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A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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Peer-Oliver Villwock Chair of KAN Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)

Europe in our sights

For thirty years now, KAN has engaged in numerous forms of discussion of standardization and conducted studies, workshops and expert discussions to identify potential in standards for improving product safety. A further aim of KAN is to improve coherence between standards and the regulations of the state and the statutory accident insurance institutions in Germany. An important principle here is that state regulations and those of the statutory accident insurance institutions take precedence over specifications found in standards.

However, it has long been insufficient to consider the situation at national level alone. Since the EU's New Approach was adopted, the majority of standards have been developed at European level. It is also not uncommon for standards to be developed by international committees or jointly in the parallel procedure at ISO/IEC and CEN/CENELEC, and then to become European standards. If the occupational safety and health lobby wishes to be heard, it must be able to make its presence felt on standards committees at European and international level and act effectively in the relevant regulatory bodies on the political level. To achieve this, stakeholders in occupational safety and health must coordinate their activities as closely as possible, in order for the available resources to be used efficiently. KAN plays an important role in this respect.

Since 2020, KAN has maintained a contact point in Brussels in the form of its European Representation. Its functions include monitoring developments in the European Commission and European Parliament directly in Brussels, maintaining a network with other stakeholders in the field of occupational safety and health and standardization, and facilitating contact with decision-makers. KAN must pursue this strategy further, and in alliance with other European partners, develop viable concepts by which the occupational safety and health lobby can face other stakeholders on an equal footing, in Europe and internationally. **«**

New challenges facing standardization

Standardization is among the many areas facing new challenges due to global competition, climate change and the shortage of skilled workers. In this article, Knut Blind, who has analysed various aspects of standardization over many years in his capacity as head of the German and European Standardisation Panel, takes a look at the most important issues. Standardization is currently facing numerous challenges caused by a range of factors, both internal and external. Internally, standardization activity is among the areas affected by the wider shortage of skilled workers. At present, over 60% of the experts in standardization are aged over 50. Several thousand will therefore be retiring in the near future¹. At the same time, women remain strongly under-represented, notwithstanding the slight change observed in this respect in recent years.

Externally, standardization is being challenged by a growing pace of change in science and technology, not least by the digital transformation. Topics such as artificial intelligence and quantum technology, and also the circular economy, call for new standardization projects and the support of competent experts, who – as already stated – are becoming increasingly scarce.

Parallel to these developments, climate change is the greatest challenge currently facing mankind, and one in which standardization certainly has a role to play. Despite that, the potential of standardization in this area has not been exploited to the full².

Regulatory and political framework conditions

In Germany and Europe, standardization is embedded within a range of policy initiatives and the corresponding regulatory frameworks. Numerous activities by the European Commission for the regulation of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and cyber resilience and the data economy give rise to further challenges for the standards sector: it must underpin the proposed legislation by means of suitable standards. Should it fail to do so, the European Commission will increasingly draw up specifications of its own, in which case adequate involvement of industry and other stakeholders will not necessarily be assured.

At the same time, the business model of the standards institutes is being placed in doubt by a ruling of the European Court of Justice, known as the "Malamud case". The court has ruled that free access must be granted to a number (admittedly as yet very small) of harmonized European standards to which reference is made in European legislation. The long-term consequences of this ruling for the standards organizations based in Europe, and also for European standardization in an international context, are still unclear.



Finally, European standardization activity must also be considered in the context of growing geopolitical tensions. On the one hand, China continues to cement its commitment to international standardization. On the other, American tech companies are exerting increasing influence on standardization. Taken together, this presents a challenge not only for standardization, but for Europe's competitiveness and values.

New initiatives are needed

Altogether, it can be said that standardization in Germany and in Europe as a whole is facing a number of major challenges. However, standards are needed for tackling global tasks such as combating climate change, and also for safeguarding Europe's competitiveness and values. Consequently, a number of initiatives must be launched or stepped up.

