

## ETUC standardisation newsletter - June 2023

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 ETUC publishes its new study on the trade union access to the standardisation system**



**TRADE UNION  
ACCESS TO NATIONAL  
STANDARDISATION  
COMMITTEES**

The ETUC published its study on [Trade union access to National Standardisation Committees](#) during the ETUC Congress held in Berlin, last May.

The objective of the study was to take a closer look at the decision-making processes in the National Standardisation Bodies (NSBs), which hold the voting

rights in the development of European (and international) standards. The NSBs are an integral part of the European standardisation system (CEN and CENELEC) and international standardisation system (ISO and IEC). The study identified the national barriers trade unions face when accessing the standardisation system, as trade unions face unequal access conditions to their NSBs and mirror committees across Europe. The Study investigated three conditions in particular the membership fees to participate in the standardisation activities at national level, the stakeholder mapping and information flow, and lastly the access to the public commenting phase on draft standards. In summary, 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. The study further makes 8 concrete recommendations, which aim to provide several paths for improvements for the inclusive participation of unions in standardisation. This ETUC study also complements to the, in December 2022 submitted, [ANEC-ECOS-ETUC-SBS proposals for CEN and CENELEC governance review in support of inclusiveness](#), as well as to the different activities inside the [European Commission's high level forum on standardisation](#).

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**ETUC Congress: Commission President Von der  
Leyen adds 'missing piece' to equal pay puzzle**



More than 45 years after the EU made equal pay the law, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen joined trade unions to ensure it is finally made a reality for women workers. President von der Leyen spoke at the congress of the European Trade Union Confederation in Berlin, where more than half of delegates were women, and ETUC General Secretary Esther Lynch called for the full and fast implementation at national level of the Pay Transparency Directive. The directive includes a ban on pay secrecy clauses, which have allowed unequal pay to persist, as well as measures empowering trade unions to tackle pay discrimination through collective bargaining agreements with employers. President Ursula von der Leyen said: “It is high time that work pays. And work must pay for everyone: for men and women alike. There is not a single argument why – for the same type of work – a woman should get paid less than a man. Not a single argument, not a single one. So, that is why we now have a Directive on pay transparency. It’s a basic principle of equality, it’s finally cast into law. Equal work deserves equal pay.” After her speech, President von der Leyen joined ETUC General Secretary Esther Lynch on stage to symbolically add these missing pieces to the equal pay puzzle.

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## ETUC Congress: Together for a fair deal for workers



The 15th Congress of the ETUC took place on 23 - 26 May 2023 in Berlin, Germany. About 600 national trade union delegates including the General Secretaries and/or Presidents of some 93 national trade union organisations from 41 European countries, 10 European sectoral trade union federations and special guests from Europe and beyond participated. For four days, European trade union leaders discussed trade union demands and priorities to ensure a Fair Deal for Workers. The focus of the discussions were on trade union renewal, on the future of work, on a new economic model for the people and the planet, on the future of Europe and on a stronger ETUC. The Congress also elected the [new ETUC leadership team](#) and approved the [2019 – 2023 Activity Report](#). It amended the [ETUC Constitution](#) and adopted key documents including the [Berlin Manifesto](#) and the [ETUC Action Programme 2023-2027](#). More information can be found at: [ETUC 15th Congress #ETUC50 | ETUC](#)

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## ETUC congress: New elected team, with Claes-Mikael Stahl taking political leadership over the ETUC standardisation activities



For the next four years, the ETUC elected a new leadership team, composed out of General Secretary [Esther Lynch](#), **Deputy General Secretaries** [Isabelle Schömann](#) and [Claes-Mikael Ståhl](#) and the **Confederal Secretaries** [Tea Jarc](#), [Giulio Romani](#) and [Ludovic Voet](#). Trade union work in standardisation will be integral to the ETUC work in the next four years. The [ETUC 2023-2027 Action programme](#) highlights the need for capacity building to increase trade unions' representation and action in standardisation at the European and national levels. Through the ETUC STAND project, the ETUC will continue to reject an expansion of European and international standard-setting activities to fields that can be better regulated by national or European legislation or collective agreements. The programme also foresees the participation to the drafting of European standards to ensure that they take into account the rights and interest of workers. For the next four years, Claes-Mikael Ståhl will take over the political responsibility of ETUC's standardisation activities and lead the standardisation

team. Claes Mikael is familiar with the standardisation file, especially in the context of international trade and the EU-US Trade and Technology Council as well as the Machinery Directive.

## The ETUC leads the discussion on inclusiveness in the European standardisation committee on AI



The ETUC participated in the CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee (JTC) 21 meeting on Artificial Intelligence, which was held in Arnhem from 22-24 May. JTC 21 was created mainly to prepare and develop the standards requested by the European Commission to operationalise the implementation of the AI Act. Following the approval of the Standardisation Request, JTC 21 has now 4 months to agree and prepare a work programme providing an overview of the standards that will be developed to support the requirements of the AI Act for high-risk of AI systems. The AI standardisation request further requires ensuring and facilitating the effective participation of relevant stakeholders in the development of the standards. With that view, and following a request from the ETUC, it was agreed at the meeting to set up a dedicated Task Group (TG) on Inclusiveness to assess the engagement of stakeholders and to prepare recommendations for increased participation. The ETUC welcomes the decision taken at the plenary meeting to

confirm the creation of the TG and its overall mission, and looks forward to contribute directly to this work.

