

## STANDARDISATION POLICY IN THE EU



# Content



© doganmesut - stock.adobe.com

## Lead topic

- 04 Standardisation in the context of European policy objectives
- 06 European Agile Specification: CEN/CENELEC plans a new standardisation product
- 07 The role of standardisation in regulatory systems

## Themes

- 09 New standards required for commercial vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery
- 11 Three questions for: Stephan Klenzmann, employee representative committee member
- 12 ECOS: the environmental voice in standardisation



© hanseinn - stock.adobe.com



## 14 In brief

- Proposed amendments to the AI Act
- EU news flash
- EUROSHNET Conference: Digitalisation and climate change
- CEN/CENELEC webinar on occupational safety and health requirements in standards

## 15 Events

### Stay up to date:



KAN\_Arbeitsschutz\_Normung



Kommission Arbeitsschutz und Normung (KAN)



KAN – Kommission Arbeitsschutz und Normung

© stock.adobe.com



**Peer-Oliver Villwock**

Chair of KAN

German Federal Ministry of  
Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)

## Faster. But not at all costs!

The European Union aims to become more competitive – and standardisation should follow suit. New standardisation document formats, such as the European Agile Specification, hold the prospect of greater speed and flexibility. These efforts in the interests of speeding up processes may appear justified. We should not forget, however, the reasons for European standardisation's success to date. Without broad participation in standardisation processes, and without public enquiries and a consensus among all stakeholders, standardisation loses its legitimacy, and thus also its capacity to have a positive influence on occupational safety and health. Standards development is viewed, with some justification, as a slow and bureaucratic process. The basic principles that make it so, such as comprehensive involvement of all affected parties, are however the very things that ensure broad acceptance of the outcomes and provide legal certainty.

Areas relevant to safety are precisely those in which sound, practical principles are needed – and not quick fudges. The political focus upon competitiveness should not lead to proven principles being watered down. Faster processes are needed, but abandonment of these principles should not be the price.

If Europe intends to be ready for the future, innovative developments and dependability must go hand in hand during standardisation work. This means that reforms must be implemented without shaking the foundations. This is essential if standardisation is to continue to contribute to occupational safety and health in the future. «

# Standardisation in the context of European policy objectives

With the beginning of the current EU legislative term in 2024 and the new European Commission's assumption of office under President Ursula von der Leyen in her second term, the focus in Brussels has shifted appreciably. The realignment of the political agenda has had a profound impact on many policy areas, particularly European standardisation.

Whereas the previous legislative approach was characterised by regulation, the Commission is now increasingly pursuing and developing measures and initiatives aimed at simplification, reducing the burden on enterprises and increasing the competitiveness of the European Single Market.

As long ago as 2022, in the EU Strategy on Standardisation<sup>1</sup>, the Commission highlighted technical standardisation as a key instrument for strengthening Europe's competitiveness, expanding technological sovereignty and driving the green and digital transitions forward. As a pillar of the Single Market, standards make a decisive contribution to Europe's ability to innovate and also to making products interoperable and safe. Even at the time of the strategy's launch, however, challenges increasingly facing European standardisation were already becoming apparent: high time pressure in the development of harmonised standards, increasingly shorter innovation cycles and the need for standards to be aligned more closely with market needs and the EU's strategic objectives.

## Standardisation as a strategic instrument

With the Commission's new policy priorities, these issues are gaining centre stage more than ever before. In January 2025, the Commission cited revision of the Standardisation Regulation as one of the horizontal enablers for its Competitiveness Compass<sup>2</sup>. It explicitly announced its intention to accelerate the standardisation process and make it more accessible. In addition, for the first time, it is also linking the common specifications to competitiveness. Common specifications are European implementing acts that the Commission regards as an alternative to harmonised standards in cases where the European standardisation organisations deliver harmonised standards that are unsatisfactory, or fail to deliver them at all.



© doganmesut - stock.adobe.com

The increased relevance of standardisation is evident once again in the Single Market Strategy<sup>3</sup> published in May 2025. In this strategy, the Commission focuses not only on the standardisation system, but also on the New Legislative Framework (NLF) and the provisions concerning market surveillance, with the aim of making the Single Market more competitive. The Commission regards long delays in standard-setting as one of the ten biggest barriers – the “Terrible Ten” – hampering competitiveness in the Single Market. It has a similar view of the harmonised product regulations of the NLF, which it considers to be outdated, and also of the lack of product conformity; the latter additionally requires improvements in the area of market surveillance.

