



ANEC Strategy 2014-2020

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Raising Standards for Consumers

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Foreword by the ANEC President

ANEC plays an effective and essential role for the protection of European consumers through the European Standardisation System and related legislation. We have made important progress at the policy and technical levels of standards development. Our role in representing weaker stakeholders in the European Standardisation System has been recognised in the Standardisation Regulation, adopted in October 2012. The Regulation provides ANEC with the more permanent legal basis for its funding that we have sought for so long. Furthermore, it raises expectations for the strengthening of our voice in the European Standardisation Organisations (CEN, CENELEC & ETSI).

Despite the long-term commitment to ANEC's public funding given by the Regulation, the continued effects of the global financial crisis mean that there are significant challenges for our funding and hence, our overall resources in the years ahead. As a consequence, the strategy for the medium term must be to find innovative ways to ensure ANEC remains as effective as possible in contributing to raising standards for consumer protection and welfare. Our members are very concerned about a static, or even declining, pool of human and financial resources, both at European level and among national consumer organisations. These concerns we must seek to address.

Moreover, ANEC must ensure its response to new and emerging fields does not prejudice its efforts in more mature sectors. Beyond general product safety, the use of standards as a tool for consumer protection is to be found in legislation on the safety of specific products (such as toys), in public policy on sustainability & environmental protection, and the accessibility of products. The Standardisation Regulation also gives impetus to the development of European standards on the safety and quality of services. All of this within a market for products and services that is becoming increasingly global, and where European approaches to safety - such as the precautionary principle - may not be universally shared, and where, despite successes such as the creation of a Single Market for products in Europe, market surveillance & enforcement tends to be local and under-funded.

These challenges and opportunities are key in the background to the elaboration and adoption of this ANEC Strategy for the years 2014 to 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Arnold Pindar'.

Arnold Pindar
ANEC President

Part I

The Strategic Vision & Mission

The ANEC Vision for 2020

ANEC's vision for 2020 is to achieve:

- *A sustainable Europe where the health, safety and well-being of consumers is paramount, where goods and services are accessible, fit for purpose and in compliance with legislation and standards;*
- *A European Standardisation System in which the consumer interest is not only represented in standards work that will affect consumers but is influential, innovative and key in decision-making;*
- *A Europe where consumer engagement is achieved at national and European level, with balance between consumer and business interests;*
- *A balance between legislation and standardisation that ensures the highest levels of protection and welfare for all European consumers, regardless of age or ability.*

The Mission of ANEC

ANEC is unique in delivering the collective European consumer interest in the development of standards and related legislation, through the activities of its national members, experts and Secretariat, in order to achieve optimal levels of consumer protection, welfare and sustainability.

Achieving the ANEC Vision:
Ten Strategic Objectives for 2014 to 2020

Objective 1

ANEC will set areas of priority that reflect both established and emerging threats to the health, safety & welfare of consumers; the needs of consumers as voiced by the ANEC members; the availability of experts and of resources to ANEC; and the potential for ANEC to achieve change.

Objective 2

Within these areas of priority, and recalling the pre-eminence of legislation over standardisation, ANEC will aim to ensure the balance of standards and legislation that best meets the expectations of consumers, and achieves its vision of better protection & welfare for consumers of all ages and abilities.

Objective 3

In a climate of long-term financial uncertainty, and reduced public expenditure, ANEC will intensify its work to demonstrate that effective consumer participation is an investment with high returns to society and to business, and is not a cost on national or European public finances with few returns.

Objective 4

Noting that perceptions are increasingly used as a driver in forming policy, ANEC will ensure it develops positions that respond to the real threats and risks to the health, safety & welfare of consumers.

Objective 5

In order to strengthen the promotion of its positions and leverage its influence, ANEC will look to build "coalitions of the willing" among those who have common interest in its goals, and to position itself as a thought leader.

Objective 6

ANEC will seek to use the provisions of the EU Standardisation Package, as well as the expectations of other legislation and European public policies (such as the Single Market Acts), to ensure the effective participation of the consumer voice in the European Standardisation System at the strategic and technical levels.

Objective 7

Given that the health, safety & welfare of consumers is critically dependent on the effective implementation of pre-market actions (e.g. legislation & standards, conformity assessment & accreditation), ANEC will seek to strengthen political support for post-market actions (e.g. public market surveillance & enforcement).

