

What we do for you

A word from the Secretary General

Few people are interested in technical standardisation and even fewer have heard of ANEC. Yet, although standardisation may not seem at all sexy at first glance, it is an essential component of modern life and the role of ANEC is key. Standards make products work: from the simplest of nuts & bolts to the most complex of smartphones.

But without effective consumer representation in the writing of standards, products need not be as safe, as interoperable, as accessible or as green as they might be.

ANEC fulfils that role in European standardisation.

Thanks to a dedicated team of volunteer experts from across Europe - supported by a secretariat in Brussels - ANEC ensures the consumer voice is heard in the setting of the standards for products and services, as well as in the shaping of laws and public policies.



“Put simply, ANEC raises standards for consumers”

Stephen Russell

Why should you care about standards?

Ever thought why your mobile phone works away from home? Why your bank card can be used anywhere in the world? Or why the dashboard symbols in the German car you have hired in Spain are the same as in your French car at home in Norway?

Yes, standards...

And do you know why, although the risk of accident and injury can never be eliminated, our children are better protected against hazards from the use of cords and drawstrings in their clothes? Or why you can use a juice extractor without fear of serious injury?

Standards again...

Now why do we need a suitcase full of electrical adaptors when we travel abroad?

That's right - a lack of standards...

Standards provide common technical rules and guidelines for the manufacture of products and the provision of services.

For consumers, standards are important as, when they are properly developed and applied, they can make our lives easier; the products we buy safer, interoperable and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. They can also improve product performance and help reduce environmental impacts. Moreover, standards can aid the quality and safety of services.

For manufacturers, standards remove barriers to trade, allow economies of scale to be exploited and aid innovation and competitiveness. In addition, use of harmonised European standards is the easiest and most cost efficient way for a manufacturer to ensure a product meets EU legislative requirements.

DIN, the German national standards body, published a study a few years ago that showed the **economic benefit of standardisation** to the German economy to be worth about **1% of Gross National Product (GNP)**. One percentage point may not sound much but 1% of German GNP was worth **almost 30.000 million Euros in 2008!**

AFNOR, the French national standards body, found in 2010 that **74% of companies** sampled thought that **standardisation gave them greater control over safety-related problems.**

“ Standards affect us all every day and everywhere, contribute to economic growth and address societal needs. ”



Standardisation in Europe: a crucial role...

In the EU, the ambition is not only to harmonise laws and standards between countries but to use common standards to support the implementation of common laws. Under the so-called “**New Approach**”¹, the European legislator restricts himself to defining the essential health & safety requirements that a particular class of products must meet to be sold on the European market and leaves the technical solution for meeting these requirements to the European standards makers.

There is no doubt the New Approach has been a success from the perspective of trade: it has removed many barriers that existed between the countries of the European Single Market. And the obligations on a manufacturer from Europe are the same as those placed on one from the United States. Or Japan. Or China.



Who are the European standards makers?

The three **European Standards Organisations (ESOs)** - **CEN**, **CENELEC** and **ETSI**² - are mandated by the European Commission to develop the standards that provide the technical requirements needed by manufacturers to meet the law. These European standards are adopted and referenced in the Official Journal of the European Union as providing a “**presumption of conformity**” to the law. They are afterwards known as “**harmonised standards**”. A key fact is that a European standard (abbreviated EN) is published as the national standard in at least 31 countries³.

But in fact, **most European Standards are proposed by industry or other stakeholders**. For example, ANEC proposed that a European standard be developed for Internet Filters in order to reassure parents that filters are effective in protecting their children from viewing inappropriate web content.

CEN and CENELEC have agreements with their international counterparts in order to use the results of international standardisation as far as possible within Europe. These are the Vienna Agreement between CEN & ISO⁴ and Dresden Agreement between CENELEC & IEC⁵.

1 - European Council Resolution of 7 May 1985 on a new approach to technical harmonisation and standards

2 - CEN is the European Committee for Standardisation, CENELEC the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation and ETSI the European Telecommunications Standards Institute.

3 - In 2010, the 27 EU Member States, 3 EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) and Croatia (as a potential accession country to the EU)

4 - International Organization for Standardization.

5 - International Electrotechnical Commission



The link with ANEC?

European standards are developed by technical bodies in the ESOs. Each technical body in CEN & CENELEC comprises national delegations appointed by the national standards bodies and national electrotechnical committees. In ETSI, technical bodies tend to comprise interested ETSI members who are usually individual companies. The standards development process in ISO & IEC is very similar to CEN & CENELEC.