#### **Impetus for reform: European Product Act and Omnibus IV package**

The strong focus of policy on simplification and competitiveness has therefore not only given marked new impetus to revision of the Standardisation Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012, but has also triggered a reform of the NLF and revision of the Market Surveillance Regulation (EU) 2019/1020. Although an evaluation of the Market Surveillance Regulation was originally to be conducted first, the Commission has decided that evaluation will now be integrated directly into the revision process. The Commission’s view is that revision of all three acts in parallel, i.e. as a package, offers potential for synergies and simplification across the entire European product framework. The Commission therefore plans to present the revisions of the Standardisation Regulation, the NLF and the Market Surveillance Regulation together, in the form of the “European Product Act”, in the third quarter of 2026.

The instrument of common specifications has increased significantly in relevance as a result of policy being focused on competitiveness. One of the Commission’s proposals in the Omnibus IV legislative package published in May 2025 is to enshrine common specifications systematically within the European framework for product legislation. In the past, they have been introduced only on a sector-specific basis in individual acts. The proposals in question form the fourth in a series of several “omnibus legislative packages”<sup>4</sup>. These have the aim of reducing the burden on enterprises and cutting administrative costs by simplifying regulations.

It is clear from current developments that European standardisation policy has rarely been linked as closely as this to the European Commission’s strategic priorities. The political reorientation towards competitiveness, simplification and the elimination of bureaucracy is creating a noticeable dynamic in the area of standardisation policy. In the course of the reform, it will be crucial to create a standardisation system and a framework of product legislation capable of responding flexibly and efficiently to new challenges, whilst remaining faithful to the proven basic principles.

*Ronja Heydecke  
heydecke@kan.de*

*Katharina Schulte  
schulte@kan.de*

KAN is following the developments at European level closely and is voicing its opinion in the legislative processes. It issued a statement on the Omnibus IV package in August 2025, having already formulated a critical assessment of the instrument of common specifications in a position paper in October 2024. Over the course of revision of the Standardisation Regulation, KAN has expressed its opinion on several occasions. It adopted a joint position on the Regulation in December 2025.

All KAN position papers can be found at:  
[www.kan.de/en/knowledge/basic-documents-kan-position-papers](http://www.kan.de/en/knowledge/basic-documents-kan-position-papers)

<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0031>

<sup>2</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/competitiveness-compass\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/competitiveness-compass_en)

<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025DC0500&qid=1769174044675>

<sup>4</sup> Further information on common specifications and the omnibus packages: [www.kan.de/en/publikationen/kanbrief/2025/4-25/omnibus-packages-fast-track-procedure-for-reforms](http://www.kan.de/en/publikationen/kanbrief/2025/4-25/omnibus-packages-fast-track-procedure-for-reforms)

# European Agile Specification: CEN/CENELEC plans a new standardisation product

With the European Agile Specification (EAS), CEN/CENELEC is seeking to introduce a new standardisation product that will enable technical specifications to be developed and made available within a short space of time. According to the proposal, the new format could potentially give rise to a presumption of conformity. The aim is to permit a swifter response to new market-related, technological and regulatory requirements.

The European Commission is seeking to accelerate procedures in order to keep pace with rapid innovation cycles. With the instrument of common specifications, the Commission has created the option of a fallback solution for the event that harmonised standards are inadequate or do not exist at all. The Commission is also considering drawing on outcomes produced by standardisation organisations beyond those already established in Europe (ESOs).

For its part, CEN/CENELEC has presented the EAS to the European Commission as a new option for accelerating standardisation processes. This standardisation product is to be developed within the existing European standardisation system, and is to be able to give rise to the presumption of conformity.

## Development process planned by CEN/CENELEC

In accordance with a decision taken by the CEN/CENELEC Technical Board, EASs are to serve as an intermediate step towards a full European standard. The procedure for EASs' development differs from the normal standardisation process in that an EAS is to be published as soon as the Technical Committee (TC) deems it safe, stable and sufficiently robust. The EAS is then to undergo a cycle of continuous revision until it is either transposed into a European standard by way of the normal procedure, or withdrawn.

Development of an EAS is to be based on a normal new work item proposal (NWIP). The responsible TC is to vote within four weeks on whether interest exists in principle in addressing the topic. Consistent with the principle of national delegation, the national

standardisation organisations are to be involved in voting, conduct consultations at national level and delegate experts to the working group. The outcome of the development process is to be open at the outset of development: the final form of publication is to be determined only in the course of the process.

Plans are for EASs to be developed in the responsible working group (WG), optionally even before the work item proposal has been voted upon. It is also envisaged that a smaller group (a drafting team) within the WG will prepare an initial draft. Once sufficient progress has been made on the draft and it meets with the support of the WG, the latter is to decide whether to publish the document as an EAS. To this end, a consensus is to be sought within the WG, but with no obligation for a consensus actually to be reached. Unlike the normal standardisation procedure, provision is not made for a public enquiry. The subsequent vote in the TC should be held within four weeks. Should the result of the vote be positive, the EAS is to be published without addressing any comments that may have arisen in the TC. Should the TC vote not to publish the document as an EAS, it is to be returned for revision to the WG, which should then consider the TC's comments.