Objective 8

In a globalised goods and services market, and with the advent of new consumer markets, ANEC will seek to ensure European standards stay effective in meeting the needs of European consumers, European legislation and public policies.

Objective 9

Noting the continued predominance of the national delegation principle in formal standardisation, ANEC will seek to strengthen interaction between the consumer movement and standardisation nationally, through working to build relationships between consumers, national standards organisations and national authorities in the recruitment & training of experts, within a framework of support that is both tailored and sustainable.

Objective 10

Noting the particular pressures on the resourcing of the consumer movement, and impact of the convergence of technologies on the identification of experts, ANEC will strive to ensure consumer participation in European Standardisation remains viable and effective in the years after 2020.



3. Implementation through Annual Action Plans

Actions to implement the Strategic Objectives will be set out in an Annual Action Plan. It will be developed by the ANEC Steering Committee (the executive board of the association) for approval by the ANEC General Assembly.

The Plan will be used, not only in the implementation of the Strategic Objectives, but in helping develop the Work Programmes through which ANEC defines its short & medium-term political & technical objectives for funding by the European Union & EFTA. The Plan will be managed by the Steering Committee on behalf of the General Assembly.

Each Plan will be a publicly-available annex to this ANEC Strategy 2014-2020.

Part II – The background to the Vision

4. ANEC, raising standards for consumers

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation. With participants from national consumer organisations in up to 33 countries, it promotes and defends the European consumer interest in three principal areas:

- *in the development or revision of European legislation and public policies related to those activities falling under its scope;*
- *within the political and technical bodies of the European Standardisation Organisations (i.e. CEN, CENELEC and ETSI) as well as in other standards development organisations whose standards may have notable impact on consumers (e.g. the International Organisation for Standardisation [ISO]; the International Electrotechnical Commission [IEC]; the World Wide Web Consortium [W3C]);*
- *in European policy fora related to the use of standards and, in particular, the application of conformity assessment schemes for products & services.*

In bringing together consumer experts from the countries of its membership, providing a framework for their activities, and ensuring a coherent voice in standardisation - supported where necessary by a research & testing programme - ANEC is committed to the objective of a high level of consumer protection as foreseen in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union:

- *"Union policies shall ensure a high level of consumer protection"¹*
- *"The Commission, in its proposals envisaged in paragraph 1 concerning health, safety, environmental protection and consumer protection, will take as a base a high level of protection, taking account in particular of any new development based on scientific facts. Within their respective powers, the European Parliament and the Council will also seek to achieve this objective"²*
- *"In order to promote the interests of consumers and to ensure a high level of consumer protection, the Union shall contribute to protecting the health, safety and economic interests of consumers, as well as to promoting their right to information, education and to organise themselves in order to safeguard their interests"³*

¹ Article 38, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2007/C 303/01)

² Article 114.3, Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU, 2007)

³ Article 169, Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU, 2007)

5. Historical perspective

Under the New Approach to Technical Harmonisation and Standardisation of May 1985, reference to formal European Standards became the preferred means of supporting the implementation of European product legislation. However, as the European Standards Organisations are private, market-driven associations, there is no guarantee the public interest (such as the consumer interest) is reflected in the development of the standards. It is the business interest that has most to gain from the development of European Standards (as compliance with a harmonised standard should be the easiest and most cost-effective means of meeting the European law), and it is the business interest that traditionally has had the resources to participate in the development process. Hence ANEC was established (with public funding) to address this classical market failure and to ensure effective consumer representation.

Although this quasi-legislative aspect was the driver behind the growth of European standardisation (there was minimal activity before the New Approach), business soon began to propose the development of other standards in order to benefit from trading in the nascent Single Market. As a result, the role of ANEC was broadened to represent the consumer interest in these non-regulated fields for products (later encompassed by the General Product Safety Directive). With the harmonisation of services now at the front of the European political agenda, and the New Legislative Framework having started to deepen implementation of the New Approach from 2010, the need for ANEC to express the consumer voice is increasing and not diminishing.

