

ANEC in brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending and representing consumer interests in the development of technical standards, in the application of certification schemes to standards and in the creation or revision of legislation on products and services. ANEC brings together national consumer organisations from the EU Member States and EFTA countries in order to define European positions on matters affecting consumer protection and welfare. ANEC receives funding from the European Commission's DG SANCO and the EFTA Secretariat. It relies too on the participation of volunteer experts which is considered a contribution in kind.

Consumer participation in standardisation is crucial. Consumer representation complements the business view, and goods and services based on standards developed with effective consumer participation can be more easily accepted in the market place. In the EU context, consumers ensure that the public interest is represented in the standardisation work that complements European legislation and broader public policy initiatives.

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Raising Standards for Consumers



*Setting the Agenda for the
Digital Consumer*

ANEC calls for the new Strategy for the European Information Society 2010-2015 - the "Digital Agenda for Europe" - to be set by consumers, for consumers.

Timing: from 2010 to 2015

Item 1: Meeting Consumers Expectations

Item 2: Granting the right to access the Information Society

Item 3: Shaping the Internet of the future

Item 4: Choosing a sound regulatory approach

Consumers expect to be able to use Information Society products and services whatever their ages and abilities.

They also expect to do it in all security and without undue technical restrictions. In other words, ANEC believes that accessibility, privacy/security, interoperability and sustainability should be the main priorities of the new European Information Society strategy



Granting the right to access the Information Society

ICT products and services, such as mobile phones and the Internet, play an increasing role in everyday life, from shopping on-line, listening to music to e-voting. Whilst recognising that a significant majority of consumers are using mobile communications services and Internet broadband connections, many consumers, older people and people with disabilities in particular, are still not reaping the benefits of the Information Society. ANEC calls for mandatory provisions to be adopted, addressing the accessibility of ICT products and services. This framework could then be underpinned by formal standardisation.

Shaping the Internet of the future

ANEC believes that the only way for the use of digital technologies to be successful for consumers, part of the so called "Internet of the future" is by adopting and enforcing consumer principles such as openness, interoperability and privacy by design in European policies. "Internet of Things" should become the "Internet for People".

Choosing a sound regulatory approach

Although ICT technologies have potential to improve consumer welfare, by making a wider range of products and services available, they pose several challenges in terms of protection of traditional consumer rights in an on-line environment. These include data privacy and the access of all consumers to the latest products and services. For ANEC, it is essential that EU policy on the Information Society ensures the legal basis for consumer protection is equipped to cope with the challenges posed by the digital environment. As a consequence, ANEC believes it is vital that the standardisation process underpinning the implementation of ICT technologies ensures full and effective consumer participation and is not directed exclusively by the wishes of business.

ANEC also recommends that Information Communications Technologies (ICT) policy should be more integrated with other EU policies as ICT are not only a technology development but are key in all aspects of life.