The EAS is to be published in English by the national standardisation organisations. Translations are to be possible, but must not delay the development and publication process. An EAS must not contradict an existing European standard. No obligation is to exist for the EAS to be adopted at national level, nor any requirement that national standards conflicting with it be withdrawn.

Once an EAS has been published, the TC is to decide whether it should be revised and republished as an EAS or transposed into a full EN standard by way of the usual procedure. Each EAS is to be reviewed at least every three years for its market relevance and potential for further development into a European standard. A pilot phase is currently in progress in which selected TCs are testing the EAS process.

## Presumption of conformity only for full standards

KAN discussed the introduction of EASs at the KAN meeting in November 2025. KAN's view is that efforts to accelerate the standards development process must not erode the fundamental principles of standardisation. Technical content that has been developed under time pressure and may therefore be deficient, and also dispensing with a public enquiry, reduce the legitimacy of standardisation and prevent the essential feedback concerning technical and practical issues.

KAN therefore takes the view that only full standards should give rise to a presumption of conformity, as these are developed in the normal European standardisation process with extensive participation by all stakeholders, conducting of a public enquiry, and full consensus-building. KAN intends to publish a position paper on the introduction of EASs.

*Katharina Schulte  
schulte@kan.de*

# The role of standardisation in regulatory systems

The key purpose of rules, regulations and standards in occupational safety and health is to present the relevant duties and recommendations comprehensibly. It follows that the regulatory system must be structured consistently. One measure of this consistency is the policy paper on the role of standardisation in the safety and health of workers at work.

Parties seeking to keep track of occupational safety and health in its entirety must inevitably deal with relevant legislative acts, secondary legislation, accident prevention regulations, technical rules of the state and the accident insurance institutions (in Germany, those of the DGUV) and standards. Under the right circumstances, employers are quite able to cope with the various documents: not necessarily because they are experts in regulatory matters, but because the documents collectively form a logical structure, and any given issue is addressed only in one place. To ensure that this is the case, the German stakeholders in occupational safety and health have not only agreed on the precise relationship between statutory legislation and the rules and regulations of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions; they have also agreed on the function of standardisation in this system in Germany, thus creating a further element for a consistent regulatory structure. This agreement, set out for the first time in 2014 in the “Policy paper on the role of standardisation in the health and safety of workers at work”<sup>1</sup>, makes the use of standards in occupational safety and health dependent on whether the standards concerned are specifications for products or stipulations concerning workplace safety and health.

Where standards address products, their use as regulatory instruments in OSH is viewed positively. This is the case not only in Germany, but also at European level, where harmonised standards constitute an important means of achieving a harmonised European single market by laying down requirements for product properties. Since standardisation, whether at national, European or international level, also covers products used in a work context, OSH experts are active on standards committees to make the case for high levels of safety and health. In January 2026, experts delegated by the German Social Accident Insurance alone were contributing their OSH expertise in over 1,200 functions on German standards committees, and in almost 700 further functions at European and international level. Topics addressed include, for example, the product safety of machinery (such as meat processing, textile and forestry machinery) and of personal protective equipment (such as protective gloves, laser protective clothing and PPE against falls from a height). Standardisation benefits greatly from this involvement, as the standard of safety and health for users of these products is increased significantly when OSH expertise is taken into account alongside the interests of other stakeholders. Equally, the German authorities and the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions are able to make use of the expertise found in standards in their own bodies of regulations, and reduce the volume of the latter by referring to the relevant standards.



### Safety and health of workers at work: other rules apply

The situation is different with regard to the safety and health of workers at work: in this area, standards are not considered suitable for use as a regulatory instrument. Where hazards at the workplace must be identified and decisions taken on the measures required for protection against them, the relevant legislation is supplemented primarily by secondary legislation, statutory regulations, and in Germany, also by the body of rules and regulations of the German Social Accident Insurance. This ensures an appropriate level of protection, since these regulatory structures provide the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions and the social partners with much greater scope for influence than in the general standardisation system. The reason for this is that during standards development processes, the occupational safety and health experts have to reconcile their interests in prevention with the interests of various other stakeholders. These particularly include manufacturers, but also consumers, retailers, research institutes, the authorities and test institutes.

However, standards addressing topics concerning the safety and health of workers at work do also exist. Standards primarily addressing terminology, definitions and symbols, for example, or describing testing, measurement, analysis and sampling procedures and statistical methods, are beneficial. OSH experts are therefore also active on standards committees addressing such topics as icons, the measurement of inorganic fibrous particles or the sampling of bioaerosols.