CEN & CENELEC rely on delegations from their national members to speak on behalf of consumers as well as business and other stakeholders. But **consumer expertise in items being standardised is often not available at national level.** Indeed, the 'Access to Standardisation' study⁶, prepared for the European Commission, found consumer interests in the standards development process to be "only marginally represented in many countries".

Hence **the European Institutions agreed to set up ANEC in 1995** to ensure a consumer voice in European standardisation. It embraces representatives of national consumer organisations from the countries that are members of CEN & CENELEC. ANEC brings together those few experts who are available at national level to agree consumer positions that can be promoted in the technical bodies of the ESOs. Reliant on the efforts of its volunteer experts, supported by a professional secretariat in Brussels, ANEC fulfils its role only through financial support from the European Union and EFTA.

“ANEC aims to achieve the highest practicable levels of protection and welfare for all consumers, regardless of age or ability.”





What ANEC does...

As well as championing consumer interests in the ESOs, **ANEC aims to influence European legislation and public policies** within the scope of its activities. It also represents the **consumer view in dialogues on the use of standards**.

ANEC is active too when consumer-relevant issues are at stake in other standards development organisations such as the **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)** - which develops the standards that ensure the Web works - and the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**, responsible for several specifications in the traffic field, including those for Child Restraint Systems (e.g. car seats for young children).

Although the consumer lead in **ISO** and **IEC** is taken by Consumers International (CI), ANEC provides expertise to CI through a Memorandum of Understanding as well as participating directly in some ISO and IEC technical bodies where CI is not active.

ANEC focuses its activities in 8 areas of consumer interest:

Environment

Innovation

Child Safety

Design for All

Services

Domestic Appliances

Traffic

Information Society



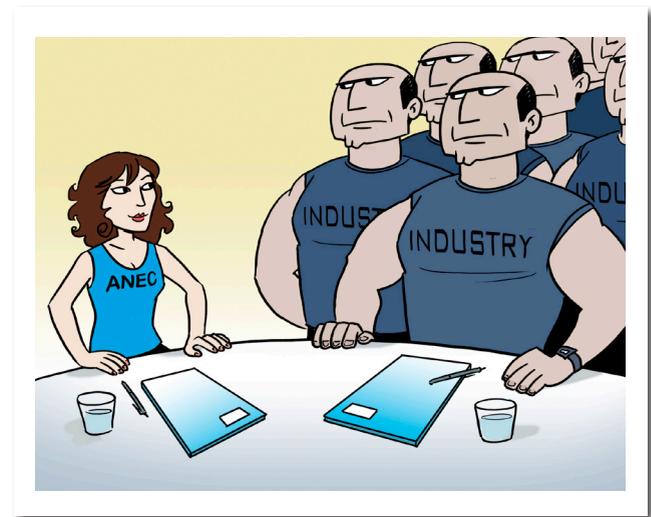
European standardisation: an activity that... ...must not be left to business alone!

Knowingly or unknowingly, the position of business interests in the development of standards can undermine the broader consumer interest. Hence **the role of ANEC is crucial in influencing the content of standards so that all consumers can benefit** from their use.

A prime example is where the first generation of **European standards⁷ for domestic electrical appliances** (everything from microwaves to dishwashers, vacuum cleaners to electric toothbrushes) focused on use of these devices by mainstream consumers. These standards contained an **'exclusion clause'**. As such, the safety provisions of **the standards did not apply to the use of these appliances by young children or "infirm people"** (the elderly or those with disabilities). In other words, use of the appliances by vulnerable consumers could be considered safe only if the appliances were used under supervision.

Unwilling to accept such distinction, and aware of the risks to vulnerable consumers, **ANEC lobbied CENELEC to revise this series of European standards**, work that started in 2005. But the role of ANEC did not end there. ANEC undertook a **programme of research** with the aim of proposing improvements that would help **enable the 'exclusion clause' to be deleted from the standards**. The first six revised standards in the series were published in November 2010 and will be referenced in the Official Journal as harmonised standards, a huge achievement for ANEC and the consumer movement. **As a result**, appliances such as washing machines and electrical hobs will be **safer for use by all consumers**. ANEC continues to be active in revision of the other European standards in the series.

This example shows the need for effective consumer representation in the standards development process if the market is to offer products and services that meet their requirements and expectations.



*Why can't we trust business
to look after consumers?*

ANEC in the European Standardisation System.a too restricted role

Despite its importance in representing the consumer interest, **ANEC is not permitted a central role** in the European Standardisation System. CEN, CENELEC and ETSI are all private associations and are not part of the European Institutions. The foundation of the standards development process in CEN & CENELEC on delegations from national members means that the influence ANEC has as a European association is **limited to observership**. And, although a full member of ETSI, ANEC **does not have the same influence** in ETSI as a multinational company.