The creation of ANEC also recognised that the expertise needed to represent the consumer interest in national standardisation (on which the European process in CEN/CENELEC is built through the national delegation principle) was fragmented or non-existent in many European countries. This was confirmed in the Access to Standardisation study, published by DG Enterprise & Industry in March 2009⁴. In the years since ANEC was founded, it remains true that consumer organisations in only a small minority of countries are able to make a systematic and effective contribution at the national level. With the convergence of technologies now a reality, and the added difficulties that causes in finding consumer advocates who are experts in the topics under discussion, it is extremely doubtful whether the national delegation principle will ever be able to deliver a sufficient and effective consumer voice in European standardisation. The EXPRESS⁵ report of February 2010, setting a vision for European standardisation in 2020, noted that the lack of consumer expertise at national level meant "there will be need for European level financial and political support to continue in the period to 2020"⁶. Similarly,

⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/ydupxz>

⁵ Expert Panel for the Review of the European Standardisation System, convened by DG Enterprise & Industry of the European Commission.

⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/yz7gys6>

an independent, mid-term evaluation of the present Consumer Policy Strategy 2007 to 2013, published in April 2011, provided fresh evidence of the essential role that ANEC plays in representing the national consumer organisations in the European Standardisation System⁷. It noted:

"The work undertaken by ANEC was highlighted as being essential to product safety and standardisation activities, and it was remarked by consultees that, without ANEC, work on standardisation would be very difficult for national organisations to feed into or support" (page 154).

In its recommendations, the evaluation stressed one of four key priorities for EU funding in consumer protection should remain:

"..., the activities of ANEC given their importance to standardisation work at the EU level" (page 170).

6. ANEC structure and funding

ANEC is governed by a General Assembly (ANEC/GA). The General Assembly comprises one individual from each of the 30 countries of the European Union and EFTA, as well as Croatia, Turkey and Macedonia (FYROM). The individual is nominated through a collective decision of the national consumer organisations in each country and acts as the interlocutor between them and ANEC. Each General Assembly serves a four-year term and ordinarily meets annually. The General Assembly meeting is chaired by the ANEC President, elected by the General Assembly from among its membership for a two-year term. The ANEC Secretary-General acts as its secretary.

The strategic decisions of the General Assembly are implemented by an executive board known as the ANEC Steering Committee (ANEC/SC). Chaired by the ANEC President, the Steering Committee comprises up to nine members elected by the General Assembly from among its membership for a two-year term. The Steering Committee members elect the ANEC Vice-President and ANEC Treasurer, again for two-year terms. The Steering Committee meets up to four times each year and also works by correspondence.

Each field of priority in which ANEC operates, determined by the ANEC General Assembly and Steering Committee, has a Working Group or Project Team (ANEC/WG or PT) as its focus. Each WG has a Chair (appointed as an observer to the General Assembly) and Secretary (a Manager from the ANEC Secretariat). Its members are voluntary experts drawn from across the countries of the ANEC membership. Among other tasks, the WG or PT briefs the ANEC representatives who participate in the technical bodies of European (and international) standards organisations.

⁷ <http://tinyurl.com/capese6>

In 2012, the ANEC funding allowed ANEC to operate in eight areas of priority: Child Safety; Design for All (DfA); Domestic Appliances (DOMAP); Environment (Sustainability from 2014); Information Society; Innovation (Nanotechnologies, Smart Meters); Services; and Traffic.

The ANEC Secretariat acts as the hub of the association. Headed by the ANEC Secretary-General, it co-ordinates the activities of its national actors at European (and sometimes international) level; supports the governance and technical bodies of the association and the members of those bodies, and leads in the lobbying of the European Institutions.

The selection of ANEC by the European Commission to receive public funding in representing the consumer voice in standardisation was subject to an annual call for tender until 2010. From January 2011 to December 2014, the public funding of ANEC, provided by the EU under its Consumer Programme 2007-2013⁸, falls under a Framework Partnership Agreement with the Executive Agency for Health & Consumers (EAHC). The annual grant available to ANEC under the Consumer Programme is a maximum of 1,3M€. EFTA contributes a further 5% to this sum. The contribution of the national consumer organisations through their volunteer experts is considered a contribution in kind (and was calculated by ANEC to have been worth 260.000€ in 2007 using the prevailing Commission *per diem* rates).