The wealth of standards impacting upon the safety and health of workers at work is, however, increasing beyond the standards of the kind referred to above for assurance of comparability or containing terminological provisions. Occupational safety and health representatives are working to counter this trend, particularly where the level of protection described is too low or where relevant provisions already exist elsewhere. For example, EN ISO 8804-1, Requirements for the training of scientific divers, is opposed by the OSH stakeholders in Germany, since the qualifications of scientific divers are already described in DGUV Rule 101-023, which concerns research diving and contains stricter requirements. DIN EN ISO 8804-1 therefore makes reference to the relevant DGUV rule in a national foreword. Another example is DIN EN 16194, a standard for mobile non-sewer-connected toilet cabins: the German national foreword of this standard draws attention to the primacy of a German national rule (ASR A4.1, concerning sanitary areas). However, a national foreword of this kind in a standard is not the ideal solution; content relating to the safety and health of workers at work should preferably be excluded from the standards development process altogether.

### The policy paper provides clarity

The policy paper on the role of standardisation in the safety and health of workers at work does not exclude standards entirely from this area, provided development of a particular standard appears beneficial. The stakeholders in occupational safety and health discuss such cases and reach agreements on them in the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardization (KAN). Agreements are based on key criteria. Firstly, these criteria identify overlap with and duplication of state legislation or the body of rules and regulations of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions; secondly, they examine whether the planned standard is beneficial for use in the field, and whether the development process is able to ensure the standard's quality. KAN may decide to reject the work item of the standard, or to approve it, either in full or conditionally.

*Finja Meyer*  
*Central Prevention Division*  
*DGUV*  
*finja.meyer@dguv.de*

<sup>1</sup> [www.kan.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/Basisdokumente/en/Deu/2021-02\\_Grundsatzpapier-Update-en.pdf](http://www.kan.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/Basisdokumente/en/Deu/2021-02_Grundsatzpapier-Update-en.pdf)

# New standards required for commercial vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery

To ensure that the safety and health of workers is taken into account during the design of new commercial vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery, the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the transport industry (BG Verkehr) is seeking to initiate development of standards for dump trucks, silo trucks and car transporters. Experts from manufacturing and operating companies are sought for this work.

As a German Social Accident Insurance Institution, the BG Verkehr is particularly concerned with the safety and health of drivers during the use of commercial vehicles. An important aspect here is the safety of access and entry points and working areas on vehicle superstructures. According to accident statistics from the BG Verkehr and other accident insurance institutions, falls, including falls from a height, during the use of access points and the performance of work on vehicles or vehicle superstructures are among the most common occupational accidents. These accidents often cause serious injury, in some cases with long periods of absence from work, and may even be fatal. As long ago as November 2022, the BG Verkehr held an industry conference<sup>1</sup> on the subject of the underestimated hazards of falls from vehicles and access points to working areas on vehicles, and effective measures for reducing these hazards to a minimum.

## Gaps in rules and regulations

Safety requirements for vehicle superstructures are described in the DGUV accident prevention regulation concerning vehicles (DGUV Regulation 70), which is currently being revised. However, its scope excludes superstructures in the form of machinery mounted on the base vehicle, such as tipping systems for dumpers and silo trucks or moving load areas for car transporters, as these must comply with the requirements of the Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC and, as of 20 January 2027, the Machinery Regulation (EU) 2023/1230. Accident prevention regulations (DGUV regulations) are addressed primarily at member companies of the German Social Accident Institutions, and not directly at the vehicle manufacturers. Nevertheless, many manufacturers of vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery refer to the requirements of DGUV Regulation 70 concerning working areas on vehicles and access, entry and exit points as a basis for the design of their products, since the Machinery Directive describes only general objectives of protection.

Existing harmonised product standards for the safe design of vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery are as yet limited in number and address refuse collection vehicles or concrete mixer trucks, for example. A French national standard (NF R17-109) for dump trucks was introduced in August 2020. This could serve as the basis for a European standard; work on its transposition has not yet begun at European level, however. No standards exist at this time for the superstructures of silo trucks and car transporters.

For vehicle superstructures falling within the scope of the EC Machinery Directive, reference can also be made to the EN ISO 14122 series of standards, Safety of machinery – Permanent means of access to machinery. However, the design requirements set out in these standards are geared primarily towards stationary machines. They often cannot be applied to the specific conditions for vehicles and their superstructures deriving from the provisions of road traffic legislation, such as dimensions and weight. A gap in the regulations therefore exists for dump trucks, silo trucks and car transporters. Specific requirements in product standards (ideally harmonised) would be extremely useful for manufacturers and operators alike.

## Requirements for manufacturers and operators

The safety and health requirements currently in place for vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery are set out in Annex I of the Machinery Directive. Manufacturers' obligations include assessing the risk during the intended use and reasonably foreseeable misuse of the product and taking appropriate technical protective measures.