First of all, the pool of experts active in standardization must be assured. This pool must also become younger and more diverse. Women therefore need to be recruited to standardization activity in greater numbers, in order to counter the impending shrinkage in the pool of staff from Germany and elsewhere in Europe. To this end, attention must be drawn in universities, and perhaps also in schools, to the importance of the topic. The European EDU4Standards.eu project³ is intended to make an important contribution in this respect. It would also be advantageous to give greater weight in academic curricula to the importance of standardization in combating climate change, and also for achieving the other sustainability objectives, including energy efficiency.

The dynamics of research and development and their implications for standardization must be taken into account by expansion both of state funding programmes for standardization activities, and of tax incentives for research and development.

Increasing embedding of standards in European policy initiatives and arrangements for regulatory frameworks must be taken into account at an early stage both in standardization processes and in the regulatory arrangements, in order to optimize interaction between these two spheres and prevent conflicts between them. The European standards institutes must develop their business models further and strategically to prepare themselves for potentially far-reaching consequences of the European Court of Justice's Malamud ruling. New products and services are needed here, as are new pricing models.

Ultimately, Europe can face the geopolitical challenges in standardization only by continuing to maintain a strong presence of European experts. Funding for this is already available through national programmes such as WIPANO⁴ and European projects such as StandICT⁵ and SEEBLOCKS⁶. At the same time, coalitions with like-minded countries must be formed at an early stage, as planned in the recently launched EU INSTAR project⁷.

Altogether, a strategic and therefore long-term approach is needed. This must include stakeholders from areas far beyond standardization itself, such as educational and research institutions, and also regulatory bodies – at national, European and international level.

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¹ Blind et al. (2024): European Standardisation Panel Survey Final Report https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/643814

² Blind et al. (2022): Deutsches Normungspanel: Indikatorenbericht 2022 – Normen, Normung und Klimawandel www.normungspanel.de/publications/indikatorenbericht-2022

³ www.edu4standards.eu

⁴ www.innovation-beratung-foerderung.de/INNO/Navigation/DE/WIPANO/wipano.html

⁵ https://standict.eu

⁶ https://seeblocks.eu

⁷ https://instarstandards.org

KAN's European Representation

Since the end of 2020, the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardization (KAN) has maintained an office in Brussels. The KAN European Representation has been headed since August 2023 by Ronja Heydecke.

The most important tasks of KAN's European Representation include monitoring and analysing relevant developments at European level. Proposed EU legislation relating to occupational safety and health and standardization, European standardization policy, and decisions by the European Court of Justice are of particular interest to KAN. Through its activity, the European Representation is able to provide KAN's stakeholders and the Secretariat promptly with information on initiatives, action programmes and legislation of relevance to OSH and standardization.

In addition, the European Representation plays a key role in representing KAN's interests at European level. For example, it represents KAN vis-à-vis the institutions of the European Union and other European institutions, organizations and associations. It contributes the expertise of KAN and its occupational safety and health experts to consultations by the European Commission¹, publishes KAN position statements at European level and raises awareness of workplace safety and health issues among policymakers. In cooperation with the Technical and Scientific Department of the KAN Secretariat, the KAN European Representation has issued position statements on numerous important EU legislative proposals, such as the AI Regulation², the Regulation on Construction Products³, and Commission initiatives such as the EU standardization strategy⁴.

Where regulations and directives impact upon occupational safety and health and standardization, the KAN European Representation monitors the European legislative process through all stages and advocates for KAN's interests at key points. This begins with initial impetus provided by the Parliament's own-initiative reports, or the publication of roadmaps or announcements by the European Commission. The European Representation also actively monitors further steps in the European Parliament and closely observes the subsequent procedure in the Council of the European Union, through to publication of the legislation in the EU Official Journal. The work of the committees is particularly relevant in the European Parliament: they amend and approve the European Commission's legislative proposals and draw up the reports that form the basis for the European Parliament's negotiating mandate. The KAN European Representation serves as a mouthpiece here for KAN's most important interests. Finally, KAN's European Representation deals with numerous other topics in the field of product safety, the safety and health of workers at work, and the overarching political principles and key events in Brussels, such as the recent European elections⁵.

