



Raising standards for consumers

POSITION PAPER

Draft Annual Union Work Programme for European Standardisation 2023



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Raising standards for consumers

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The European consumer voice in standardisation aisbl

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SUMMARY

This position paper expresses ANEC's preliminary views on the draft Annual Union Work Programme (AUWP) for European Standardisation for 2023.

As a participant in the Committee on Standards (CoS)¹, ANEC commented on the previous AUWPs and is pleased to have opportunity to submit its views on the new draft. ANEC is also a member of the ICT Multi-stakeholder Platform, and comments on the Rolling Plan for ICT Standardisation.

For ease of reference, we present our comments on the standardisation actions with reference to the structure of the AUWP in tabular format.

¹ The Committee on Standardisation is established under Article 22 of Regulation (EU) 1025/2012 on European Standardisation.

Specific Comments

1. Accessibility requirements for websites and mobile applications

As EN 301 549 and CEN/CLC/ETSI TR 101551 and CEN/CLC/ETSI TR 101552 will also be revised in the context of the European Accessibility Act Sreq, it is essential to ensure coherence between the two activities. In addition, we suggest for the new standards to better take into account the cognitive accessibility requirements.

2. Cybersecurity requirements for products with digital elements

The essential requirements must cover all the key aspects of cybersecurity and data protection. Therefore, the standards cannot contain only baseline security requirements as not stringent enough to ensure a high-level of cybersecurity and thus consumer protection.

Given the primacy of international standardisation over the regional, the consequence is that more standards for application within Europe are being drafted or revised at international level. However, the participation of consumers and civil society is even more limited in international standardisation discussions, while there is a strong participation of countries that do not share European values and principles, especially in AI and cyber standardisation.

The adoption at the European level of several international standards on organisational frameworks and methodologies (e.g. IT management systems; data protection and privacy guidelines; processes and products evaluation schemes; ICT security and physical security technical guidelines) is already taking place. While the availability of such international standards might help in raising the level of security across the world, and their adoption as European standards will ensure they are transposed into national standards catalogues throughout the Single Market, we do not see any of these as containing security product requirements which can increase consumer trust in the connected products they buy. We do not support the use of international standards to implement European public policies and legislation, especially in the context of cyber resilience against geopolitically motivated attacks.

3. Digital Product Passport

With a view to “help consumers making informed choices”, it will be important that the standards also take into account that essential information needs to still be available also offline (i.e. on the products).

4. Digital Services

For business-to-consumer electronic commerce transaction (B2C ECT) ANEC recommends also to consider the recently revised *ISO 10008:2022 Quality*

management — Customer satisfaction — Guidance for business-to-consumer electronic commerce transactions and whether its possible adoption as a European standard could be beneficial in the context of the implementation of the DSA.

The document aims at providing a fair, effective, efficient, transparent, and secure B2C ECT system in order to boost consumer satisfaction and their trust in B2C ECTs.

7. Internet standards

The fact that European Values are 'considered' does not mean necessarily they are implemented. We think the aim should be more ambitious or it will never be realised... i.e., 'The aim of the action is to ensure that the European values are incorporated into the future development of internet'.

11. Safe and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems

While welcoming the focus of the request on safe and trustworthy AI, ANEC is concerned about this request being already issued while the AI Act is still under discussion by the co-legislators. Many definitions and requirements could change during the legislative process making the standards drafted potentially out of scope and in need of complete redrafting to become Harmonised Standards. In addition, the publication of the standards could put pressure on the co-legislators not to change the AI Act, in contravention of the EU democratic principles of decision making.

In addition, ANEC already expressed concerns about the use of standards to implement fundamental rights: <https://www.anec.eu/images/Publications/position-papers/Digital/ANEC-DIGITAL-2021-G-141.pdf>. European standards on governance and quality of datasets used to build AI systems should not cover the requirements contained in Articles 10 (2) f) and 10 (4) of the draft AI Act.

European standards shall develop specifications to address AI fitness for purpose within the product context of reasonably foreseeable use to increase consumer safety and security.

We also believe that present safety standards need to be updated to meet the risks posed by AI and wonder how the future standards on AI will interplay with the present safety standards (e.g. will they be revised, will the new AI standards apply on top of present safety standards).

The standards relevant to this Request should also take into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Finally, we sound a note of caution about the use of International Standards to implement European legal requirements due to the strong participation of countries not sharing EU values and principles.

26. Ecodesign and energy labelling of computers

Work is about to start on the development of the new Computer Ecodesign Regulation which will include reference to the new test procedure being supported by the Commission and CLASP. It is essential that the standards for computers address active state energy use.

The requirements in the new Ecodesign Regulation on computers should be sufficiently robust to be able to make a difference in the energy use of consumers' products. This includes ensuring that integrated display energy of notebook computers is measured within the new standard and that suitable requirements for this high energy using component are included.

Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the new Ecodesign Requirements are based on the measurement of a sufficient number of new products on the market and over the many different types of computers available as possible.

The new standard should exhibit sufficient robustness over time so that consumers are always provided an accurate idea of how much energy their new products will use when under normal use and whilst in low power modes.

