

ETUC Standardisation Newsletter - February 2024

Dear colleagues and friends,

The ETUC is pleased to send you its newsletter on standardisation, bringing you regular updates on the ETUC's activities in this field. We are pleased to deliver information on European and international standardisation straight to your inbox. If you wish to receive additional information and/or documents related to the news presented below, feel free to contact us at standards@etuc.org.

AI Standardisation 'Inclusiveness' Newsletter



In May 2023, the European Commission issued a standardisation request in support of Union policy on artificial intelligence ([European Commission C \(2023\)3215](#)). The

requested standards are currently being prepared in the CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee (JTC) 21 on 'Artificial Intelligence'.

The AI standardisation mandate requires facilitating appropriate representation and effective participation of relevant stakeholders in the development of the standards. With that view, a dedicated Task Group (TG) on Inclusiveness, led by the ETUC, was set up within JTC 21, to assess the engagement of stakeholders and reflect on ways to increase their participation. One of the means put in place by the TG to facilitate broader participation has been to share updated information on AI standardisation and related activities to all interested stakeholders, via the regular publication of a newsletter.

The first issue of the [AI standardisation Inclusiveness Newsletter](#) was published on 16 January 2024 and raised much interest. It was decided that the Newsletter would continue to be circulated through the Joint Technical Committee itself and further distributed to its wider membership. The ETUC is providing secretariat work for the newsletter. Any request to be included to the mailing list or suggestions for publication should be addressed to TG_Inclusiveness@etuc.org.

Work on a European standard for AI Risk Management to begin



The European Commission's standardisation request M/593 in support of safe and trustworthy artificial intelligence provides a list of deliverables to be developed, including a standard with requirements on risk management system. In that context, the CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committee (JTC) 21 'AI', recently launched for vote a New Work Item Proposal for a European standard on AI Risk Management. This should provide clear and actionable guidance on how risk can be addressed and mitigated throughout the entire lifecycle of the AI system.

The ETUC supported the work and recommended the adoption of the proposal. We further submitted technical comments looking at namely including in the scope the need to prevent risks when possible, in addition to identifying and managing them. The Work item has been approved and will be allocated to WG 2 "Operational aspects".

Interview with Susanne Wixforth: Standards are no longer only an industry tool



Susanne Wixforth, Deputy head of the economic policy department at the Vienna Chamber of Labour (AK Wien), explains why standards are no longer only an industry tool.

What is standardisation and why do we need it?

SW: Standardisation is aimed at the uniform definition of technical product properties. The idea behind this is to standardise the design of objects so that they can be used in many different contexts in different places by different groups of people. Since the beginning of the 21st century, standards have gone far beyond technical issues and also relate to management and services. Trade unions therefore need to address the following questions: What is the impact of this extension of the scope of standardisation, where are trade union competences affected? And how should trade unions get involved in the process of shaping standards?

Have standards reached “the world of work”?

SW: When we think of standards, we probably first focus on plugs for electrical appliances, standardised charging cables for mobile phones or paper formats. In the meantime, standards are increasingly affecting management and services, health and safety in the workplace, work processes and operational human resource (HR) work as well as working conditions. With regard to the twin transition (green and digital), standardisation relating to artificial intelligence is taking centre stage. Moreover, "human-centred transition pathways" are also set to become the subject of ISO standardisation. It is therefore important to set the political framework conditions for the participation of all stakeholders concerned so that standardisation not only supports the interests of employers, but also contributes to the safety of employees. Standardisation can also be a useful tool for trade unions: One example is the Austrian cockpit Association's application for standardisation, supported by the Austrian Vida trade union: the aim was to improve air quality in aircrafts through an EU standard. The problem of the current technical design of aircrafts ventilation, small amounts of engine or hydraulic oil can get into the cabin air despite the presence of seals, thereby damaging the health of flight personnel. Although the

appropriate technology exists and is applied in certain aircrafts, no common standard exists to protect the aircraft crews from the damaging effects.

[Access the full interview here.](#)

Unions win better training for airport and maritime security



Security staff working at European airports and ports will receive a higher level of training under new standards set in conjunction with trade unions. The ETUC and UNI Europa, which represents security staff, have contributed to revising two European standards on the minimum criteria for the provision of security services within the aviation and maritime sectors.

Both standards, EN 17483-2 'Private security services - Protection of Critical Infrastructure - Part 2: Airport and aviation security services' and EN 17483-3 'Private security services - Protection of Critical Infrastructure - Part 3: Maritime and port security services' were published at the end of 2023.

The standards will raise requirements for the training of private security staff above those laid down in existing EU standards and legislation. The standards were developed through negotiations with employers, manufacturers, consumers and regulators. Participation of trade unions in these standards was crucial to ensure that workers' voices and concerns were heard and taken into account in their development. Trade unions bring in shop-floor experience but also raise the need for improvements in the job.

We welcome that the standards foresee that training for supervision shall be conducted by qualified trainers and have further requirements for on-the-job training and refresher training.

The ETUC and UNI Europa are currently participating in the development of additional parts of the EN 17483-series, namely the standards on private security services for the energy sector and water infrastructure. Further sector-specific standards are planned.