Standards are an important aspect of prevention activity and contribute to safe and healthy workplaces. Since standards in many areas are developed at European level, the activities of the most important players in European standardization policy, such as the European Commission and the European standards organizations CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, are of great importance for KAN's work. With regard to the social interests recognized in European standardization, the European Representation also monitors the activities of the "Annex III" organizations⁶ ANEC, ECOS, ETUC and SBS, which represent relevant social interests vis-à-vis standardization activity. Common interests are often found here, and provide points of contact for dialogue.

Workplace safety and health is an important topic, affecting millions of workers across Europe. It is therefore increasingly important for KAN, as a national organization, to find allies at European level. KAN's European Representation is therefore also expanding KAN's network to include other organizations, institutions and decision-makers in Brussels.

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¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/

- better-regulation/have-your-say_en www.kan.de/en/publications/kanbrief/ artificial-intelligence/kan-position-paper-on-the-eu-draft-regulation-on-artificial-intelligence
- www.kan.de/service/nachrichten/ detailansicht/kan-position-zur-eubaupvo-veroeffentlicht
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/ 13099-Standardisation-strategy/ F2663350_en
- https://elections.europa.eu/en/
- www.kan.de/en/publications/kanbrief/ 4/21/annex-iii-organizationsrepresentatives-of-social-stakeholdersin-european-standardization-activity

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Cooperation between the international and European standards organizations

Standardization has long ceased to be a purely national matter; it should be coordinated on the widest possible international base. Special rules apply to the parallel development of standards at international and European level. Two agreements promoting cooperation between the international and European standards organizations have been in place for many years. The Vienna Agreement governs cooperation between ISO and CEN. For standardization in the electrical sector, IEC and CENELEC recently updated the basis for their cooperation with the Frankfurt Agreement.

The Vienna Agreement between ISO and CEN

An agreement between ISO and CEN concerning technical cooperation was reached in 1991 and amended again in 2001. The agreement opens up several modes of cooperation between ISO and CEN Technical Committees (TCs) sharing a common technical remit. The relevant committees can conclude cooperative agreements themselves, differing in their depth. The first level of cooperation is limited to the transfer of information in each direction. The second level involves representation on each other's committees. In the most comprehensive form of cooperation, the committees develop their standards jointly and adopt them in parallel. It is also possible for a cooperative agreement not to be reached at all.

The two TCs can decide to work together on developing a standard as soon as a proposal for it is made in one of the committees. In this case, the lead is assigned to one of the two TCs, working sessions are held in this TC, and the standardization process takes place in accordance with this TC's rules. In general, responsibility for the lead lies with the ISO committee concerned. The non-lead committee may delegate up to four observers. During the draft phase, comments from one committee can be submitted to the other through these observers.

The core element of the Vienna Agreement is parallel voting. This means that the public enquiry and final voting on the draft standard take place in parallel at ISO and CEN. If the results of the public enquiry and final voting are positive in both organizations, the standard can be published in identical form as an ISO and EN standard. If the required agreement is not reached in one of the two organizations, consultations are launched between ISO and CEN to determine whether joint work on developing the standard is still worthwhile. It is also conceivable for only one of the organizations to publish the standard; in this case, a corresponding identical standard is not produced. Should the vote in both organizations be negative, the draft is returned to the responsible committee.



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Frankfurt Agreement between IEC and CENELEC

A similar cooperation agreement, the Frankfurt Agreement, exists between the standards organizations IEC and CENELEC. Cooperation between the two organizations was launched in 1991 with the Lugano Agreement. This was updated in 1996 in the form of the Dresden Agreement and followed in turn in 2016 by conclusion of the Frankfurt Agreement, which is still in place today. The Frankfurt Agreement accords fundamental priority to international standardization in the field of electrical engineering. This is attained through a range of measures.

If a need for standardization activity is identified at European level, it is first determined whether the standard can be developed at international level by IEC. Where the need for standardization is not limited to the European level, development by IEC ensures that publication of an international standard is the direct result.