At the end of the Consumer Programme, the legal basis for the financing of ANEC will move to the Standardisation Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1025/2012)⁹. The maximum funding available is expected to be 1,4M€ annually, with a further 5% being contributed by EFTA as previously.

Expenditure of the budget historically falls under three headings:

- *the functioning of the ANEC Secretariat and employment of the ANEC staff;*
- *the reimbursement of the travel, accommodation and subsistence costs of the ANEC volunteer experts and the ANEC representatives;*
- *the funding of a small Research & Testing programme, intended to provide the qualitative evidence needed by ANEC in the setting of certain of its positions.*

ANEC has signed the EU Transparency Register and agreed to abide by its Code of Conduct. Its Identification Number is 507800799-30¹⁰.

⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/d9fzufv>

⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/d8fdwn5>

¹⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/d24sb8y>

7. The present ANEC Strategy 2008 to 2013

In May 2008, the ANEC General Assembly adopted a strategy for the years 2008 to 2013, a timeframe chosen to coincide with the remainder of the EU Consumer Programme 2007-2013.

It had four main aims against which progress can be reported as follows:

Objective: *to consolidate (and grow) the funding of ANEC in the years to 2013*

Result: *The Standardisation Regulation gives political recognition and financial support to the European-level association representing the consumer interest in European standardisation. However, the continuing impact of the financial crisis is likely to mean no increase in the public funding of ANEC in the short or the medium term, and ANEC has had no success in finding private sector sponsors. Furthermore, the impact of the financial crisis on the well-being of the national consumer organisations, and provision of expertise to ANEC, is significant. The ANEC Strategy 2014-2020 needs to address this objective further.*

Objective: *to enhance the presence of ANEC at national and European level*

Result: *ANEC has played a leading role since 2008 in sensitising the European Institutions to the inadequacies of national market surveillance activities and the need for a strengthened European framework. This success has been reflected in the European Parliament's Resolution of March 2011 on the (GPSD and) market surveillance, and the expected Commission proposal for a Regulation on market surveillance. But noting that post-market measures (such as accreditation and market surveillance) remain insufficient in ensuring the effective implementation of pre-market measures in Europe (such as legislation and standards), the focus of ANEC on the post-market should be underlined in the Strategy 2014-2020.*

High-profile successes in standardisation have also aided the visibility of ANEC at the European level (and internationally). Notable among these are:

- the continued revision of the EN 60335-2 standards for domestic electrical appliances to permit removal of the "exclusion clause" and so allow the safe and more accessible use of appliances by vulnerable consumers (children, elderly or disabled people);
- the introduction of a safe limit by default in the maximum volumes allowed by Personal Music Players (PMP's) and similar portable devices, so reducing the risk of permanent hearing loss to up to 10 million European consumers (mostly young people);
- the introduction of the UNECE I-size technical regulation for child seats (CRS or Child-Restraint Systems) offering improved protection to the youngest of vehicle passengers, including the mandatory rearward-facing transport of young children to the age of 15 months in line with studies by ANEC among others.

More generally within the European Institutions, ANEC has raised the awareness of regulators about the inadequacy of European standards for services without at least a framework of minimum harmonisation (such as in the revision of Council Recommendation 1986/666/EC on hotel fire safety, and in implementation of EN 15733 on services of real-estate agents). It has demonstrated the inadequacies of the legislative framework for chemicals in consumer products – including toys - and in methodologies used to support popular measures of carbon footprinting and life-cycle analysis. It has continued to criticise the promotion of CE Marking as a safety mark to consumers.

But the continued fragmentation of the consumer movement at national level in many countries, and the financial crisis more particularly, have meant that ANEC has had little success in encouraging consumer engagement in standardisation at national level. This, and the provision of effective and sustainable training on standardisation for the consumer movement, needs to be carried forward to the Strategy 2014-2020.

Objective: to build partnerships with organisations that share the goals of ANEC

Results: ANEC continued its collaboration with Consumers International in order to ensure a combined European and international voice in ISO and IEC standards work, notably IEC/TC 61 "Safety of household and similar electrical appliances" and UNECE. ANEC also participated in international standardisation work in fields where Consumers International is not active (two examples being ISO/TC 207 "Environmental Management" and ISO/TC 228 "Tourism and related services"). A close co-operation continued with BEUC and its particular policy expertise (e.g. in the revision of the Toys Directive; the proposed revision of the GPSD; through the Nanotechnology Expert Team).

