impact of using standards in public policies *The study should explore the impacts of standards on the economy and society at large, building on and taking into account existing national studies, as well as the different models currently used for financing standardisation. This study has also been asked for by the Council in March 2015 [2-3 March 2015, 6197/15 and 6715/15].*

Action 2 – Linking research and innovation with standardisation

It is important to highlight the link between research, innovation and commercialisation using standardisation as early as possible in order to exploit to a maximum the outcomes of current and future research and innovation projects from, for example, Horizon2020 or from other existing technical platforms. An early in-depth analysis should be carried out of where, when and how standardisation can help to boost innovation in European innovation programs. It would also be helpful to increase the use of standards by business to foster market access for their innovation. *Those standardisation deliverables supporting research and innovation projects that have been realised so far will be assessed and the development of pilot projects may also be taken into consideration.*

Action 3 – Programmes for education in standardisation/Training and awareness on standardisation

Programmes of formal education and vocational training addressing standardisation and, more specifically, the European standardisation model should be further developed.. *Therefore, there is a clear need to explore and promote standardisation as an element of formal education, academic & vocational training, in co-operation with Member States with experience in this area, as well as engaging academia. The development of training programmes for policy officers and experts on standardisation would also be an important element in the frame of this innovative educational project.*

Action 4 – Improvement of standardisation awareness in national public authorities .

At national level, a certain lack of knowledge about the role of standards in support to regulations and public policy has been observed. It is therefore recommended to further involve public authorities in the standards setting and referencing processes. *Therefore, an enhanced engagement of Member States will be a fundamental achievement; other practical measures will be envisioned, such as a common kit/toolbox/template with communication material for individual use in the Member States.*

Pilot Project, will be reviewed following the Court's Judgement in case C-613/14:

Action 5 – Aiding the implementation of the Construction Products Regulation (CPR) through standards

This action will focus on mapping some of the main specificities and challenges pertaining to harmonised standards and the standardisation process for construction products. *It will cultivate a common understanding on the role of harmonised standards in the CPR context; it will clarify the role of the various actors and explore the use of a simplified procedure for amending existing mandates. Furthermore, the action will enhance the process of introducing new classes and threshold levels into harmonised standards and apply collaborative efforts to ensure their timely revision and citation. This action should be in full respect of Regulation (EU)305/2011.*

Domain 2: Coordination, Cooperation, Transparency and Inclusiveness

Action 6 – Improve the exchange of information and dialogue with industry through a Standards Market Relevance Roundtable (“SMARRT”)

From the side of many actors of the system, the need for a better exchange of information, more transparency and dialogue to enhance the effectiveness of the legislator’s use of the European Standardisation System has been strongly called for. To achieve this result, and in line with Article 12 of Regulation (EU)1025/2012, an adequate consideration of market relevance, in addition to public policies and regulation is needed. *In order to look at improvements for market relevant testing of European standardisation policy planning, a roundtable will be established between the European Commission and industry, called: “Standards Market Relevance Round Table”, “SMARRT”. This Roundtable will meet on a regular basis in full transparency, for example, during the development of draft standardisation requests, prior to Committee on Standards meetings, to offer market relevant opinions.*

Action 7 – Optimisation of operational aspects of Regulation (EU)1025/2012

It is important to use the planning instruments and tools at EU level to their full extent to effectively support policy objectives. Stakeholder collaboration and coordination are fundamental for optimised support to EU policy priorities and for the effectiveness of these instruments. *An analysis of the available planning instruments for standardisation at EU level and a gathering of best practices as evidence to support EU policy objectives would help to clarify the different roles, responsibilities, processes, objectives and deliverables, and would contribute to better plan further actions (e.g. complementary coordination actions).*

Action 8 – Provide high-quality standards delivered and referenced in a timely manner

The strong call for standards/specifications issued when the market/regulations/public policies need them and when the users of the standards are ready to implement their requirements or use them in the legislation is an undeniable need expressed by the actors of the system - be it policy makers, industry or society – a challenge which has to be tackled through *collaborative processes: improvement of performance in terms of quality and timeliness over the entire life cycle of European standards linked with policy and regulations, ensuring that the roles and competences of each actor remain preserved, in respect of the European and Member State regulations.*

Action 9 – Inclusiveness, transparency & effective participation of all stakeholders in the European Standardisation System

An increased awareness of the role of Annex III organisations would strengthen the system, as well as increase their contribution during the development of standards, and to overcome additional obstacles at international level. In order to promote a real and effective inclusiveness of the European Standardisation System, an easy access of all interested stakeholders to national, European and international standardisation work and *their effective participation should be supported through appropriate means and actions. Awareness raising actions targeted at national standards bodies and technical bodies should take place. It is also of importance that standards are market relevant and reflect the interests and needs of all stakeholders, including societal and environmental.*