Parallel voting is the rule in the relationship between IEC and CENELEC, and does not require a dedicated agreement between the TCs. The European public enquiry at CENELEC is usually initiated as soon as IEC submits a draft to a public enquiry. The same applies to final voting. The only exceptions to this are when the CENELEC Technical Board (BT) fails to see a need for the standard in Europe, or where draft amendments are made to IEC standards that have not yet been adopted at European level. If a standard is developed independently by CENELEC, for example where a corresponding IEC committee does not exist, it is submitted to IEC for potential transposition into an international standard. Here too, parallel voting can be initiated.

Impacts at national level

The members cast their national votes in the ISO, IEC, CEN and CENELEC ballots. The majorities that must be reached in order for drafts to be adopted in the public enquiry and at final voting differ from organization to organization. If the standards are adopted only at international level, the members are also free to publish them at national level (in Germany, for example, in the form of DIN ISO standards). If the international standards are adopted at European level, however, the member organizations of CEN/CENELEC are obliged to adopt them in identical form at national level (for example in the form of DIN EN ISO standards), and to withdraw any conflicting national standards. This mechanism is what lends the Vienna Agreement and Frankfurt Agreement their particular importance for national standardization work.

Future prospects

Whereas in the past, international standardization activity was strongly influenced by western industrial nations, new powerful players have now entered the arena. China, in particular, has recognized the importance of industry, service and management standards and is increasingly occupying key positions (chairs and secretariats) on the international committees. This is supported by the "Belt and Road Initiative", in whose course strong economic ties are being forged to emerging and developing economies worldwide. Although the involvement of European experts in standardization remains very high, it is increasingly under pressure owing to the time and costs that it entails.

In the meantime, at least at ISO, a trend can be observed towards more and more standards being developed. ISO standards now number over 25,000; at the beginning of 2017, this figure was still around 21,000. However, the understanding of standardization and its areas of application varies. Many countries view standards as a means of establishing a body of rules in areas where, as yet, they lack legislation or regulations. To ensure that standards presenting a low threshold do not subvert the existing body of regulations in Europe, careful scrutiny is required of which international standardization projects are suitable for adoption at European or national level.

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Three questions for: Peer-Oliver Villwock, Chair of KAN

Peer-Oliver Villwock, Head of the Occupational Safety and Health Directorate at the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, was elected the new Chair of KAN in April 2024.

KAN has now been in existence for 30 years. Are its tasks and objectives still the same as in 1994, the year of its inception?

With the founding of KAN, Germany followed the EU Machinery Directive's mandate to the Member States to enable the Social Partners to participate appropriately in standardization activity. In the 30 years since then, KAN has gained recognition as a voice for German stakeholders in occupational safety and health. These stakeholders all benefit from the fact that coordinated through KAN, their positions carry more weight than they would individually. Through its Secretariat, KAN is now involved in standardization activity not only at national level, but also, when the need arises, directly at European and international level, and in other regulatory bodies. The stakeholders represented in KAN adopted a joint position in 2023 reaffirming this mandate.

It goes without saying that KAN must continually address new topics as they emerge. Topics relating to the digital transformation, such as artificial intelligence, and also climate change, currently rank highly on the standardization agenda. KAN must become involved at an early stage in these areas and make sure that the right course is set in the interests of occupational safety and health. At the same time, it must defend the regulatory remit of the state and the statutory accident insurance institutions.

Last year, the EU adopted its new Artificial Intelligence and Machinery Regulations. In what way are these Regulations particularly interesting from an occupational safety and health perspective?

The European Commission had originally intended to address the concept of "artificial intelligence" in the Machinery Regulation by reference to the AI Regulation. This reference was deleted during the negotiations. As a result, these two Regulations are no

longer optimally intermeshed - the solution reached by the legislators at EU level isn't as user-friendly as it could have been. Another new aspect in the Machinery Regulation is that involvement of a notified body is now imperative during conformity assessment of certain machines and associated products. This is the case even where manufacturers follow harmonized standards covering all the relevant requirements. This applies, for example, to safety components whose behaviour is fully or partly self-developing, i.e. based on AI. Another interesting point is that the procedure long established in Germany for determining whether a machine has undergone a "substantial modification" has now been enshrined at European level in the Machinery Regulation. Finally, I should mention the "common specifications" introduced with the Machinery Regulation, which have since also been introduced in a range of further EU legal acts.

