

European standardisation

2011/0150(COD) - 07/05/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the report by Lara COMI (PPE, IT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Standardisation and amending Council Directives 89/686/EEC and 93/15/EEC and Directives 94/9/EC, 94/25/EC, 95/16/EC, 97/23/EC, 98/34/EC, 2004/22/EC, 2007/23/EC, 2009/105/EC and 2009/23/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The committee recommends that the European Parliament's position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

European standards: Members specify that this means a standard adopted by one of the European Standardisation Organisations, which shall be implemented through its publication as an identical national standard, with the obligation for National Standardisation Organisations to withdraw any existing and conflicting national standards.

Technical specification: the characteristics required of a product include levels of environmental protection and public health.

Participation and balanced representation of stakeholders: Members want European Standardisation Organisations to encourage and facilitate appropriate representation and participation of all relevant stakeholders, such as public authorities, including market surveillance authorities, SMEs, organisations representing the interests of consumers, including people with disabilities, environmental and social stakeholders, including social partners, in particular, through the stakeholder organisations, referred to in Annex III, at the policy development level and at least at the certain stages of the development of European standards or European standardisation deliverables.

Access of SMEs to standards: the report stresses SMEs participation in the standardisation process is essential for technological progress in the Union. It makes a series of amendments to encourage SME participation in standardization activities, particularly at national level and to facilitate their effective access to standards. It provides that National Standardisation Organisations shall exchange best practices aiming to enhance the participation of SMEs in standardisation activities and to increase and facilitate the use of standards.

Ensuring the participation of public authorities: noting that in most Member States public authorities show a limited interest in participating in the standards development process, Members want the Regulation to ensure that public authorities take part in all national technical committees mirroring the development of standards mandated by the Commission. The participation of national authorities is particularly crucial for the proper functioning of legislation in the areas covered by the 'New Approach', and for the avoidance of ex-post objections to harmonised standards.

Objection to harmonised standard: as the European Parliament is on an equal footing with the Council in the ordinary legislative procedure, the European Parliament must have the right to object to a harmonised standard.

Recognition and use of technical specifications in the field of ICT: the Union should encourage contact between standardisation bodies and forums and consortia drafting technical specifications especially in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), while avoiding the creation of a system which competes with standardisation.

Either on proposal from a Member State or on its own initiative the Commission may decide, after consultation with the European Standardisation Organisations and all relevant stakeholders, including the European multi-stakeholder platform on ICT standardisation as set up by the Commission, to reference ICT technical specifications which are not national, European or international standards and meet the requirements set out in Annex II. The report supports the introduction of a new system allowing the use, in particular in the field of public procurement, of specifications developed by other organisations.

Improving and accelerating the European standard-setting process through more transparency and consultation: Members consider that it is essential for European standards to be developed within a reasonable period of time. Before issuing a request, the Commission shall within a reasonable deadline consult the European Standardisation Organisations, all relevant stakeholders, especially those referred to in Annex III, and the committees of national experts set up by the corresponding sectoral directive where such a directive exists as well as notify all interested parties registered in the European Transparency register.

As standards are primarily a market tool, it is necessary to ensure a high level of cooperation between the European Standardisation Organisations and the Commission in the establishment of its annual European standardisation work programme in order to ensure that the standards that the Commission intends to request from the European Standardisation Organisations are market-driven.

Better consultation between the Commission and the European Standardisation Organisations is also necessary prior to the issue of a request for new standardisation work.

Accordingly, the committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall meet at least twice per year with the European and National Standardisation Organisations. Furthermore, the Commission may invite the organisations referred to in Annexes I, Ia and III, and other relevant stakeholders, as observers, to the meetings of the committee.

Joint Research Centre: the Commission's Joint Research Centre shall contribute to the preparation of the European standardization work programme and participate in the activities of the European Standardisation Organisations providing scientific input, in its areas of expertise, to ensure that standards take into account economic competitiveness and social needs such as environmental sustainability and safety and security concerns.

Use of ICT: in order to accelerate the standardisation process and facilitate the participation of all interested parties in that process, European and National Standardisation Organisations should make best use, in their working methods, of information and communication technologies.

Review: the Commission shall consider the need for additional measures to simplify the financing of European standardisation and reduce the administrative burden for the European Standardisation Organisations. It shall present its conclusions in a report to be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council by 1 January 2015, and shall submit, if appropriate, a legislative proposal for the amendment of this Regulation.