Operators must observe national regulations during use of the product. In Germany, these include the German Occupational Safety and Health Act (ArbSchG) and

the German Ordinance on industrial safety and health (BetrSichV). They are therefore required to conduct a risk assessment in which they determine and evaluate the working conditions to be taken into account in the design of work equipment and machinery and during its selection and use. Machinery in this context also includes vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery. Adherence by manufacturers to the harmonised safety requirements set out in standards is highly advantageous for operators.

**Towards international standards**

In the light of this situation, the BG Verkehr wishes to promote two work items for standards development that contain specific provisions for access and entry points and working areas and protection against falls from a height on vehicle superstructures in the form of machinery:

- Extension of the EN ISO 14122 series of Type B standards (generic safety standards) by a new part describing essential requirements for access to superstructures in the form of machinery mounted on mobile/non-stationary machinery
- European (ideally harmonised) Type C standards (product safety standards) for dump trucks, silo trucks and car transporters

A request for development of the new part of the EN ISO 14122 series of standards for mobile/non-stationary machinery has now been submitted to ISO/TC 199, Safety of machinery. As soon as this request has been approved, the essential requirements are to be developed in ISO/TC 199 in an international working group.

The envisaged product standards for dump trucks, silo trucks and car transporters are intended to support manufacturers in complying with the statutory product safety requirements and to provide guidance to operators during purchase of these vehicles. To this end, the BG Verkehr is seeking to introduce a work item in CEN/TC 301, Road vehicles, in cooperation with the DIN Standards Committee Road Vehicles and Mobility.

**Experts needed for standardisation work**

Still needed: experts from manufacturing and operating companies who would like to contribute to developing and shaping the technical standards. These experts are always welcome. Should you have any questions or would like to get in touch, please contact the Executive Division Prevention of BG Verkehr.

*Dirk Bremer*  
*Dirk.Bremer@bg-verkehr.de*

<sup>1</sup> [www.bg-verkehr.de/arbeitssicherheit-gesundheit/aktuelles-und-kampagnen/branchenkonferenzen/vergangene-branchenkonferenzen/branchenkonferenz-gueterkraftverkehr/branchenkonferenzen-gueterkraftverkehr](http://www.bg-verkehr.de/arbeitssicherheit-gesundheit/aktuelles-und-kampagnen/branchenkonferenzen/vergangene-branchenkonferenzen/branchenkonferenz-gueterkraftverkehr/branchenkonferenzen-gueterkraftverkehr)



© hansen - stock.adobe.com

## Three questions for: Stephan Klenzmann, employee representative committee member

Stephan Klenzmann is a member of the employee representative committee at SMS Group, a machine plant supplier for the steel industry. In this capacity, he promotes occupational safety and health within the group. He is a member of the Governing Committee of the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the woodworking and metalworking industries (BGHM) and is active in KAN, in both cases representing employees' interests.

### What factors have had the greatest impact upon the safety and health of workers at work in recent years?

We've seen an increase in the introduction of international management systems and standards-based certifications. These impact upon many areas of preventive activity in the safety and health of workers at work. For some German companies, this may impair efficiency, since established structures and procedures are already in place that are not always consistent with the certification requirements. At the same time, these systems also offer opportunities, for example when occupational safety and health activity is integrated into management structures. Supervision of these processes by parties to co-determination is conducive to their being implemented successfully in the interests of occupational safety and health.

A major challenge presented by the certifications, which are often valid internationally, is their interface to the regulations concerning occupational safety and health, opportunities for participation and rights to co-determination, which differ from country to country. The certifications must not be detrimental to the comparatively high level of protection here in Germany and the participative processes by which the regulations are created. In particular, Germany's dual occupational safety and health system is characterised by participation of the social partners in the creation of regulations, whether in the state committees of the Ministry of Labour (BMAS), or in the structures of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions, in which equal rights of employers and employees are enshrined. Participation in this form is not assured in standardisation activity.

### "Cutting red tape" has become a catchphrase. What's your opinion of this development?

With its initiative to reduce bureaucracy, the BMAS aims to make the regulation of occupational safety and health more efficient and digital. The purpose is to develop practical solutions for SMEs and to relieve the burden on trade and industry as a whole. We mustn't make the mistake, though, of viewing functions such as safety delegates and external company coordinators – functions which are now being called into question – as "red tape". These functions guarantee indispensable protection for workers.

Responsibility for occupational safety and health lies with the employer. Employers can't be everywhere at once, though, or aware of all relevant hazards. They therefore rely on the support of persons appointed for the purpose. Examples are safety delegates and external company coordinators. Persons performing these roles ensure that legal requirements and company rules are observed. These persons' activity is modest, but effective.