It's evident that supporting the requirements of the AI Regulation presents challenges for occupational safety and health. Since most standardization activity is conducted at international level, the limited resources available for standardization work must be concerted and used efficiently. This is where KAN is able to use its network and contribute to coordinating occupational safety and health interests.

What's your view of the new instrument of "common specifications", which was recently introduced in several EU regulations?

The European Commission can use common specifications to define technical requirements which, like harmonized standards, give rise to a presumption of conformity when they are applied. However, it's important to note that this instrument represents a makeshift solution. Certain conditions therefore have to be met before the European Commission is



Peer-Oliver Villwock

permitted to use it. Common specifications have now been included in the new Machinery and Artificial Intelligence Regulations, and in the draft Construction Products Regulation. Used on a case by case basis, common specifications may be useful. It still isn't clear, though, how they should be drawn up in practice, and how the stakeholders are to be involved in their creation. It would therefore be better if this makeshift solution weren't needed in the first place. Improved cooperation between the standards organizations on the one hand and the Member States and the European Commission on the other would be beneficial in this respect.

Gender gap in occupational safety and health: how PPE disadvantages women firefighters

Technology used by firefighters has traditionally been geared primarily to dimensions of the male body. Design guidelines often lack consideration for the female body. Furthermore, the anthropometric data used as a reference for design is often obsolete. Technology designed for end users is usually geared – at least implicitly – primarily to male users. A major reason for this is that many products are designed and tested against a standardized adult male (currently 1.75 m in height and 79 kg in weight according to DIN 33402-2¹, and in many standards only 75 kg).

Awareness of these deficiencies has grown in recent years. The International Standards Organization (ISO) is currently working on a draft standard that will enable all relevant standards to be reviewed in the future for gender equality, and developed further if required². The body measurements currently in use, which are often outdated, are also being scrutinized.

In a study conducted on behalf of the European Commission and published in 2024³, 2,650 harmonized European standards of relevance to occupational safety and health were reviewed to determine whether they give consideration to anthropometric data, and if so to what extent. Such data is relevant in 36% of the standards examined, but is often not given sufficient consideration, or is outdated. For 76 standards, the potential impact of this on safety and health is regarded as high. Some harmonized standards contain up-to-date measurements, but in many cases only for men.

Safety and gender equality in protective clothing for firefighters

The example of protective clothing for female firefighters illustrates the consequences of technology not being adequately designed for both sexes. In an interview study, over 1,700 firefighters, male and female, were asked about the comfort and fit of their personal protective equipment (PPE). Female firefighters in the study encountered poorer conditions and felt less well protected than their male colleagues: the clothing fits them less well, for example because jackets do not close over the hips and trousers are too wide at the waist, too tight on the legs or too long overall (see images below).

Another study evaluated accident reports from volunteer fire brigades⁴. In fact, the study showed the accident risk for female firefighters to be over twice (205.7%) that for their male colleagues (see Figure page 24), and that the accidents they suffer are also more serious. This is at least partly due to PPE and work equipment that is poorly tailored to women.

One reason for this poorer protection is that firefighters' protective clothing is designed primarily for men, who constitute the majority of users, despite legislation and standards requiring clothing sizes to be suitable for a wide user base. Whilst



Gender-specific comparison of firefighter clothing (Aachen fire brigade)⁶

Themes

Men Women

Accidents ⁴ and members ⁵ in the volunteer fire brigades

Members	8,6%	91,4%
Accidents	15,2%	84,8%

specifying performance requirements for the protective functions, technical standards do not specify manufacturing dimensions. Manufacturers are responsible for taking both men and women into account when designing clothing. This is also clear from the provisions concerning room to move within the clothing and wearer comfort set out in EN ISO 13688, Protective clothing – General requirements.

At the same time, the manufacturing and testing specifications for firefighters' protective clothing (HuPF)⁶ adopted by Germany's conference of ministers for the interior (IMK) set out a minimum standard for manufacturing dimensions. However, these dimensions are intended almost exclusively for male wearers. Manufacturers may deviate from these specifications, but are then responsible for ensuring that safety continues to be guaranteed.

