

ETUC Standardisation Newsletter - June 2025

Dear colleagues and friends,

The ETUC is pleased to share with 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.

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ETUC Mid-Term Conference in Belgrade



On 20–21 May 2025, the ETUC held its mid-term Congress in Belgrade, Serbia. Representatives of 45 million workers from across Europe gathered to discuss and exchange views on key priorities, commitments, and demands aimed at advancing good working conditions for all workers throughout Europe.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the ETUC STANDardisation Project took part in the mid-term Congress with a dedicated stand. Building on its ongoing efforts to promote stronger representation and more effective participation of trade unions in standardisation, the ETUC STAND team engaged in meaningful exchanges with participants about the importance of standardisation. These conversations were supported by the distribution of practical tools developed over the past year, which introduce the world of standards and explain their impact on workers, including:

- [Handbook "Standards at the Workplace"](#)
- [Video: Standardisation Matters: Towards Better Participation of Trade Unions](#)

ETUC Joins ISO/TC 162/WG 2 - Protective Clothing against Heat and Fire



Europe is increasingly experiencing the impacts of climate change. Forest fires and flooding are affecting more and more EU Member States, with firefighters and emergency service workers facing growing risks and dangers at work. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) plays a critical role in safeguarding these workers from escalating hazards, ensuring their health and safety.

The EU Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulation — [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/425](#) — sets out the legal requirements for the design, manufacture, and marketing of personal protective equipment within the EU, to ensure that PPE placed on the EU market provides adequate protection for users' health and safety. To demonstrate that products comply with the essential health and safety requirements of EU Regulation 2016/425 on PPE, manufacturers can apply harmonised standards referenced in the Official Journal of the European Union.

In this context, the ETUC has decided to contribute to the work of ISO/TC 162/WG 2 Protective Clothing against Heat and Fire, which is revising EN 469 “Protective clothing for firefighters – Performance requirements for protective clothing for firefighting activities”. This standard is one of those supporting the implementation of EU Regulation 2016/425 and is designed to protect the wearer of firefighters' clothing.

The current edition of EN 469, adopted in 2020, specifies minimum performance requirements for protective clothing used in firefighting. It addresses aspects such as design, protection against heat and flame, mechanical and chemical resistance, comfort, and visibility. The upcoming revision of the standard is aimed at reflecting the increasing risks faced in the field, particularly those related to heat stress and evolving environmental and climate-related challenges.

The ETUC has joined the Working Group, in order to bring the voice of workers to the drafting table.

ETUC and LO-Norway Awareness Event on Standardisation in collaboration with Standards Norway



On 12 June, the ETUC and national affiliate LO-Norway co-organised an awareness raising event in Oslo: "Standards as a tool for better working conditions". The event was organised in collaboration with Standards Norway, the Norwegian national standardisation body.

Both in-person and online participants explored the field of standardisation and its relevance for workers. The event provided valuable insights into how standards intersect with legislation and their broader geopolitical implications. Attendees also learned about Standards Norway, as well as about practical case studies. In terms of the latter, presentations were provided both with regards to the work of trade unionists on specific standards (on machinery and diversity management); as well as in relation to effective engagement strategies for workers, with Sweden provided as a strong example of coordinated trade union efforts in technical standardisation work.

This workshop was organised under the ETUC STAND Project, which seeks to promote awareness of standardisation at national level. Held twice a year in collaboration with national affiliates, these events aim to deepen understanding within the trade union movement of how standards are developed, their significance at the workplace, and their broader impact.

USO Joins UNE Technical Committee on Human Resource Management Standards

TRADE UNION ACCESS TO NATIONAL STANDARDISATION COMMITTEES

Just over a year after co-organising a successful awareness-raising event on standardisation in Madrid alongside the ETUC (22 May 2024), the Unión Sindical Obrera (USO) has taken meaningful strides to deepen its involvement in this important area.

In May 2025, USO officially became a member of the Human Resource Management Technical Committee of UNE—the Spanish Association for Standardisation. This significant development represents a major milestone in USO's ongoing commitment to influencing the standardisation landscape in Spain.

By joining this committee, USO ensures that the perspectives and interests of workers are not only heard but actively considered in the development of standards that affect working conditions. USO's participation is a testament to the growing recognition of the vital role trade unions can play in shaping standards that directly impact the world of work. It also highlights the importance of continued collaboration between trade unions, standardisation bodies, and other stakeholders to ensure that workers' voices remain at the heart of these crucial discussions.

USO's national efforts are also closely aligned with the work being carried out at the international level by the ETUC. At the global stage, the ETUC actively participates in ISO Technical Committee 260 on Human Resource Management, contributing to a range of key standards. These include ISO 30201 on Human Resource Management Systems, ISO 30414 on External and Internal Human Capital Reporting, and others addressing for example workplace wellbeing and the use of technology in HR management. Together, these national and

international initiatives reflect a coordinated approach to ensuring the voice of workers is present in standardisation, in support of worker-friendly standards.

OHS Risks Arising from Extreme Weather Conditions



With Summer arriving, the ETUC is re-iterating its concern about safe work conditions during high temperatures. In recent years, awareness has grown about the critical role of heat stress at work. However, legal requirements are still needed to enforce prevention and protection measures to mitigate the impact of climate change on workers' health and safety.