A case can be made in many areas for cutting red tape. However, this must be planned conscientiously and with the involvement of the social partners. Besides posing a risk to workers, overly hasty measures increase costs to companies in the long term. The common goal of all parties involved must continue to be to reduce occupational accidents and working days lost due to illness. Measures to reduce bureaucracy must therefore never be implemented at the expense of safety levels.

This level of safety is also guaranteed by the autonomy of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions, which is enshrined in Volume

VII of the German Social Code and ensures that provisions are geared to the situation in the field. This autonomy, and the dual occupational safety and health system in Germany, must be preserved, and not eroded under the pretext of "cutting red tape". DGUV Regulations, for example, are the responsibility of the autonomous administration, comprising representatives of employers and insured individuals, and not of the BMAS.

### What is the function of external company coordinators, and why are they indispensable for the safety and health of workers at work?

Levels of occupational safety and health have improved in many companies. At the same time, though, it's increasingly common for employees of several companies to be working on the same company site, and occupational accidents particularly often affect the employees of external companies or occur where different companies interact.

External company coordinators play a crucial role in assuring the safety and health of workers at work. They identify and assess risks arising at points of contact between different companies, initiate suitable health and safety measures in consultation with the customer and the external companies, and coordinate implementation of these measures. The coordinators also provide assistance with preparing risk assessments for shared work areas. They have special authority to monitor working conditions and ensure that the safety regulations are being observed. Rather than eliminating these coordinators, it would be far more advantageous to strengthen their function and regulate it clearly, thereby ensuring that "cutting red tape" doesn't ultimately lead to a reduction in the level of protection in the workplace.

# ECOS: the environmental voice in standardisation

**ECOS, the Environmental Coalition on Standards, has been representing environmental interests in standardisation for 25 years. Amina Aissani, Senior Programme Manager Standardisation Policy, explains how the organisation works and what topics it is currently focusing on.**



## **What is ECOS' mission and how is the organisation structured?**

ECOS is an environmental NGO which helps shape environmentally ambitious standards, policies, and laws. We bring environmental expertise to European and international technical standards. This expertise is crucial in areas such as the clean transition to a circular economy, industrial decarbonisation, building a renewable and efficient energy system and combatting greenwashing.

We are a network of over 60 member organisations in 30 countries. An Executive Committee elected by the General Assembly is responsible for strategic direction, while the secretariat, with its 30+ members of staff, coordinates day-to-day standardisation work. This is complemented by a pool of experts who make technical and scientific contributions and participate in standards committees.

ECOS is one of the four European stakeholder organisations recognised under Annex III of the EU Standardisation Regulation 1025/2012, and we are officially charged with representing environmental interests in the European standardisation system. The NGO is a partner organisation of CEN and CENELEC and a member of ETSI, and is active in numerous international committees at ISO, IEC and ITU. ECOS is funded by EU and EFTA grants, and also by philanthropic foundations.

## **What role does standardisation play in environmental protection, and how is ECOS involved in the standardisation process?**

Standards are an important tool which, if well used, can contribute to a healthy and clean environment. ECOS works to raise awareness of the need for new or revised standards for crucial environmental sectors, policies or innovations, pushing for robustness and environmental ambition in policies and laws that are implemented with the support of standards.

Standards set key technical specifications, for example to measure the energy consumption of household appliances or determine the reparability, material use and recyclability of products, thereby laying the foundation for a sustainable economy. Many of these technical specifications are harmonised worldwide through ISO and IEC standards, and thus support global trade.



© ECOS

Standards can help foster technological developments and innovation. They act as enablers to facilitate market access for clean tech and climate-friendly products and services, e.g. natural refrigerants, low-carbon cement, repairable products, circular fishing gear, and energy and material-efficient products. Standards can also influence consumer decisions when used in labels and claims. Furthermore, in Europe, standards are used as a tool to underpin environmental legislation, such as REACH regarding chemicals and RoHS on the restriction of hazardous substances, providing presumption of conformity and therefore a route to the market.

ECOS is closely involved in standardisation processes. We have access to over 300 committees and working groups across European and international standardisation organisations, including 40 liaisons at ISO, primarily in committees on environmental management, the circular economy, buildings and construction and energy efficiency.

As a partner organisation at CEN and CENELEC, ECOS is active on technical committees and in working groups, and can contribute opinions and technical input to standards under development. In addition, ECOS initiates projects such as the work undertaken within the High-Level Forum on European Standardisation on greater inclusiveness of the standardisation system, particularly for civil society and SMEs. We are also part of influential environmental campaigns, including “Right to Repair Europe” and “Rethink Plastic alliance”.

### **What topics are currently at the top of the agenda?**

ECOS is active in a great number of environmental areas, including industrial decarbonisation, for example in the cement and steel sectors, green public procurement, ecodesign for all sectors, critical raw materials, carbon accounting, and also emerging topics such as digitalisation and data centres. Parallel to these topics, we highlight the need for a more inclusive and transparent standardisation system at all levels, and the appropriate use of standards in support of environmental legislation and policy. This is particularly central to the revision of the EU Standardisation Regulation, which offers a critical opportunity to make the system more inclusive for environmental organisations and other societal stakeholders.