Germany's HuPF regulations require observance of the European EN 469 standard, Performance requirements for protective clothing for firefighting activities⁶. This has both advantages and drawbacks. Protective clothing for firefighters is a product with a guaranteed minimum quality and standardized product characteristics, which permits ready comparison between products at the procurement stage. At the same time, being closely regulated, it is also a product that cannot be developed further without great expense and a substantial business risk.

Creating framework conditions for greater flexibility

Manufacturers may presume that if they observe the harmonized standard, the essential requirements of the relevant European legislation for the design of a product will be met. However, if requirements formulated in harmonized standards are incomplete or outdated – for example because, with a height of 1810±60 mm, the dummies used for testing heat-protective clothing⁷ are closer in their dimensions to males than females – a risk exists of products being designed that are potentially dangerous for users, even though they comply with the standard.

It is essential that standards and regulations be kept up to date with changes in underlying conditions, particularly body dimensions. Where measurements are explicitly specified, women's measurements must also be included in the requirements. Any permissible deviations must also be clearly highlighted. This will enable manufacturers to develop technology that is up to date, and users to better evaluate the products available on the market and demand adequate, modern products that are suitable for a diverse range of end users. It will also make it considerably easier for employers to meet their obligation to provide personal protective equipment that is tailored to each and every employee.

⁵ www.feuerwehrverband.de/presse/statistik

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¹ DIN 33402-2:2020-12, Ergonomics – Human body dimensions – Part 2: Values

 ² ISO/FDIS 53800, Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality (...)
 ³ European Commission, Study on the inclusiveness of anthropometrics in European

harmonised standards, https://doi.org/10.2873/172248

⁴ Schiffer, C. (2023), Accidents in 2019 at the volunteer fire departments of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia and Schleswig-Holstein, https://doi.org/10.18154/RWTH-2023-02080

⁶ Innenministerkonferenz (2020), Herstellungs- und Pr
üfungsbeschreibung f
ür eine universelle Feuerwehrschutzbekleidung, Parts 1 to 4

⁷ EN ISO 13506-1:2017-12, Protective clothing against heat and flame – Part 1: Test method for complete garments – Measurement of transferred energy using an instrumented manikin

EU-OSHA: goals and priorities

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has built up a very strong track record over 28 years. The world of work, however, is constantly changing and it is important that the agency be capable of meeting today's challenges. We asked William Cockburn, who has been Executive Director of the Agency since 2023, about the current goals and work priorities.

What are your general goals for EU-OSHA in the years to come?

We have just started work on a new multi-annual strategy that will involve our management board, national Focal Points and staff in setting our course for the next ten years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the visibility of OSH and of the agency has increased significantly. This gives us an opportunity to expand our impact, but we have to recognize that we are unlikely to obtain additional resources to do so. Therefore, we need to improve efficiency in how we perform our three key functions: providing knowledge for policymaking and research; supporting workplace risk prevention through guides and tools; and promoting a positive prevention culture through networking and awareness raising.

The 'Focal Point' network of national authorities and their national networks involving social partners is a key asset of EU-OSHA and is unique among EU agencies. Strengthening the Focal Point network is therefore a key priority. We need to ensure a high level of engagement with national authorities and social partners at Member State level, so that they can support our research, promote our tools and guidance, and help us to raise awareness of the importance of safe and healthy workplaces.

What opportunities and challenges does digitalisation present for occupational safety and health?

The use of digital technologies in the workplace brings with it opportunities, such as relegating repetitive, labour-intensive and unsafe tasks to machines; obviating the need for workers in hazardous environments; improving access to the labour market for disadvantaged workers; and improving the work-life balance through the flexibility experienced by workers who can work from home. Additionally, 'smart digital systems' can improve risk prevention, for example through advanced monitoring of exposures. Our recent OSH Pulse survey¹ shows that digital technologies are used to monitor noise, chemicals, dust, and gases in the working environment of 19% of European workers.

