

## **ETUC standardisation newsletter - March 2020**

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](mailto:standards@etuc.org).

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The Coronavirus is winding down our activities



After China, the corona virus is now hitting Europe and other parts of the world. Economic and social activities are winding down and it has severe consequences for workers, business and society as a whole. Millions of workers are facing difficulties at work, from forced to telework without much support until layoffs.

Trade unions, where possible, are working hard to conclude collective agreements with employers and governments to put in place measures and resources to keep workers safe, to protect their jobs and incomes during the coronavirus crisis no matter what their job, occupation or employment relationship. Such collective agreements are indispensable to guarantee that workers concerns are properly addressed. Some initiatives of the ETUC, the European social partners and the ETUC affiliates are listed [here](#).

Finally, the European and international standardisation activities are winding down. Physical meetings are either postponed or cancelled for the next two months. Whenever possible, they are replaced by online meetings.

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## Towards a future European standard for hairdressers' gloves



Standards can help improve health and safety at work. As social partners of the hairdresser sector - UNIEuropa and Coiffure.EU - have identified the need for a specific standard on gloves for hairdressers, the ETUC organised an ad hoc meeting in Brussels on 30 January 2020. It allowed various stakeholders including experts, Coiffure.EU, the CEN/TC 162/WG 8 convenor (Jean-Claude Cannot), to take stock of the specific hairdressers' needs and start building consensus towards a future European standard for hairdressers' gloves.

It was clarified at the ad hoc meeting that the main aim of the standard is to protect hairdressers from the chemical impact of the products. The length of the gloves – 300mm? – was also discussed.

The outcome of the ad hoc meeting organised by the ETUC provided the right input for the CEN/TC 162/WG 8 “Safety Gloves” meeting, which took place on 18-20 February, in Madrid.

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### The ETUC meets the DG GROW Director Joaquim Nunes de Almeida



The current Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) on standardisation between the European Commission and the ETUC is coming to a close on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. Simultaneously, a new Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) is under negotiation in the European Institutions. The ETUC therefore proposed to meet with the European Commission services in charge of standardisation, to discuss a wider range of issues.

DG GROW Director Joaquim Nunes de Almeida elaborated on different aspects around standardisation and how standardisation supports the European legislation (a public, private partnership, which is unique in the world). He also emphasised the growing importance of international standards. Isabelle Schömann – ETUC Confederal Secretary - presented the 2015-2019 ETUC activities in the field of standardisation (i.e. the ETUC STANDardisation project). She highlighted that standards have improved the wellbeing at work, in particular in fields like OSH, Machine safety, etc. At the same time, Isabelle addressed some attention points for trade unions, in particular around specific standardisation activities which, even while standards are non-binding and so voluntary, they still have the potential to circumvent or even violate labour laws, collective agreements and collective bargaining. This is all the more important, as the Vienna Agreement for the transposition of international standards at the European level foresees a principle of primacy of international standardisation. Isabelle therefore addressed the possibility to review this agreement, so as to guarantee a robust control of legality and compatibility of international standardisation before authorizing their application at EU and national levels. This first DG GROW-ETUC encounter at political level proved very productive and allowed to have a better understanding of each other's activities and policy priorities.



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## New ISO work proposal on "Humane entrepreneurship"



A proposal for the development of an ISO International Workshop Agreement (IWA) on **Guidelines for Humane Entrepreneurship** was submitted jointly by SAC (China), JISC (Japan), and KATS (Republic of Korea) for approval until 7 March, by the ISO/Technical Management Board (ISO/TMB). The ETUC questions the usefulness of this new standardisation project.

The proposed Workshop Agreement raises various concerns for, amongst others, trade unions. Firstly, The ETUC believes this proposal conflicts with current work carried out in **ISO/TC 260** "Human resource management" and its **WG 8** 'Diversity and Inclusion', **WG 9** 'Employee Engagement', and **WG 11** 'Learning and development'. The ETUC is currently contributing to ISO/TC 260 and its relevant Working Groups.

Moreover, the ETUC fears the IWA risks interfering with the actions taken at the European level on Corporate Social Responsibility, Responsible Business Conduct, and Business and Human Rights. And finally, the ETUC understands this guidance document is meant to explore the relationship between entrepreneurship, human resource management and leadership, etc.

The ETUC raised strong concerns that the people concerned i.e. the workers and the trade unions are not part of the Agreement nor dealt with in this document. The ETUC believes the IWA misses important and relevant

stakeholders such as the ILO, European and international trade unions. The ETUC will closely follow-up the further developments of this IWA proposal in ISO.

