



## Press Release

**"A strong consumer voice is key to the success of a modern standardisation system"**

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**ANEC welcomes the adoption today of the "Standardisation Package II" by the European Commission - exactly five years after its proposal for a Regulation on European Standardisation. We especially welcome the aim of the new Package to strengthen consumer participation in standardisation<sup>1</sup>.**

"ANEC recognises the contribution that European standards can make to business competitiveness, but stresses that standards also need to reflect the views of public interest stakeholders", said ANEC Secretary-General, Stephen Russell. "This is why we welcome that the **Joint Initiative on Standardisation** seeks to strengthen the voice of social & societal stakeholders in standards setting. We see the Initiative, which we will sign with other stakeholders on 13 June, as an opportunity to achieve better consumer protection & welfare through standardisation".

The Joint Initiative on Standardisation should provide the platform on which to build a European Standardisation System (ESS) able to meet the challenges of 2020 and beyond. However, the vision needs to be bold and ensure the ESS has added value over other standards development organisations in meeting the needs of European stakeholders, most particularly, the legislator. Timeliness is more important than speed in the development of standards that are inclusive and so reflect the broadest consensus possible.

"ANEC also welcomes the wish of the Commission to exploit **European standards for services** in order to increase consumer trust in cross-border transactions", added Mr Russell. "Nevertheless, lack of an overarching European legal framework on the safety of services becomes of greater significance. Such a framework exists

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/policy/index_en.htm)

for products and should be built for of services, underpinned by standards. Without a harmonising framework, European standards will not be able to provide a level-playing field as conflicting national regulations (where they exist) will continue to take precedence, so leading to overall legal uncertainty and consequent consumer detriment. Nevertheless, we will continue our participation in the development of European and International standards for the quality of services, such as postal services, on-line reputation and care for older consumers”.

We also welcome the **Annual Union Work Programme (AUWP) for European Standardisation** for 2017, particularly as it reflects some of our proposals on the draft Work Programme<sup>2</sup>. We appreciate that several consumer-relevant priorities we identified have been taken into account, such as e-health; cross-border services; the accessibility of public sector bodies’ websites; lifts; eco-design, products under the General Product Safety Directive and toys. However it is more and more difficult to understand why the means used by the Commission to determine the priorities for digital/ICT standardisation activities are different from those used for traditional standardisation, remembering most consumer products now have a digital interface or element of smartness (e.g. internet connectivity). We ask for a more coherent approach which should also help tackle the problem of patents in standards<sup>3</sup>.

Standards for consumers are important as - when they are properly developed and applied – they make the products we buy safer, more interoperable and accessible to people of all ages & abilities. ANEC wants to see stronger consumer participation add to the success of European standardisation.

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## About ANEC

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ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and conformity assessment, 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 33 countries. This year we celebrate our 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary (#ANEC21)!

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



*Raising standards for consumers*

**European association for the coordination**

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<sup>2</sup> [ANEC position paper on draft EC Annual Union Workprogramme for Standardisation 2016; ANEC comments on Preliminary Draft Annual Union Work Programme on European Standardisation 2017](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ANEC Position Paper on patents and standards, February 2015; ANEC position paper on Standards for the Digital Single Market \(reply to public consultation\), Dec.2015](#)

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