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## Adopting ISO 45001 'Occupational health and safety management systems' in Europe



The international standard [ISO 45001 'Occupational health and safety management systems — Requirements with guidance for use'](#) will be adopted as a European standard. ISO 45001:2018 is the international standard for occupational health and safety management. It provides a series of minimum requirements which an employer's management system must comply with to achieve certification. The [ETUC is critical towards ISO 45001](#) due to the misbalance of power and underrepresentation of unions/worker reps in the development of the standard. The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) decided to adopt the standard in late 2022 and now the adoption process is coming to an end. Although CEN has opened a limited consultation, it does not foresee the set-up of a technical committee and discussion of possible comments. The ETUC is concerned about the procedure chosen to adopt ISO 45001 as it is not transparent nor democratic and does not allow the discussion and resolution of comments. Considering the scope of ISO 45001 on occupational health and

safety, the active participation of union representatives and labour inspectorates at national and European level in the adoption process would have been of importance.

At the same time, the ETUC sees the need for improvement of the current version of ISO 45001, predominately the role of worker representatives and the strengthening of consultation and participation. Although the consultation is limited, it is possible to submit comments to the respective [National Standardisation Body](#) the latest by end of June. The CEN consultation runs until 6 July, but national ballots close earlier. For more information and comments, please contact Katrin Behnke ([kbehnke@etuc.org](mailto:kbehnke@etuc.org)).

## Wellness at work



The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) proposes to prepare a new international standard on workplace wellness (ISO/NP 30441). The work would take place in ISO/TC 260 'Human resource management'. The ETUC actively follows the work of this committee. The vote on the proposal closes on 30 August at ISO level but national ballots will close earlier. The proposed document will summarise prevention, promotion and organizational practices that are meant to support health and wellness in the



workplace. It will deal with work-life balance such as flexible hours, access to teleworking, personal leave, but also management practices on harassment prevention, recognition, decision-making autonomy and workload. It will also address the work environment, namely air quality, noise control, brightness, thermal comfort, material quality, workstation ergonomics, etc. Lastly, it will deal with lifestyle habits. The new work will be based on the [Canadian standard CAN/BNQ 9700-800 'Healthy Enterprise – Prevention, promotion and organisational practices contributing to health and wellness in the workplace'](#).

The ETUC is not only concerned the standard deals specifically with occupational health & safety – which is regulated by the EU legal aquis on health and safety at work. But it also deals with issues that are very personal and private.

Together with Eurocadres, the ETUC has been long [calling for a European Directive to combat psycho-social risks at work](#). More than half of all working days lost in the EU are caused by work-related stress. 89% of employers state that complying with the legislation is the main reason why they manage occupational health and safety. On 7 June, the European Commission launched a [communication on a “comprehensive approach to mental health”](#) with concrete actions to combat the problems associated with mental health. The communication also addresses mental health in the workplace. The Commission is planning an EU-level initiative on psychosocial risks, after carrying out a peer review and consulting the social partners.

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**Improving the marking of ladders**



Correct and clear marking of ladders is essential to inform workers about the right use of the ladder. The wrong use of ladders can expose them to dangerous situations and cause accidents. Since long, the ETUC is concerned about accidents with ladders as falling from height counts for the second most deadliest occupational accidents.

In Europe, ladder manufacturers use the standard EN 131-3:2018 'Ladders - Part 3: Marking and user instructions'. This standard advises on the safe use of ladders and includes instructions on how ladders are marked. Until early September, EN 131-3 is under review. This means that National Standardisation Bodies vote on whether the standard should be revised or remains as it is. After EN 131-3 has been used for several years, the ETUC believes the standard needs updating. The introduction of a colour system where the intended use – at home or at work – is signalled by a different colour would underline and emphasize the correct use. We also believe additional marking for the appropriate temperature range and storage area could help to store the ladders correctly and prevent material fatigue. The ETUC therefore calls for a revision and invites its affiliates to contact their National Standardisation Body to vote for this. The review ends on 2 September, but national ballots close earlier.

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## ETUC and UNI Europa welcome the publication of the draft standard for hairdressers gloves



After four years of work, the draft European and International standard EN ISO 374-6 on protective gloves for hairdressers was released for public enquiry. Its elaboration was a joint effort of social partners, glove manufacturers, laboratories, universities, etc. A hairdresser glove standard is in the interest of all stakeholders:

**For the hairdresser**, using high-quality hairdresser gloves will help prevent and avoid skin affections, ailments and diseases as well as irritations and allergic reactions;

**Employers**, who invest in health and safety, are acknowledged as leaders in terms of socially responsible enterprise. This acts as a lever in relationships with clients and suppliers, and enhances the image of their business;

**For the glove manufacturer**, a specific hairdresser standard sets high-level criteria to help innovative manufacturers consolidate in the specific market. The hairdressing sector will start using gloves, which comply with the specific hairdresser glove standard;

**For the market surveillance authorities and social inspection**, as a specific

hairdresser glove standard makes an end to grey zones and discussions if the right OHS material is used (or not); **For the social welfare/insurance**, it helps to reduce social security costs for the public authorities. Healthy workers are of interest to social welfare and insurance organisations: healthy hairdressers do not have to make use of social security allowances.

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