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Published standard on the assesement of the ability to repair, reuse and upgrade of energy related products



The ETUC welcomes the publication of EN 45554 '*General methods for the assesement of the ability to repair, reuse and upgrade energy related products*'. The ETUC participated to the development of this standard, which comes in response to Mandate 543 on "Ecodesign requirements on material efficiency aspects for energy-related products".

Although the ETUC supported the adoption of EN 45554, the ETUC recommended it be complemented with an additional standard addressing the material efficiency of the **repair** or **maintenance** operations of energy related products, which the ETUC believes was only partially covered by the standard. The ETUC has raised this concern to the CEN/CENELEC BT, and the ETUC hopes to see the proposal go through shortly.

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Contribution to the CEN-CENELEC strategy 2021-2030

# STRATEGY 2030

## preparation process

CEN and CENELEC are in the process of redefining their strategic ambitions for the future. With a view to redefining and enhancing their strategic position as standard makers in Europe – and at international level – they are currently developing **a common strategy for the period 2021-2030**.

In order to take into account the views of the different stakeholders involved in standardisation, they have prepared a questionnaire to allow their partners – such as the ETUC - to provide feedback on their draft strategy, which outlines their vision, mission and a set of strategic goals.

The ETUC took the opportunity to provide trade unions feedback on the draft strategy and, following a prior consultation of the ETUC affiliates, the ETUC has submitted its reply on Friday 28 February.

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## ETUC STANDardisation project evaluation



The Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission, as part of which the ETUC STAND project was set up in 2015, is coming to a close on 31 December 2020. The ETUC has therefore carried out an evaluation of the project over the past 4 years in order to better assess the achievements



and the challenges of the project, as well as the lessons learnt. The ETUC trusts the exercise will help us reflect on future priorities.

The evaluation consists of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the activities carried out in the project. The evaluation includes a survey within the members of the Special Committee on Standardisation and the experts contributing to the project. In terms of the overall assessment of the ETUC STANDardisation project and its activities, the feedback is in general very positive. The survey was sent to 50 trade union organisations, members of the committee, of which 24 are active in standardisation. 19 organisations that have replied to the survey stressed the important role played by the ETUC STAND project in ensuring that trade unions participate in standardisation, and strongly encourage its continuation.

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## Improving the wellbeing of the flying staff on commercial airlines - cabin air quality



Since 2015, the ETUC, along with ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation), ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation), GCAQE (Global Cabin Air Quality Executive), ECA (European Cockpit Association) and other flying staff representatives have been working with other stakeholders to shape a European standard that enables measurements to define the cabin air quality on civil aircraft. The aim of the standard is – simply said - to “clean” the cabin air of toxic chemicals. Currently, the cabin air is not clean – e.g. due to fume events – and pilots and other flying crew have been grounded/banned from undertaking their profession, due to primarily neurological and respiratory diseases. But the link between the toxic cabin air and the neurological and other diseases is contested by the airline industry (manufacturers and airlines). The ETUC has identified a similar situation - 20 years ago - of the dangers related with the use of asbestos, or of cigarettes, which at that time was strongly questioned by the asbestos and cigarette industries; or similarly, today's continued denial of climate changes taking place, by some interest groups.



After long discussions, the draft European standard 17436 “Cabin air quality on civil aircraft – chemical compounds”, was released for comments in September 2019.

Over 800 comments on the draft standard were put forward by the different stakeholders. To slow down the process towards the publication of prEN 17436, as a European standard, some stakeholders require to evaluate each single comment, at length. This tactic will, unfortunately, slow down the process. But it will not stop it.

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## The ETUC discusses the Sharing economy

The ETUC participated to the second meeting of ISO/TC 324 ‘Sharing economy’, which took place from 9 to 11 December 2019 in Toronto, Canada.

The participants discussed the first part of the standard: a glossary of definitions and principles for the sharing economy. Before starting the writing of the standard, it is important to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of the terminology used. The ETUC expert provided input such as gender considerations, protection from arbitrary account closure and non-payment. The meeting reviewed the many comments received on the draft document ISO 24561 ‘Sharing economy – Terminology and Principles’. It was agreed at the meeting, after much discussion, to refine the definitions such that ‘sharing economy’ means *‘economic model where platforms enable providers and users to exchange products and assets’*. And platform refers to *‘mechanisms that facilitate transactions’*. All the comments were addressed and agreed.

The draft is currently circulated for comments until April 2020.

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