Memoranda of Understanding were signed with ECOS, the European Child Safety Alliance, and European Disability Forum. A collaboration with ORGALIME, and the publication of a common position paper, was a prime mover in the sensitisation of the European Institutions to action on market surveillance beyond Regulation 768/2008 of the NLF.

Despite these broad successes, the use of Memoranda was found limiting rather than helpful. During the Strategy 2014-2020, ANEC needs to explore structured but more flexible and less bureaucratic means to pursue collaboration with more organisations that share similar values and goals.

Objective: to provide better support to members and experts in fulfilling their roles, and to strengthen the links that bind the different layers of the association

Result: Once again, the financial crisis provided an obstacle to the building of the relationship between the ANEC Secretariat in Brussels on the one hand, and members and experts in member countries on the other. Without the political and financial support of the national authorities, and with a likely constraint on the prospects for growth of the central budget, the outlook for the reinforcement

of the network of members and experts remains bleak. Nevertheless, the ANEC Secretariat has looked to serve as a professional and central resource at the disposal of members and experts in fulfilling their roles. The Strategy 2014-2020 needs to look for cost-efficient, sustainable and effective means to provide more support to the network, and, more strategically, to champion a more centralised approach among the Institutions and other partners to building the influence of the consumer movement in standardisation at the national level.

7.1 National consumer participation in standardisation

Ahead of the development of the ANEC Strategy for the period 2014 to 2020, the ANEC Secretariat undertook a survey of the participation of national consumer organisations in standardisation activities at national, European and international level. The survey results were presented and discussed during the ANEC General Assembly meeting on 14 June 2012. Although not all countries submitted a reply, the results of the survey confirmed there is no consumer representation in standardisation in some countries. Moreover, only Germany and the UK were able to report consumer participation across a wide spectrum of technical committees at the national, European and international levels.

The survey also confirmed a match between the present set of ANEC priorities and national priorities.

8. Developments since adoption of the ANEC Strategy 2008-2013

8.1 Political developments

- the **European Council Conclusions on standardisation and innovation** of 25 September 2008¹¹ which, while underlining the principle of national delegation, included recognition of the need to encourage the further participation of societal stakeholders and SMEs in standardisation;
- the **Access to Standardisation study**¹² carried out by DG Enterprise & Industry in 2008 which showed consumers are seen - even by themselves - as having low commitment to (national) standardisation and insufficient knowledge. Among other things, it went on to state that consumer interests - among others - are "only marginally represented in many countries";
- the **EXPRESS report**¹³, setting a vision for European standardisation in 2020, which included recognition of the value of the representation of societal stakeholders and SMEs through European associations in guaranteeing the relevance of a European standards process built on national delegation;

¹¹ <http://tinyurl.com/y964dpx>

¹² <http://tinyurl.com/ydupxz>

¹³ <http://tinyurl.com/yz7gys6>

- adoption of the **New Legislative Framework¹⁴** of 9 July 2008 which, among various provisions, adopted the principles of the New Approach as the model for all future European product legislation and addressed market surveillance in a European legal instrument for the first time;
- entry into force of the **Lisbon Treaty¹⁵** (TEU and TFEU) on 1 December 2009 changing certain inter-institutional balances and “de-pillarising” the repartition of competences between Members States and EU institutions;
- the **Commission Communication on the Europe 2020 Strategy¹⁶** of 3 March 2010 which included the aim to make European standards-setting more favourable to encouraging innovation;
- the **Commission Communication on the Single Market Act¹⁷** of 13 April 2011 which included a review of the European standardisation system and the political acceptance of standardisation being extended to services;
- the **Commission Communication on the Single Market Act II¹⁸** of 3 October 2012, which identifies further drivers for the invigoration of the Single Market: fully integrated networks; the cross-border mobility of citizens & business; the digital economy; strengthening social entrepreneurship, cohesion & consumer confidence;
- the **Commission Communication on a Digital Agenda for Europe¹⁹** of 26 August 2010 which aimed to deliver sustainable economic & social benefits from a digital single market based on fast internet and interoperable applications;
- the **Commission Communication on the European Disability Strategy²⁰** of 15 November 2010 which proposed to use legal and other instruments, such as standardisation, to optimise accessibility of the built environment, transport and ICT;
- the **Parliament Resolution on the future of European standardisation²¹** of 21 October 2010 which included recognition of the needs to make “effective membership” (or partnership) available to European associations representing societal stakeholders & SMEs in the standards process; for a more independent appeals procedure; the assessment of an alternative production line for the drafting of standards of exceptional public interest and the use of public procurement to foster access for all through standardisation;