### **Where do environmental protection and occupational safety and health have common interests?**

Considerable overlap exists between environmental protection and occupational safety and health, and also with consumer protection. These areas all benefit from consistent hazardous substance management, which protects employees and consumers from exposure and at the same time prevents environmental contamination. Technical measures, such as extraction or filter systems, improve air quality at the workplace and reduce emissions into the environment. Waste prevention also creates synergies: less waste means less environmental impact and fewer health risks during recycling and handling of residual waste. Sustainable procurement is another example, as environmentally friendly products are often also safer for health.

A very telling example of slightly different but nevertheless similar interests is personal protective equipment. PPE is not always suitable for repair or reuse, and may be made of materials that are difficult to recycle; intensive cleaning or disinfection measures may also pollute the environment. We acknowledge that the safety of users and consumers should come first, but this should not prevent the roll-out of much-needed sustainable solutions, such as repairable and recyclable PPE or environmentally friendly cleaning agents. Close cooperation in areas such as hazardous substance management, product development and sustainability in companies is particularly important in order to find solutions that benefit all stakeholders.

## Proposed amendments to the AI Act

In November 2025, the European Commission presented the Digital Omnibus on AI Regulation Proposal for amendment of the AI Act. The amendments proposed in the omnibus may also have an impact on the safety of persons at work. In particular, the date of application of the provisions for high-risk AI is to be postponed. The background to this particular proposal is that the harmonised standards supporting the requirements of the Act have still not been published. The Commission is therefore now proposing a mechanism that links the start of application of the provisions to a decision confirming that the required standards and supporting instruments are available.

The Digital Omnibus is not the only proposal by the Commission for amendment of the AI Act. Further adjustments are to be made in a proposal to revise the Medical Devices Regulation (MDR) and the In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices Regulation (IVDR). The MDR and IVDR are to be moved from Section A (Union harmonisation legislation based on the New Legislative Framework (NLF)) to Section B (other Union harmonisation legislation) in Annex I of the AI Act. This would result in medical devices and in vitro diagnostic medical devices for AI systems that are considered high-risk under Article 6 (1) (Annex I) of the AI Act being subject to significantly fewer requirements than those provided for to date.

Comments can be submitted through the Commission's Have Your Say portal: until 13 March 2026 for comments on the Digital Omnibus and at least until 4 May 2026 for comments on the proposed revision of the MDR and IVDR.

Have Your Say portal:

[https://t1p.de/digital\\_omnibus](https://t1p.de/digital_omnibus)

[https://t1p.de/Medicaldevices\\_in-vitro](https://t1p.de/Medicaldevices_in-vitro)

## EU news flash

On 30 January 2026, the European Commission published the **2026 Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report**. The report particularly addresses implementation of the Single Market Strategy, which was adopted in May 2025. The strategy states the obstacles to competitiveness in the Single Market – the “Terrible Ten” – that are primarily to be eliminated.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2026:46:FIN>

On 6 February 2026, CEN and CENELEC published their **Work Programme 2026**. The focus of the programme lies on topics such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, the Digital Product Passport and standardisation work addressing green technologies. Further important points are revision of the Standardisation Regulation and the New Legislative Framework (NLF): the objective here is to increase the speed and flexibility of the European standardisation system.

<https://wp2026.cencenelec.eu>

Since 1 January 2026, Cyprus has held the **EU Council Presidency**. In view of the current geopolitical turmoil, one of Cyprus' objectives is to enhance the EU's inner resilience and

autonomy. In the area of occupational safety and health, the focus lies upon revision of the Carcinogens, Mutagens or Reprotoxic substances Directive 2004/37/EC (CMRD).

<https://cyprus-presidency.council.europa.eu>

## Digitalisation and climate change: reshaping occupational safety and health

On **27 and 28 May 2026**, EUROSHNET, the European Occupational Safety and Health Network, will host the **9th European conference on standardization**, testing and certification in the field of occupational safety and health in Helsinki, Finland, under the heading: Digital and green innovations – Shaping the future of occupational safety and health.

The impact of climate change presents the occupational safety and health community with major challenges, and requires new approaches in many areas to ensure that safe working conditions can continue to be maintained. At the same time, companies are increasingly making use of new digital technologies. These open up opportunities for innovative developments, but must also always take account of occupational safety and health concerns.

The EUROSHNET conference brings experts from across Europe together to discuss how standardisation, testing and certification need to be developed further to meet this new reality. In addition to numerous papers on the topic, the event offers an excellent opportunity for networking with colleagues from EU institutions, occupational safety and health organisations, testing and certification bodies, companies, the social partners and standardisation organisations from throughout Europe.