The [ETUC is calling for a European Directive on the prevention of occupational heat](#). At the same time, the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) has prepared a document that provides general guidelines for companies on what to do to combat occupational health and safety risks arising from climate change and related adaptation measures. This has been prepared in the form of a Publicly Available Specification (PAS), ISO/PAS 45007; the next step in the development of this standard is the final adoption vote in ISO/Technical Committee 283 'Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) management', overseeing this work.

The scope of ISO/PAS 45007 remains solely to provide guidance. It is not a certifiable standard, but is rather intended as a practical tool aimed at helping organisations to establish, implement, maintain, and continually improve management systems meant to address risks such as floodings or wildfires in or near workplaces.

Worth noting in parts of the document is the weak focus on OHS measures for the protection of workers, in favour instead of business continuity. While business

resilience is a key priority when writing a standard, those drafting its content must not forget that a truly effective health and safety system must also prioritise impacts on workers.

Since the beginning of the work on the document around a year ago, the draft has evolved in various ways. Importantly, however, the clause on worker participation initially proposed and introduced by the ETUC remains the same. This commitment to involving workers in the design, implementation, and evaluation of measures is a strong positive.

An important development is that compared to a few months ago, the document now offers more elaborate guidance on the determination of applicable legal requirements. This is a welcome enhancement, as understanding and complying with relevant legislation is a cornerstone of any effective OHS management system. This is in line with the opinion which the [European Commission Advisory Committee on Safety & Health at work](#) prepared on draft ISO/PAS 45007. It highlights that a standard is not an alternative to legislation when it comes to addressing OSH risks from climate change and adaptation measures. The PAS does not and should not aim at giving any legal assurance or at guaranteeing the fulfilment of legal requirements.

In line with this, the ETUC continues to call for better protection of workers during extreme weather conditions such as heat stress, as well as to collect statistical information and testimonials related to heat stress and its impact on workers' health and safety.

EU Machinery Legislation Guide Undergoes Revision for New Regulation



The European Commission Guide for the application of EU Machinery legislation, a vital tool for industry to apply the requirements of legal obligations on machinery, is currently undergoing a revision. The expected update is crucial to align the guide with the new Essential Health and Safety Requirements (EHSRs) introduced by the recently adopted Machinery Regulation (EU) 2023/1230.

The EU Machinery Regulation, which will fully apply as of 20 January 2027, replaces the EU Machinery Directive (2006/42/EC). Unlike directives, regulations are directly applicable in all EU Member States, ensuring greater legal certainty and uniformity. The new Regulation introduces significant changes compared to the Directive, particularly addressing technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and the increasing digitalisation of machinery.

Industry stakeholders rely heavily on this guide to ensure their products comply with the evolving regulatory landscape. The updated guide will provide much-needed clarifications and practical guidance on how to implement the provisions of the new Machinery Regulation.

The revision process is being conducted through a dedicated Editorial Group and related subgroups, each focusing on critical areas such as AI-powered safety functions and software as a safety component; the suitability of the current guide concerning the amended EHSRs in the new Regulation, addressing "substantial modification" of machinery; and considering machine-specific provisions of the New Legislative Framework. The work will also look at contact with overhead powerlines.

The ETUC asked to join the work with a view to maintaining a high level of safety for those that work with machines, while ensuring adaptations to the rapid pace of technological innovation. We believe it is crucial to involve a broad range of experts including from market surveillance, trade unions, industry and consumer organisations.

**Adapting the Cornerstone of Machinery Standards:
EN ISO 12100**



For anyone involved in the design, manufacture or use of machinery, standard EN ISO 12100 "Safety of machinery - General principles for design - Risk assessment and risk reduction" is not just another document; it is the fundamental bedrock of machinery safety. This "Type-A" standard provides the overarching framework, terminology, and methodology for achieving safety in machinery design, providing a crucial baseline for the development of all other, more specific safety-related standards (Type-B and Type-C standards).

At its core, EN ISO 12100 outlines a systematic process to ensure machinery is inherently safe. It mandates a comprehensive risk assessment process, followed by the implementation of risk reduction measures.

As the world of machinery is constantly evolving, with new technologies introducing novel hazards and risks, EN ISO 12100 is currently undergoing a revision. This update is also driven by the need to align the standard with the new Machinery Regulation (EU) 2023/1230, which will replace the EU Machinery Directive. EN ISO 12100 is one of more than 800 standards that underpin the EU Machinery Directive, providing presumption of conformity to those that apply the standards.

ISO/Technical Committee 199 'Safety of Machinery' is responsible for the updating of the standard, among others by addressing the safety implications of AI-powered safety functions and including requirements to protect machinery control systems from unauthorized access or attacks that could lead to hazardous situations.

The ETUC participated in the May ISO/TC 199 meeting, focused on resolving comments on the standard collected during the past months. We welcome that the standard now contains better requirements for the walkability of machines and mental strain at the Human-Machine Interface. Other updates – e.g. related to AI-induced changes or those resulting from the lifecycle of Machine Learning – were agreed in principle but are yet to be reflected in the draft standard. An ongoing discussion

remains around the concept of ‘tolerable risk’, as there are different views within ISO. The ETUC is calling to stick with what is defined in EU legislation. The question at hand is whether the standard, once finalised, will be in full compliance with the new Machinery Regulation.

The revised EN ISO 12100 is expected to be published around mid-2026.

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