¹⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/ybdyeyo>

¹⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/cu4yljm>

¹⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/7yhtj5m>

¹⁷ <http://tinyurl.com/62veuep>

¹⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/9hfhbxw>

¹⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/3eszvz8>

²⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/6sckq9f>

²¹ <http://tinyurl.com/3xfrsme>

- the **European Parliament Resolution on the revision of the GPSD & market surveillance**²² of 8 March 2011, which made many references to the strengthening of GPSD in order to strengthen its provisions for all consumers, regardless of age or ability, and recognised the importance of creating a European framework for market surveillance;
- the **Commission Communication on a strategic vision for European standards**²³ of 1 June 2011 which reiterated the importance of European standards as tools to encourage competitiveness, aid innovation, build social inclusion and enhance environmental protection;
- the **draft Regulation for a Consumer Programme** for the period 2014 to 2020²⁴ which intends to strengthen the protection of consumers through political and financial support for heightened co-ordination on market surveillance among Member States, as well as ensuring the education of consumers and the right to redress;
- the **Commission Communication on the European Consumer Agenda**²⁵ of 22 May 2012 which is meant to provide a more political and strategic framework for the Regulation on the Consumer Programme. Product and service safety, and enhanced market surveillance, are among the main policy priorities;
- the **Standardisation Regulation** of October 2012²⁶, consolidating all legal, financial and political instruments related to European standardisation; providing a more permanent legal basis for the funding of European public interest representatives in standardisation, including ANEC, as well as the setting of certain political expectations for the positioning of these representatives in the European Standardisation System.

8.2 Economic developments

- **The global financial crisis:** the strength of national consumer organisations is proportionate to their financial resources. The situation in very many European countries has seen a dramatic reduction in the income of national consumer organisations since 2008, from private and public sources of revenue. This gives rise to the paradox that the consumer movement is least able to offer protection to consumers at a time when the economic climate dictates that protection is most needed. Individual consumers are also adversely affected as purchasing power decreases and access to essential services (e.g. energy) becomes more expensive. More specifically, the crisis has witnessed a withdrawal of experts

²² <http://tinyurl.com/64a3qdk>

²³ <http://tinyurl.com/43t45qn>

²⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/cp9qflk>

²⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/d38ehq5>

²⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/d8fdwn5>

from ANEC, most particularly from the countries hardest hit, with the Secretariat acting to cover the deficit when its own budget is limited to 2005 values..

- **The migration of manufacturing to countries outside Europe:** the relocation of manufacturing bases to countries outside Europe (presently Asia but possibly Africa in future) places added pressure on the integrity of the global supply chain, and compliance with local laws and standards. Moreover, public market surveillance and enforcement activities are fragmented at local, national and regional level, under-resourced, and unable to meet the challenges and risks of a globalised market.

- **Service standardisation:** The present reluctance of the European Institutions to introduce a European framework of even minimum harmonisation will impede development and effective implementation of European standards for services, as conflicting national legislation will be able to remain in place. Cross-border trade and consumer confidence (e.g. in the safety of tourist accommodation) will be impeded as a result. Moreover, Member States ensured in the negotiations in the run-up to the adoption of the Standardisation Regulation that many sectors of service activity would remain exclusive to national competence.

- **Emergence of BRICS countries** (Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa): these countries are beginning to assert their influence in IEC and, notably, ISO. The environment in which international standardisation takes place is changing and, although these changes may aid participation of newly-developed countries, they could prejudice the applicability of ISO/IEC standards for identical adoption within Europe, especially in support of legislation and public policies.