Robust telescopic ladders for workers



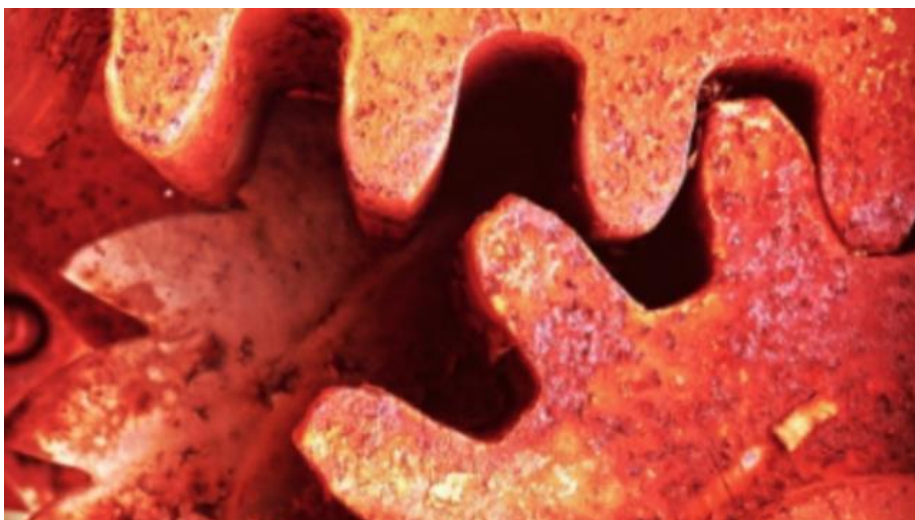
The International Standardisation Organisation, ISO, is developing a standard for manufacturing and testing telescopic ladders. These ladders are commonly used by workers working in buildings, such as painters, drywallers, electricians, carpenters and chimney sweeps. The ladder is also very popular as it is very light and fits into any car without a roof structure. The ladders are therefore mostly used by small businesses without a large fleet of cars.

The standard, ISO/DIS 11671 'Fiber reinforced plastics - Telescopic ladder - Requirements and test methods', is prepared in ISO/TC 61/SC 11 'Plastics' and is now on vote.

The ETUC is against the proposed total load of 100kg for telescopic ladders used professionally. A worker climbing up a ladder with tools and material may well be over 100 kg. A telescopic ladder tested only for 100kg therefore wrongly suggests safe commercial use. We therefore support the total load of 150 kg, which is not only more realistic but also in line with the requirements of the European Standards EN 131-2 'Ladders - Part 2: Requirements, testing, marking' and EN 131-6 'Ladders - Part 6: Telescopic ladders'.

The vote is scheduled at ISO on 22 March 2024.

Collecting data of accidents with machinery



The new Machinery Regulation 2023/1230 sets provisions to ensure that machinery on the European market has a high level of protection of the health and safety of persons such as workers. As some machinery is more dangerous to work with than other, the regulation foresees a list of high-risk machinery (Annex I Part A). For such machinery types, a Notified Body is responsible for checking whether it is indeed in conformity with (part of) the harmonised standard(s).

The regulation however does not carve into stone which machinery is high-risk. The European Commission will collect reports on accidents with machinery from Member States on a regular basis. With the data collected, the EC will then assess whether there is a need to update the list of high-risk machinery in Annex I of the regulation. To have a uniform collection of data, the European Commission prepared a draft template which Member States need to use when reporting on accidents.

The ETUC welcomed that the draft template collects not only data on accidents, but also other sources related to health and safety when working with machines, such as the indication of harm, safety defects, corrective action and close calls.

The processing and interpretation of data, however, is crucial. The methodology for the assessment needs to be clarified and also take into account qualitative information. The withdrawal of a category from Annex I Part A could result in more accidents with this type of machinery as the provisions for high-risk machinery, such as mandatory conformity assessments, are no longer in place.

Moreover, the ETUC calls for the template and collection of data to indicate or trace back to the shortcoming of the respective standard. Should the standard fail to address certain health and safety requirements and therefore become the source of manufacturing defect machines, the template and data collection should be designed in such a way that accident information can be linked back to a defect standard, feeding back into the standardisation process.

The draft template is currently being fine-tuned by the European Commission and its finalisation is planned ahead of Summer 2024.

CEN and CENELEC are addressing a governance review



In the framework of improving efficiency, CEN and CENELEC (the European Standardisation Organisations) are optimizing their governance. One of the reforms regards the CEN and CENELEC Technical Boards. A proposal has been put forward to hold specific “members only” CEN/Technical Board sessions. From a partners’ perspective – the ETUC being one of such partners – this would represent a step back from the “inclusiveness” that CEN-CENELEC have helped to champion over the past decade.

The ETUC, along with ANEC (consumers), ECOS (environmental stakeholders) and SBS (representing SME interests in the European standardisation system), have issued a joint letter on the proposed governance review, advocating to maintain the current involvement of “Annex III” partners. (The input of such partners (ANEC-ECOS-ETUC-SBS) is crucial in order to support and enrich CEN and CENELEC in their decision-making processes. The full letter can be found [here](#).

ETUC meets the CEN-CENELEC Director General



Claes-Mikael Ståhl (ETUC Deputy-General-Secretary) has met Elena Santiago Cid (CEN-CENELEC Director General).

During the acquaintance meeting, Claes-Mikael Ståhl informed about the latest ETUC Congress, the new elected ETUC team and his various (new) responsibilities, including Standardisation and the adopted ETUC congress position on standardisation. Elena Santiago Cid informed about the ongoing CEN and CENELEC activities to make the standardisation system more efficient, while maintaining the inclusiveness of the CEN and CENELEC system. Andreea Gulacsi (Director Policy & External Affairs, CEN and CENELEC) and Guido De Jongh (Advisor, ETUC) accompanied the acquaintance meeting.

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