The **deadline for registration is 11 May 2026**. Proposals for the accompanying poster exhibition can be submitted up until 17 April 2026.

Programme and registration: [www.euroshnet.eu/conference-2026](http://www.euroshnet.eu/conference-2026)

## CEN/CENELEC webinar on occupational safety and health requirements in standards

Occupational safety and health may be relevant in many areas addressed by standardisation documents. However, standards may present problems for their users when they set out requirements concerning occupational safety and health that are not consistent with the legal framework. Where standards can be helpful and how problems can be avoided is the topic of a CEN/CENELEC webinar to be held on Friday, **12 June 2026**, from **10 to 11 am CET**.

The webinar will be conducted by the Strategic Advisory Group Occupational Health and Safety (SAG OHS) of CEN/CENELEC BT. The chair of SAG OHS and Head of the KAN Secretariat, Dr Monika Maintz, will moderate the event.

Save the date now. Further information and registration details will be announced in good time at [www.cencenelec.eu/news-events/events](http://www.cencenelec.eu/news-events/events)

# Events



15.-16.04.26 » Online

Seminar

**Produktsicherheitsverordnung und Produkthaftung: Anforderungen, Pflichten und Haftungsrisiken**

DIN Media

[www.dinmedia.de](http://www.dinmedia.de) Produktsicherheitsverordnung

05.-07.05.26 » Pforzheim/ Online

Konferenz

**CE-PraxisTAGE**

IBF Solutions GmbH

[www.ce-praxistage.com](http://www.ce-praxistage.com)

05.-07.05.26 » Hybrid/Köln

Seminar

**EU-Maschinenverordnung (EU) 2023/1230**

MBT

[www.maschinenrichtlinie.de/fortbildung/mbt-seminare](http://www.maschinenrichtlinie.de/fortbildung/mbt-seminare)

19.-21.05.26 » Innsbruck (A)

Fachveranstaltung

**Forum Prävention 2026**

AUVA

<https://auva.at/veranstaltungen/forum-praevention-2026>

20.05.26 » Online

Arbeitsmedizinisches Online-Kolloquium

**Gefahrstoffe**

DGUV

[www.dguv.de/ipa/lehre/fortbildung/index.jsp](http://www.dguv.de/ipa/lehre/fortbildung/index.jsp)

20.05.26 » Online

Seminar

**KI im Arbeitsschutz**

Concada

[www.concada.de/seminare/seminar/ki-im-arbeitsschutz](http://www.concada.de/seminare/seminar/ki-im-arbeitsschutz)

02.-03.06.26 » Online

Seminar

**CE-Kennzeichnung im Maschinen- und Anlagenbau**

VDI Wissensforum

[www.vdi-wissensforum.de/weiterbildung-maschinenbau/ce-kennzeichnung](http://www.vdi-wissensforum.de/weiterbildung-maschinenbau/ce-kennzeichnung)

27.-28.05.26 » Helsinki (FIN)

EUROSHNET Conference

**Digital and green innovations – Shaping the future of occupational safety and health**

EUROSHNET

[www.euroshnet.eu/conference-2026](http://www.euroshnet.eu/conference-2026)

08.-11.06.26 » Sankt Augustin

Seminar

**Vibrationsmesstechnik für den Arbeitsschutz**

Institut für Arbeitsschutz der DGUV

<https://dguv.converia.de/frontend/index.php?sub=269>

15.-17.06.26 » Helsinki (FIN)

Conference

**17th conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology**

EAOHP

[https://eaohp.org/eaohp\\_2026](https://eaohp.org/eaohp_2026)

07.07.26 » Köln

Sonderkonferenz

**EU-Maschinenverordnung**

MBT

[www.maschinenrichtlinie.de/fortbildung/konferenzen](http://www.maschinenrichtlinie.de/fortbildung/konferenzen)

24.-27.08.26 » Stockholm (S)

Conference

**Preventing Occupational Disease**

EPICOH

[www.epicoh2026.com](http://www.epicoh2026.com)



Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales  
aufgrund eines Beschlusses des Deutschen Bundestages

## Publisher

Verein zur Förderung der Arbeitssicherheit in Europa e.V. (VFA) with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

## Editorial team

Commission for Occupational Safety and Health and Standardization (KAN), Secretariat  
Sonja Miesner, Michael Robert  
Tel. +49 2241 231 3450 · [www.kan.de](http://www.kan.de) · [info@kan.de](mailto:info@kan.de)

## Responsible

Dr. Monika Maintz, Alte Heerstr. 111, D – 53757 Sankt Augustin

## Translation

Marc Prior

## Publication

published quarterly

ISSN: 2702-4024 (Print) · 2702-4032 (Online)