Nonetheless, ANEC has won many battles on behalf of the consumer and much of its success has to be attributed to the **knowledge and commitment** of its experts, the **professionalism** of its Secretariat, and the **quality** of its arguments.

Thanks to ANEC, the standards development process is not driven by cost and profit but for how long?

In order for everyone in society to benefit from the wealth that can be created by the use of standards, consumers must participate in and shape the development of standards. Such activities incur costs and public funding is vital to ensure consumer participation. Hence ANEC is financed by the European Union (95%) and EFTA (5%), **but this funding is not guaranteed beyond 2013** despite the recommendation of the European Parliament.

In 2010, the ANEC budget was **1,32**M€.

That's **1**€ for every

380 European consumers.

ANEC in the European Standardisation System.a too restricted role

With the principles of the New Approach being extended to more products through the implementation of the **New Legislative Framework**⁸, which entered into force on 1 January 2010, and with standards for services now high on the European political agenda, **the European Parliament has called for ANEC to be granted “effective membership” of the ESOs**⁹. Moreover, the Parliament has agreed with ANEC that the ESOs should assess an alternative process that would guarantee the participation of all interested stakeholders in the drafting of European standards of “exceptional public interest”¹⁰.

Recognising the dependence of ANEC on public funding, **the Parliament has also recommended that its European political and financial support be continued to at least the year 2020**¹¹ (noting the EU 2020 agenda).

ANEC believes **such evolution is essential** if the public interest is to be adequately represented in the future.

The ANEC budget meets the expenses of 260 volunteer experts in 80 technical bodies of CEN, CENELEC and ETSI. That sounds impressive until it is remembered that there are 60.000 experts active in CEN alone, almost all from industry.

In ETSI, ANEC has **1** vote on behalf of Europe's
500 million consumers compared with
45 votes for
1 multinational company.

8 - Broad package of measures aimed to facilitate the functioning of the internal market for goods and to strengthen and modernise the conditions for placing a wide range of products on the EU market.

9 - Resolution of 21 October 2010 on the future of European standardisation (2010/2051(INI): Paragraph 34

10 - Ibid : Paragraph 35

11 - Ibid : Paragraph 33

ANEC at the forefront

8 areas of interest ... and so many challenges!

As standardisation continues apace as the European Single Market evolves, our aim remains to ensure all products and services, including the newest information technologies, are safe, interoperable and accessible to all, with their impacts on the environment minimised.



1 CHILD SAFETY

from toys, child care articles and playground equipment to potentially dangerous products for children, such as child appealing products or window blind cords

We strive to:

- ★ Reduce the number and severity of accidents involving children
- ★ Guarantee a minimum quality for products intended for and/or used by children
- ★ Ensure enough information is available to enable parents to choose products complying with safety standards
- ★ Guarantee safe use of household electrical appliances by all consumers, including children

2 DESIGNED FOR ALL

products and services including easy-to-open packaging, visible public signs, tactile walking surface indicators, etc.

We strive to:

- ★ Introduce design for all principles into standards and legislation, to overcome discrimination and make sure older people and people with disabilities can safely use consumer products and services
- ★ Guarantee safe use of household electrical appliances by all consumers, including elderly and disabled people



ANEC at the forefront

3 DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

from toasters, microwave and simple ovens, to hairdryers, water heaters and garden equipment.

We strive to:

- ★ Guarantee safe use of household electrical appliances
- ★ Reduce the number of accidents and their relative severity
- ★ Encourage the environmental and performance aspects of household appliances



4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

of products, from fridges to cars.

We strive to:

- ★ Improve the environmental performance of products by assessing the environmental aspects over their entire life cycle
- ★ Achieve ambitious mandatory requirements for product design, such as energy efficiency, hazardous substances and waste treatment
- ★ Enable consumers to make sustainable choices, by providing them with a wider range of green products, as well as simple, reliable and easy-to-use eco-labels

5 INFORMATION SOCIETY

products and services such as mobile phones, the safety of children on-line, personal music players, RFID technology and the Internet of Things.

