



Raising standards for consumers

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How can standards be truly European?



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The European Commission is consulting on an amendment to the rules on European Standardisation in order to underpin “the EU’s role as a global frontrunner in the development of standards, supporting EU values and providing industries with a competitive edge”¹.

The aim is to address the ‘Geopolitics’ of standardisation and improve the governance of the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs). The Commission is expressing serious concerns about the membership rules and voting rights which are in the hands of non-European companies for the adoption of Harmonised Standards and other standards used to implement EU policies.

ANEC Secretary-General, Stephen Russell, welcomed the revision and its ambitions to help the EU deliver the green and digital transitions in line with European policy goals. He said, “In its comments², ANEC stressed the need to take urgent action to enable European standards to reflect only European values and principles in supporting the European public interest”.

Nevertheless, numerous multinational companies, that do not have their headquarters in Europe have national offices in the EU member states, are active in standardisation at national level, this influencing the decision-making. He added, “In such cases, each national standardisation body should be required to ensure its votes take into account only the positions of stakeholders that are headquartered in the EU and EEA”.

However, we believe more is needed to increase the inclusiveness of the ESOs for societal stakeholders. To this end, the Commission is also calling for a modernisation the ESOs governance by the end of 2022. This should include increasing the involvement of SMEs, civil society and users. If insufficient progress is made, the Commission will consider proposing a fuller revision of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012.

Commenting further, Mr Russell said, “the requirement for the European Standardisation System to be inclusive is unique in the world and is worth reinforcing. A product or service that complies with an inclusive standard not only benefits European society, but provides European business with advantage on the global stage”.

ENDS.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_661

² [<https://bit.ly/36QfkLK>]



ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and the use of standards, as well as related legislation and public policies.

ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and is open to the representation of national consumer organisations in 34 countries.

ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

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