While digital technologies are rarely problematic in themselves, OSH risks tend to arise as a result of their poor design, implementation and use. If problems are to be avoided, the worker needs to be properly considered and involved, and put at the centre of each of these stages. Unfortunately, digitalisation often leads to workers experiencing a wide range of poor outcomes related to OSH, e.g. loss of autonomy, and work intensification. Job content becomes narrower and jobs are de-skilled, with workers experiencing increased isolation and the effects of automated decisions. According to our 2022 OSH Pulse survey, workers report that digital technologies result in them working alone (44%), increase surveillance of them (37%), reduce their autonomy (19%), determine the speed or pace of work (52%) and increase their workload (33%).

It is essential that we harness the great opportunities that digitalisation offers for safer, healthier and better work and that we avoid the risks. That's the key message of our twoyear campaign, 'Safe and healthy work in the digital age'.

What needs to be done to make the circular economy a success story, including with regard to occupational health and safety?

Depending on how the Circular Economy (CE) is implemented and managed, it can lead to new risks, or it can present a significant opportunity for a just and sustainable transition, improving OSH at the same time as preserving the environment. But for



the latter to happen, the workforce (including managers) needs to be adequately (re)skilled to work safely with new, circular processes.

Robust regulatory efforts are also necessary, for example to develop an EU-wide monitoring system to track substances contained in products so that they can be safely maintained, re-used or recycled, and to prevent imports of products that could put workers at risk during these processes.

The principle of 'repair, reuse and recycle' can be implemented safely only if workers have access to all the information they need at all times. A digital system that alerts workers to potential hazards would significantly contribute to improving OSH in such hazardous CE work processes.

Digital technologies certainly play a key role in the transition towards a CE, not only as an enabler of such digital monitoring, control and alert systems, but also by improving working conditions allowing the automation and remote monitoring of hazardous tasks, such as in waste sorting and recycling.

Within and between sectors and EU Member States, progress towards the implementation of a CE that benefits OSH could vary widely. Convergence will depend on ensuring sufficient support for all sectors and countries, especially those with fewer resources. Here again, EU-OSHA has a role to play.

¹ https://osha.europa.eu/en/facts-andfigures/osh-pulse-occupational-safetyand-health-post-pandemic-workplaces

Symposium marking KAN's 30th anniversary

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On 13 November 2024, KAN will mark its 30th anniversary by holding a symposium at the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) in Berlin on the topic of "Occupational safety and health and standardization: between global harmonization and national interests".

The first part of the event will focus on the political significance of standardization. Only a few years ago, the desire for global harmonization was still the prime mover of international standardization activity. Now, however, standardization is being used by many countries as a strategic instrument for pursuing their own national economic and socio-political interests. In the second part of the event, KAN's members and stakeholders will discuss the potential impacts of these developments on the interaction between occupational safety and health and standardization, and on KAN's activity.

On the evening before the event, a reception will be held at the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). This will provide an opportunity for networking and dialogue with other guests from Germany and other European countries.

Programme and registration: www.kan.de/en/30-years-of-KAN Attendance is free of charge. Simultaneous interpreting between German and English will be provided.

New mandate for the "Standardisation" working party

At the end of November 2023, the European Commission published the revised mandate for the "Standardisation" working party of its Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work. The mandate makes provision for the working party to monitor European and international standardization activities in the sphere of occupational safety and health and to promote the consistency of these standardization activities with the EU legal framework.

The Member States, employers and employees are represented in the working party. This make-up of the working party is intended to prevent standards from conflicting with or contradicting the regulatory competences of the EU, the Member States and the social partners. The working party monitors standardization activity, issues position statements on an ad-hoc basis, and advises and supports the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment on all standardization issues relevant to occupational safety and health. The mandate particularly provides for attention to be paid in future to monitoring the effects of climate change upon occupational safety and health, and specifically the ISO 45007 draft standard, Occupational Health and Safety Management – OH&S risks arising from climate change and