We strive to:

- ★ Make certain ICT products are accessible, safe and of high quality for all
- ★ Ensure private data is performed in a clear, legal and standardised framework, with absolute respect for privacy and accessibility



ANEC at the forefront

6 INNOVATION

such as nanotechnologies and consumer products containing nanomaterials

We strive to:

- ★ Make sure nanomaterials used in products are safe
- ★ See the creation of a mandatory European public register of the nanomaterials used in consumer products
- ★ Obtain clear and trustworthy labels



7 SERVICES

from general interest, financial and postal services, to health, care and support services, tourism, sports and leisure activities

We strive to :

- ★ Achieve a European legislative framework for services that guarantees a consistent approach across sectors, ensuring safety, information provision & accessibility for all
- ★ See safety, hygiene, information provision, customer satisfaction, complaints handling and redress procedures, personnel competence, contracts & billing, and accessibility reflected in service standards and regulations

8 TRAFFIC SAFETY

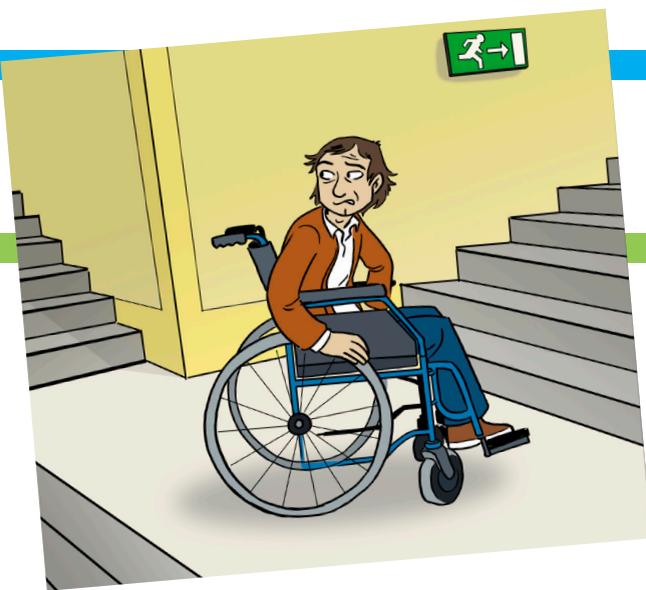
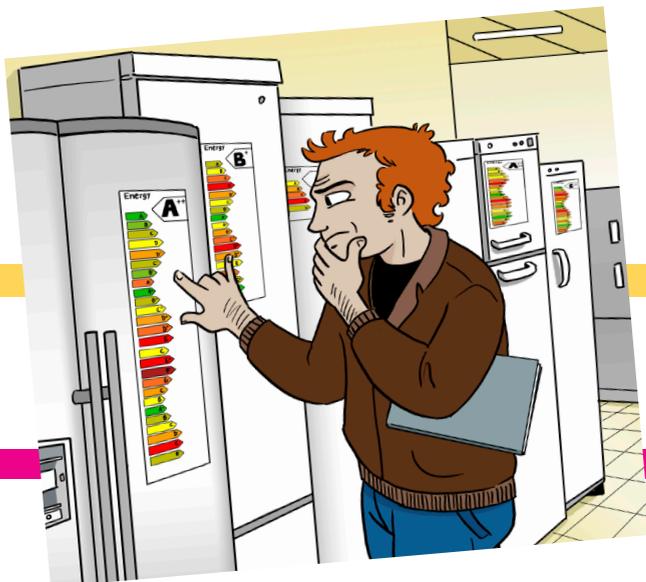
including child-restraint systems (CRS), vulnerable road users, safety and emissions of motor vehicles, eSystems and bicycles.

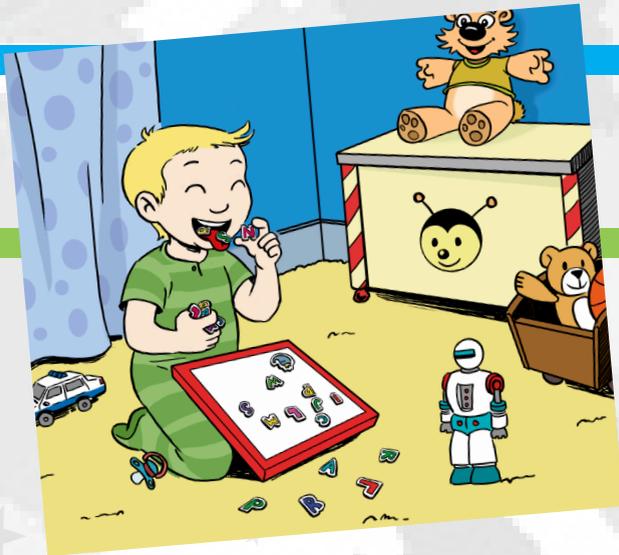
We strive to:

- ★ Provide the highest levels of safety practicable for children from CRS
- ★ Contribute to a high level of road safety for vulnerable road users
- ★ Guarantee an efficient, user-friendly and safe way of recharging electric vehicles
- ★ Ensure that environmental priorities do not jeopardise the safety of motor vehicles



A Europe without ANEC...







Raising standards for consumers

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