Action 10 – Facilitating participation of all stakeholders at national level

Enhanced participation of some existing and emerging categories of stakeholders at national level, including those representing societal and public interests (e.g. national authorities including market surveillance) would bring added value to the final quality of the standardisation deliverables. As contributions from all stakeholders are considered to be pivotal in order to produce state-of-the-art standards, tools are to be developed *through which participation of underrepresented categories could be extended at national level to more countries, building on existing best practices.*

Pilot Project:

Action 11 – Increased use of standards in Public Procurement to better implement the public procurement Directives

Currently, there is a rather low use of standards in Public Procurement, which means that suppliers face numerous, different requests and various definitions in the “suppliers documents”, resulting in higher costs and inefficiency in procurement. Approximately, 2 % of goods and services in public procurement cross the borders today in the EU. *Therefore, practical and concrete actions should be envisaged, such as a guide, for how to use standards in combination with the new procurement directive. In order to improve the current situation, it would also be important to find out how Member States deal with the use of standards in public procurement in terms of structure, tools, guides, education etc. A study or analysis could be considered in that context.*

Domain 3: Competitiveness and International dimension

Action 12 – Encouraging the greater development and use of European service standards to help integrate Europe’s service markets

Both the 2006 Services Directive and Regulation (EU)1025/2012 on European standardisation recognise the potential benefits of service standards to increase market transparency, raise quality and safety, and facilitate market access for businesses and consumers. Indeed, there is untapped potential for service standards in Europe, respecting national and European regulations.. While their number is growing, most existing and newly emerging services standards are national (fewer than 20% of existing service standards are European). *This action will look to promote where appropriate the increased development and use of market driven European service standards to benefit European businesses and consumers through increasing market transparency, improving the quality of offer, facilitating market access, and promoting the greater provision of product-service packages.*

Action 13 – Promote the European regulatory model supported by voluntary standards and its close link to international standardisation in third countries.

Considering it is widely recognised as a success story and a best practice, the European regulatory model [“New Approach” (NLF)-type legislation] could be promoted outside the EU and the EFTA Member States. This means that a common effort by all the actors of the system would be needed: *stakeholders should consider promoting globally the concept of common regulatory objectives in international trade negotiations. In addition, these efforts will also help in supporting the interests of European SMEs in international standardisation processes, e.g. by promoting best practices for SMEs at ISO and IEC level.*

Action 14 – Standardisation to support digitisation of European industry

Digitisation of European industry and services represent an important opportunity for the growth of the European businesses and for the society, as well as an important milestone in the context of achieving a Digital Single Market.

Industry in Europe has had longstanding leadership in factory automation and intelligent manufacturing technologies. Currently, digitisation of industry and services and the application of cognitive technologies set connections across sectors as well as throughout the value chain, from the innovator to the manufacturer and from provider to the consumers. This is a push for innovation and technology integration throughout the value chain.

The EC package on “Digitising of European Industry” as well as several initiatives at Member State level and within industry federations recognise that standardisation has an important role to play, helping European industry in securing their leadership in manufacturing and service provision adapting best available digital technologies, amongst other benefits: "An effective standardisation environment for digital technologies is crucial for Digitising European Industry, and is key for the Digital Single Market. ICT standards allow devices and services to connect seamlessly across borders and technologies. In the future, billions of connected devices - including appliances, industrial equipment, and sensors – depend on such seamless communication, regardless of manufacturer, technical details, or country of origin."

The smart collaboration between CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, together with industry actors, EC/EFTA Member States and other international and global organisations and initiatives, can pave the way for promoting an effective set of standards, taking into account existing ones available at European and global level, resulting in an efficient support to digitisation of industry.

This action is looking at how to best support the EU policy objectives, as, for example, outlined in the EC package on “Digitising of European Industry”.

Pilot Project:

Action 15 – Improve the representation of the interests of SMEs in Europe in international standardisation processes

Standards drafted by international standards’ bodies, such as ISO and IEC, are more and more important on the global markets. They are increasingly transposed as Harmonised Standards in Europe to prove presumption of conformity with EU legislation. SMEs from Europe should have their voices better heard in international standardisation, based on the improvements that have been made at European level. International standards that meet the needs of SMEs in Europe contribute to enhancing their competitiveness. While the presence of SMEs and their associations is already improving at European level, more should be done to ensure appropriate representation and effective participation in international standardisation processes, building on existing best practice; this could also be extended to the other societal stakeholders under the Annex III of Regulation (EU)1025/2012. *There is, hence, room for more coordinated strategies and joint efforts by European stakeholders and National Standardisation Bodies to influence the processes at ISO and IEC - both at the technical and policy - level. Also, best practices for SMEs at the international level could be promoted for*

the benefit of SMEs in Europe, where appropriate with the help of national standardisation bodies. These best practices can also benefit to the other societal stakeholders, Annex III Organisations.

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of the
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to the

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under the Single Market Strategy*

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