

# TRADE UNION

## ACCESS TO NATIONAL

# STANDARDISATION

## COMMITTEES





**E**uropean standards are used to support a wide range of policy objectives, including health and safety at the workplace, energy efficiency or the cybersecurity of connected devices. When underpinning occupational health and safety, work processes or working conditions, the participation of trade unions is crucial to ensure that workers' voices and concerns are heard and taken into account.

The growing use of standards to support public interest has reinforced enduring questions regarding their legitimacy and the ability of the standardisation bodies to ensure a balanced representation of all relevant stakeholders and in particular trade unions. In Europe, national standardisation bodies (NSBs) channel access and participation to their national mirror committees, which hold the voting rights in the development of European standards.

## **BARRIERS TO ACCESSING STANDARDISATION**

But do trade unions have access to participate in standardisation at national level? Across Europe, national trade unions have different conditions to access their respective NSB and national mirror committees.

Several NSBs apply membership fees to participate in their mirror committees which ultimately influences the standard setting.

With regard to stakeholder mapping and the information flow, a process to identify the relevant stakeholders is missing in some NSBs even though the large majority of them have a process in place.

Submitting comments during the public commenting phase on draft standards does not take place in a user-friendly way.

All of these are barriers which trade unions must overcome.

## HOW CAN WE IMPROVE ACCESS CONDITIONS FOR TRADE UNIONS IN EUROPE?

**Recommendation 1:** NSBs, taking into consideration their various business models, should implement harmonised access conditions across Europe for trade unions' participation in the national mirror committees, thus ensuring that national trade unions wherever they may be in Europe, have the same opportunity to be part of the elaboration of the national consensus position.

**Recommendation 2:** NSBs should review their internal contact data base annually to ensure that a contact name and personal email exist for trade unions representatives. Upon request, the ETUC should support the NSBs in identifying a national contact point within trade unions.

**Recommendation 3:** NSBs shall proactively share the New Work Item (NWI) form when informing about a new work proposal to ease priority setting for external stakeholders.

**Recommendation 4:** The EC should consider allowing ETUC and other societal stakeholders receiving European Union financing for standardisation activities to dedicate part of the EC grant to support financially or technically their affiliates at national level.

**Recommendation 5:** CEN and CENELEC to integrate into their membership criteria a requirement to grant access of trade unions and other societal stakeholders to national committees at no cost, especially as they do not have any financial interest. Should membership fees impede specific trade union participation, the case shall be reported by the NSB or trade union representatives to the ETUC and CEN, or CENELEC when relevant, in order to find an ad hoc solution with the stakeholders concerned.

**Recommendation 6:** The role of public authorities and Members states in effectively improving the inclusiveness of the ESS should be addressed, including with regard to funding possibilities.

**Recommendation 7:** CEN and CENELEC should enforce and monitor the effective implementation of their membership criteria and provide clearer guidelines in their internal regulations on stakeholder mapping, information flow, membership policy and enquiry process.

**Recommendation 8:** The EC should improve the reporting method of Article 24 of the Standardisation Regulation (EU) No. 1025/2012 on the involvement of trade unions at national level to avoid misunderstandings of indicators and discrepancies of the data reported. Fact-checking and gap-resolving procedures involving the Article 24 reporting parties should be developed in this context.

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The ETUC study found that an important part of the inclusiveness of the European Standardisation System is played out at national level and access conditions to national mirror committees are determinant in this regard. Trade unions face different access conditions to their national mirror committees across Europe. The above recommendations provide several paths for improvements for the inclusive participation of unions.

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Find more information in the study at  
[etuc.org/en/etuc-stand-studies](https://etuc.org/en/etuc-stand-studies)



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**50** | **ANNIVERSARY**  
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## EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

The European Trade Union Confederation speaks with a single voice on behalf of European workers to have a stronger say in EU decision-making. It represents 45 million members from 93 trade union organisations in 41 European countries, plus 10 European Trade Union Federations.

The ETUC standardisation project (ETUC STAND) aims at ensuring sustaining and reinforcing trade union representation and their effective participation in the development of standards.

[www.etuc.org/en/issue/standardisation](https://www.etuc.org/en/issue/standardisation)

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