



Raising standards for consumers

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New ISO standard will help consumers choose



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ANEC welcomes publication by ISO of the standard, ISO 21041 'Guidance on unit pricing'. We participated in the development of the standard which is intended to help consumers compare the prices between products and make more informed choices.

The way in which unit prices are displayed can influence how consumers recognise and use this information when buying a product. The new ISO standard aims to allow the value for money of products to be compared more easily and so allow consumers to make more informed choices between package sizes, brands, packaged and non-packaged products, types of packaging, regular and special offer prices, substitute products, and even retailers.

The standard identifies elements that affect the quality of this information, including the proximity of the unit price to the selling price; font type and size and colour; and contrast against the background. It also highlights using angled shelf-labels to improve legibility, and addresses broader aspects, such as consistency in the provision and display of the unit pricing, including units of measure.

The standard supports the implementation of Directive 98/6/EC 'on consumer protection in the indication of the prices of products offered to consumers', which requires retailers to provide the unit price of packaged products in order to improve the information given to consumers and facilitate the comparison of prices. The Directive requires "unit price to be unambiguous, easily identifiable and clearly legible". At present, the quality of unit pricing varies greatly from one country to another, and within countries.

Regrettably, our proposal of a concept to calculate minimum character heights for legible unit prices depending on viewing distance (especially considering the needs of consumers with disabilities), was not included in the standard. We consider such minimum character heights essential, noting demographic changes such as "Ageing Europe". We will press for the concept to be reconsidered when ISO 21041 reaches its periodic review.

ENDS.



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.

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