Consumers will often have decided to purchase either a "notebook" or a "desktop". As such, the new standard should allow consumers to be able to choose amongst "notebooks" and amongst "desktops" based on their energy efficiency, as well as wider environmental impacts.

28. Ecodesign and energy labelling of electronic displays

Regarding electronic displays, it is essential to ensure that the standard laying down the methods of measurement for the power consumption properly fulfil the requirements of the new regulation.

The European harmonised standard should include a method for measuring televisions that include a non-removable main battery as these products are not covered by the IEC standard.

The European harmonised standards to be developed should close the potential test loopholes that could undermine the implementation of the regulation's requirements. This includes addressing the display luminance during the "default configuration".

The European harmonised standard should ensure that all terminology is consistent with terminology within the EU Regulation but should also add further clarification to definitions found in the Regulation where necessary (e.g. definition of pixel).

37. Ecodesign and energy labelling of tumble driers

The revision of the regulation on household tumble driers is still pending and is due for 2023. Given the standards should be enabling the requirements in the regulation, developing the standards before the draft regulation is available, risks putting the cart before the horse.

It is important for the Regulation to be developed by 2023 as planned and suitably set the requirements on which standards will support it, and especially enhance it.

38. Ecodesign and energy labelling of vacuum cleaners

Also in this case the awaited revision of the legislation is expected to set the scene for the standards to further support the legislative requirements.

We would find it relevant however for a standardisation request from the Commission to already require standards on vacuum cleaners to already address material efficiency aspects (e.g. on durability and reliability of VC robots).

48. Environmental Footprint Methods

Over the years, ANEC comprehensively assessed the use of methods to assess, display and benchmark the environmental performance of products and organisations based on a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) approach. Our experience led us to conclude that no one method is able to characterise alone the environmental performance of activities.

ANEC therefore strongly opposes the use of Product Environmental Footprint/Organisation Environmental Footprint alone as the basis for environmental labelling schemes and to provide consumer information. The related ISO standard on the constitution of LCA method calls for transparency on its limits and benefits.

Different methods (1) to characterize the environmental performance of activities and (2) to assess reliability of environmental declarations have advantages and disadvantages which must be analysed and combined in a meaningful and cost-efficient manner.

49. Environmental sustainability of construction products

Similarly to what stated above for point 48, we underline the need to consider that different methods to characterize the environmental performance of activities have advantages and disadvantages which must be analysed and combined in a meaningful and cost-efficient manner.

LCA needs to be complemented especially when impacts are dependent on space, time and background levels.

56. Wireless charging for mobile phones and similar radio equipment

We welcome the request for Harmonised Standards on wireless charging as it is important to avoid any fragmentation in this area as well. Already now many smartphones are using the Qi industry standard for charging. However, consideration should be given to the energy performance of wireless charging to increase the current level of performance.

62. Lifts and safety components in lifts

We welcome the development of new standards for lifts which should ensure the safety of all consumers. In addition to the need to continue the elaboration of EN 81-76 on Evacuation of disabled persons using lifts, we think a full revision of EN 81-70 on accessibility of lifts should be requested. We believe it important to clearly state the more political accessibility expectations that the standards have to meet. In addition, we think the main standard EN 81-20 should be revised to cover the accessibility requirements of the present standards.

64. Machinery products

ANEC believes safety of automated machines/robots has to be ensured for consumers, so we suggest a new priority on safety of robots is added for the Harmonised Standards supporting the revised Machinery Directive/Regulation. We also suggest that the new Harmonised Standards are inclusive and gender responsive.

The standards relevant to this Request should also take into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

65. Making harmonised standards inclusive/gender responsive

We welcome very much this initiative about gender responsive standards in this age and time, it is not acceptable that European standards do not cover the safety needs of all consumers. We suggest that the new Machinery Regulation and AI Act (as well as PPE Directive) are relevant for this exercise. In addition, it would be important to check and change (if needed) the wording of the standards text which refer to manufacturers/economic operators/consumers/etc as 'he' and say 'she/he' or 'they'.

New actions

Sustainability of digital/media services and products

We think it is important that the digital/media industry and the consumers are aware of the environmental impact generated by consuming digital products and services. Reference could be made to findings in the EC Joint Research Centre in ICT Task Force Study on the environmental impact of ICT. JRC full report is available [here](#).

Horizontal services

CEN TC 447 and DG GROW had considered that in line with the mandate in the updated Industrial Strategy, and after assessment of the market relevance and feasibility of standards for business services, five service areas in two ecosystems were selected for deeper exploration with CEN "because of their economic impact and importance for the green and digital transition and for the servitisation of industry".

Moreover, CEN TC 447 is currently considering several new work items for development, including B2C services.

It would be useful to see these new areas of activity mentioned in the AUWP and we suggest their inclusion also to raise attention of businesses to standardisation activities in the sector.

Safety requirements for children's products

In August 2022, ANEC replied to the Public Consultation on the EC draft decision on the safety requirements to be met by European standards for certain children's products, which we overall welcome.

It is not clear from the scope whether sports, playground and recreational equipment are covered. If not, we re-iterate the need to set up a separate COM Decision on the safety requirements to be met by European standards for these products.

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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