- **Continued enlargement of the EU:** the political will to continue enlargement of the EU remains undiminished, with Croatia expect to accede in July 2013. Turkey remains confirmed as an accession candidate, and Albania & Macedonia (FYROM) are in discussions. With political encouragement from the Commission, the European Standardisation System has been at the head of accession, with Croatia, Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey already full members of CEN/CENELEC. ANEC has historically followed the decision of CEN/CENELEC, in order to ensure the consumer movement in these countries can be also heard alongside business in the standardisation committees.

8.3 Social developments

- **Ageing Europe:** The world's population has doubled since 1968, and exceeded 7 billion people in October 2011²⁷. Lower mortality rates, longer life expectancies and large youth populations in countries where fertility is high, all contributed to a rapid population growth in recent decades. As a result, there is an increasing trend of consumers at the extremes of age with greater levels of disability, need

²⁷ <http://tinyurl.com/78qmou5>

for greater levels of accessibility and desire for independent lifestyles. Consumer policy and protection measures have to evolve to meet these challenges.

- **The (dis)connected consumer:** overloaded with information and confronted by a plethora of products and services. Although many consumers still distrust on-line transactions, more and more services – private and public – are either offered exclusively on-line or at preferential rates (e.g. discounts on tax returns if submitted electronically). Hence there is a high risk of exclusion if accessibility, trust and safety within the digital environment are not addressed²⁸. Furthermore, information must be able to be transformed into knowledge.

- **Environment, sustainability and climate change:** the pressures of a growing global population, in an increasingly consumerist society characterised by shorter-product life-cycles, has led to an unsustainable demand on resources and unprecedented levels of waste.

8.4 Technological developments

- **Information Communications Technologies (ICT):** ICT has become key in all aspects of consumers' lives. Nevertheless, the adoption and enforcement of consumer principles such as openness, security, and interoperability in European policies and standardisation have not kept pace with technological progress.

- **Complex and converging technologies:** the convergence of technologies makes it more difficult to recruit consumer representatives with the expertise needed to be effective in the development of legislation and standards. Despite standards being developed faster by the formal standards bodies, the ICT sector still looks to the use of informal ICT specifications (such as those now allowed to be used in public procurement by the Standardisation Regulation), developed in a process in which the consumer interest is likely to be absent.

²⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/burtl2u>

Temporary Annex

Milestones in the development of the ANEC Strategy 2014-2020

End of December 2011	Mission and Vision Statements finalised.
10 January 2012	Progress Report to ANEC/GA.
January to March 2012	ANEC Secretariat prepares skeleton of draft Strategy.
Spring meeting of ANEC/SC (29 March 2012)	ANEC/SC reviews skeleton of draft Strategy.
By end of April 2012	ANEC/SC agrees skeleton of draft Strategy.
Annual meeting of ANEC/GA (June 2012)	Presentation of progress to the ANEC/GA and detailed discussion with GA members.
June to October 2012	ANEC Secretariat prepares first full draft of Strategy.
Autumn meeting of ANEC/SC	ANEC/SC reviews first full draft of Strategy.
By end of December 2012	First full draft submitted to public comment phase of up to 3 months, through email invitation to ANEC members, partners & stakeholders and through posting on the ANEC website and social media (e.g. Facebook).
January to March 2013	ANEC Secretariat reviews comments and

	prepares revised draft of the Strategy.
Spring meeting of ANEC/SC	ANEC/SC reviews revised draft.
By end of April 2013	ANEC/SC agrees the revised draft and recommends its adoption to the ANEC/GA as the ANEC Strategy 2014 to 2020.
Annual meeting of the ANEC/GA	ANEC/GA adopts the ANEC Strategy 2014 to 2020. The adopted text is communicated to partners and stakeholders and published on the ANEC website.
June to October 2013	ANEC Secretariat prepares draft Annual Action Plan 2014 to support implementation of the Strategy.
Autumn meeting of ANEC/SC	ANEC/SC reviews the draft Annual Action Plan 2014.
By end November 2013	ANEC/SC recommends adoption of the Annual Action Plan 2014 to the ANEC/GA.
1 January 2014	ANEC Strategy 2014 to 2020 effective.
From 1 January 2014	ANEC/SC manages the implementation of the Strategy and prepares future Annual Action Plans. Regular reporting to the ANEC/GA.