



Annex: A joint initiative on standardisation

1. Industry to be granted observer seat in Committee of Standards

The European standardisation system (ESS) is voluntary and driven by industry for industry. Therefore, industry should be granted an observer seat in the Committee on Standards with the ability to send two interchangeable delegates (secretariat member plus expert). This would truly acknowledge industry, the chief developers and implementers of standards, as an equal stakeholder in the strategy setting agenda of the ESS. Standardisation priorities could be more efficiently aligned and deliverables streamlined.

2. Early industry involvement in preparation of mandates

Throughout the entire preparation phase of a mandate, industry and other relevant stakeholders should be invited to discussions that align the purpose and requirements for content. Specialised Commission sectorial committees or expert groups are too vast in numbers and too fragmented to monitor to be truly consulted during mandate preparation. Knowledgeable stakeholders with demonstrable interests are needed to drive the standardisation process. This could be ascertained with early inclusivity in the process creating smoother ESO acceptance later.

3. Programming mandates to be encouraged

Commission mandates should not be too specific so that the agenda of industry is steered. Solutions that predominantly support technical deliverables with no clear public interest should be left only to market-led development. This is particularly relevant for the proliferation of technologies to support the digital single market. Programming mandates should be encouraged as a useful tool to support market relevant standards.

4. Early ESO consultation of stakeholders in preparation phase

As a condition of acceptance of standardisation mandates, the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs) shall ensure sufficient stakeholder engagement. However they are restricted to respond within one month. This limited time frame is not sufficient to seek commitment for active participation from a critical mass of relevant industry stakeholders at crucial stages of the production chain. Therefore the ESOs should proactively consult with stakeholders during the mandate preparation phase to ensure fully aligned goals and expectations. This all the more calls for point 2.

**5. Establish ways to involve public authorities in standards development**

Although not always easy, public authorities should participate in development of standards with a public interest, especially those granting presumption of conformity. This would ensure in-depth appreciation of the rationale behind the standard and avoid formal objections and safeguard clauses ex-post when changes are difficult to introduce. The National Standardisation Organisations, ESOs and public authorities should seek practical ways for participation so public authorities can truly engage even under the restrictions they face.

6. Create procedure to ensure quick publication in OJEU

A quick resolution procedure should exist to resolve disputes and delays in the publishing of standards in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). While presumption of conformity should hinge on solid coverage of the Essential Requirements in the legislation, it should not be waived for poorly underpinned reasons, but only on the basis of solid risk assessment as per agreed procedures and criteria (such as the risk assessment procedure agreed for RAPEX). A transparent procedure should exist for these situations to overcome deadlocks and ensure legal certainty as well as continued industry investment in the ESS.

7. Strategic level meetings to be established

An annual strategic level meeting should be held between the Commission, public authorities, ESO representatives, societal stakeholders and industry to exchange views about the strategic standardisation agenda for Europe. Interchangeable themes that are crucial in supporting the current European agenda could be better coordinated, such as supporting the digital single market.

8. Global regulatory cooperation and alignment of standards

Competitiveness is not just an issue of the single market but one of global importance. To support production of globally uniform products for global markets, standards should be internationally consistent without regional deviations. This could be facilitated by aligning with ISO, IEC, ITU standards following enhancement of appropriate regulatory cooperation when politically and technically feasible.

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