EU news flash

EU Construction Products Regulation - On 10 April 2024, the European Parliament approved the compromise text of the Construction Products Regulation that had been reached in interinstitutional negotiations. The new Regulation is intended to make the standards publication process faster and more efficient. It now also contains requirements concerning the safety of construction products. In future, users will be able to call up information on a construction product through a digital product passport. The new provisions promote the use of recycled building materials. Following formal approval by the Council, the Regulation is expected to be published in the Official Journal of the EU in the autumn of 2024 and to come into force 20 days later. Certain aspects are subject to longer transition periods. Compromise text: www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/

Asbestos - On 4 April 2024, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), together with the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), called on the Belgian Presidency of the Council to support, at the earliest possible opportunity, a legislative proposal for screening for asbestos. These bodies consider this to be of crucial importance for employee safety, as knowledge of the presence of asbestos is the first and most important requirement for its safe removal. www.efbww.eu/news/efbww-asks-belgian-presidency-to-push-for-aeuropean-legal-frame/4065-a

European Single Market report

On 17 April 2024, the European Council published former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta's report on the European Single Market on its website. The report includes comments on occupational safety and health and standardization. It points out the need for a deterioration in occupational safety and health to be averted. All too often, fatal and non-fatal occupational accidents, particularly in the construction sector, have been caused not by unfortunate events, but by negligence, insufficient investment and the pursuit of profit. Sound, thorough collection and analysis of data is essential for selective measures and safety strategies. In addition, occupational safety and health measures should increasingly address mental health and climate-related risks.

With regard to the Single Market being geared to a circular economy, Enrico Letta also calls for the EU, in conjunction with the European standards organizations, to continue to advocate for standards addressing the safe design of products for such an economy. Standards in this area are essential for longer product life and the quality of the recycled materials. Reliable standards would not only increase confidence in the circular economy in the EU: they would also promote the use of recycled materials in manufacturing processes and thus make Europe a pioneer of the circular economy. www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-amarket-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf



02.07.24 » Hanau

DKE Innovation Campus NORMEN.MACHEN.ZUKUNFT. All Electric Society – Standards for a Sustainable Future DKF

https://innovation-campus.dke.de

09.07.24 » Berlin

Strategieworkshop

Waschbarkeit von smarten und elektronischen Textilien DIN/DKE

www.din.de/de/din-und-seine-partner/termine/strategieworkshop-waschbarkeit-smarten-textilien-1042756

11.09.24 » Online

Fachveranstaltung Dresdner Treffpunkt "Aktuelles zum Arbeitsstättenrecht und Erkenntnisse zum Zusammenwirken von Arbeitsstätten- und Bauordnungsrecht" BAuA

www.baua.de \mathcal{P} Treffpunkt Arbeitsstättenrecht

12.-13.09.24 » Dortmund

..... GfA-Herbstkongress

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Konferenz Building a resilient future towards sustainable safety in a rapidly changing world DGUV https://wos2024.org/home.html

22.-26.09.24 » Oxford

Conference International Society for Respiratory Protection Conference 2024 ISRP www.isrp.com/events/next-international-conference 25.-26.09.24 » Berlin

Konferenz

Durchstarten mit Normung - zweite interaktive Konferenz zur Normungslehre DIN/DKE www.din.de/de/mitwirken/young-professionals/ durchstarten-mit-normung

08.-10.10.24 » Köln

Konferenz Neue EU-Maschinenverordnung und Maschinenrechtstag MBT www.maschinenbautage.eu/konferenzen/ maschinenbautage-2024

09.-11.10.24 » Dresden

Seminar Sicherer Einsatz von kollaborierenden Robotern IAG https://asp.veda.net/webgate_dguv_prod/?key=1#p2 🔎 570164

21.-23.10.24 » Dresden

Seminar Grundlagen der Normungsarbeit im Arbeitsschutz IAG/KAN https://asp.veda.net/webgate_dguv_prod/?key=1#p2 🔎 570044

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05.-07.11.24 » Stuttgart

Fachmesse Arbeitsschutz Aktuell

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14.11.24 » Paris

Konferenz Foresight for Occupational Safety and Health **INRS** https://en.fosh2024.inrs.fr

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