



European standards can serve society if the system changes

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today, the organisations representing societal stakeholders in the European Standardisation System - ANEC, ECOS, and ETUC - brought together representatives of the European institutions, the standardisation community and civil society to examine the degree to which European standards meet the needs of civil society, including in the support standards provide to legislation and policies in the area of public interest. Participants also looked at possible solutions to make the European Standardisation System more inclusive in order to ensure standards truly serve the interests of society, alongside economic interests.

With standards increasingly used to support - or sometimes even replace - regulation, it is crucial to ensure that societal stakeholders are fully represented and have the ability to contribute to the standardisation process most effectively.

Laura Degallaix, ECOS Director said: “The standardisation process is a time consuming, expensive process to get involved in, and requires a great level of technical knowledge, greatly limiting the participation of NGOs at national level. Fundamental changes to the standardisation system are vital to help overcome these barriers, in particular facilitating the involvement of civil society organisations at European level”.

Stephen Russell, ANEC Secretary General, added: “We welcome the steps that the European Standardisation Organisations are making to strengthen the voices of the European representatives of societal stakeholders in the process. European standards that reflect societal needs aid the market relevance of products and services, and aid the competitiveness of European industry in global markets. Nevertheless, standards are only one part of the continuum of measures aimed at delivering societal welfare and protection, and more must be done elsewhere too, especially on market surveillance and enforcement.

Peter Scherrer ETUC Deputy General Secretary commented: “Over the last years, standardisation activities have moved away from an activity by industry backed experts, to an activity which addresses society, including workers. The new Regulation (EU) 1025/2012* clearly addresses this. But practical and subtle barriers remain; some national standardisation bodies still require high entry fees, and number-wise, societal stakeholders are always in a minority position at the table. But most important, standards shall not encroach upon national labour laws and collective agreements. Trade Unions cautiously monitor this”.

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Notes for editors:

*[Regulation \(EU\) 1025/2012](#): In the EU, ANEC, ECOS, and ETUC have been officially recognised as part of the four underrepresented stakeholders' organisations whose participation in the European standardisation system needs to be supported by the European Union and the standardisation organisations. Together with Small Business Standards (SBS), they form the so-called Annex III organisations. This political decision is meant to ensure that the societal interests are represented in the system at European level, in order to compensate the absence of a systematic and organised participation of societal stakeholders in standardisation at national level.

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defends consumer interests in the process of standardisation and the use of standards, and in policy or legislation that intends to refer to standards. www.anec.eu

ECOS is the European Environmental Citizens' Organisation for Standardisation, defends the environment in the development of standards and product ecological policies. www.ecostandard.org

ETUC is the voice of European workers, promotes high quality working conditions for workers in the standardisation process. www.etuc.org/issue/standardisation

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Contacts

Honey Kohan
ECOS Communication Officer
Honey.kohan@ecostandard.org
+32 2893 08 64

Natalia Giorgi
ANEC Communications Officer
Natalia.Giorgi@anec.eu
+32 2743 24 70

Christophe Hauert
ETUC Advisor
chauert@etuc.org
+41 79 628 95 24