



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

2010/2051(INI)

15.7.2010

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

on the future of European standardisation
(2010/2051(INI))

Rapporteur: Reinhard Bütikofer

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that the new European standardisation model must contribute to European innovation and sustainable development, enhance the Union's competitiveness, strengthen its place in international trade and benefit the welfare of its citizens;
2. Calls on the Commission to include the existing obligation to follow the principles of the World Trade Organisation's agreement on technical barriers to trade (transparency, openness, impartiality, consensus, efficiency, relevance and consistency) in the legal framework of European standardisation, particularly in Directive 98/34/EC or its successor, as this would help the establishment of, enforcement of, compliance with and supervision of standards; encourages the Commission to promote the principle of balanced representation and accountability in the European Standardisation System; recalls the importance of intellectual property rights, which must be an integral part of the future European standardisation policy;
3. Stresses that international standards are enablers for a global market by virtue of the use of one identical standard in many countries, centred on a 'performance-based' approach, encouraging consumer understanding and market confidence;
4. Asks the Commission to set clear eligibility criteria for organisations entitled to design standards;
5. Calls on the Commission to introduce into the standardisation part of Directive 98/34/EC or its successor the obligation on the Member States to ensure that national standards bodies (NSBs) notify national standards on services;
6. Recognises that European standardisation is a key instrument for promoting innovation of crucial importance for the competitiveness of EU as well as for the completion of the internal market, and underlines its important economic benefits, enabling companies to achieve faster knowledge transfer, cost and risk reduction, faster time to market and higher value for innovation;
7. Recognises the importance of simplifying the procedure for establishing standards;
8. Calls on the Commission to introduce in the standardisation part of Directive 98/34/EC or its successor an explicit opportunity for the Commission to issue mandates in certain sectors in the field of services;
9. Welcomes efforts by the European standards organisations (ESOs) and NSBs to include all stakeholders and ensure balanced representation; encourages these organisations to make full use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to strengthen stakeholder participation through web-based meetings and online discussion; considers that thought should be given to setting an upper limit for participation by particular types of stakeholders on technical committees and working parties, so that, for example, SMEs

- are given fair representation; stresses the need to continually improve cooperation between standardisation bodies, the R&D sector and academia from the early phases of standards development;
10. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to launch information campaigns on standardisation and standardisation procedures in order to raise awareness, particularly in the R&D sector, academia and educational institutions;
 11. Calls on the Member States to support national/sectoral SME representative organisations and other national societal stakeholders in national standardisation processes;
 12. Acknowledges the important role played by stakeholder organisations pursuing interests of the public good at European level such as ANEC, ECOS and ETUI-REHS, and the essential role played by NORMAPME; recognises that their limited resources can hinder effective participation in the standard-making process and calls on the Commission to earmark some of the financing provided for European standardisation to these organisations, particularly to support the participation of experts in the elaboration of standards; asks the Commission to evaluate the contributions by these organisations within two years to make sure that the funding they receive is merited; also asks the Commission to consider whether other organisations would merit similar support and, if so, to consider increasing relevant funding; expects these organisations, amongst others, to play a more important role in advising Member States in future and thus ensure the participation of stakeholder groups (consumers, environmental groups, trade unions and SMEs) on the national ‘mirror committees’ in European standardisation projects;
 13. Calls for each of these stakeholder organisations to be given an appropriate role in the European standardisation process, which should empower them in the formal approval of European standards that they have contributed to elaborate, which could include a vote for them; calls for the development of a fast-track conflict-resolution mechanism that can efficiently resolve disagreements in the setting of standards;
 14. Calls on the Commission and all stakeholders to ensure the financial sustainability of the European standardisation system, including through public-private partnerships and through multiannual financial planning, which is essential to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency in global competition;
 15. Recommends that the Commission include the issue of standardisation in the next SME Week;
 16. Recognises that European standardisation helps create a level playing-field for all market actors, especially for SMEs which are vital contributors; acknowledges also, however, that the complexity of standards, participation in developing standards and cost of standards can represent an obstacle to SMEs; welcomes and encourages the measures proposed in the SME programmes of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (Cenelec) to facilitate the use of standards by SMEs;
 17. Calls on national and European standards bodies to provide SMEs with bundles of standards and user-friendly guidelines for reduced fees and to facilitate access to them, in particular by providing online abstracts of standards free of charge;

18. Underlines the need for stability and simplification of European standards and for the reduction of standards development time and calls on the national and European standards bodies and trade associations to provide user-friendly guidelines for the use of standards, by making the texts describing these standards less technical and by improving and simplifying electronic search functions;
19. Stresses that the need to bring European innovation efforts to bear on global strategies to combat climate change and respond to the challenges of energy, society and the environment must also be reflected in the establishment of new guidelines for standardisation models;
20. Calls on the Commission to develop technology-watch activities so as to identify future R&D output that could benefit from standardisation; to facilitate the flow and transparency of information necessary for market penetration and the operation of R&D; and, in this connection, to promote easily accessible and user-friendly evaluation mechanisms via the internet;
21. Calls for reform of the mandating process and its timetable, so that standards can be issued promptly to render European innovations marketable, thus enhancing the innovativeness of European industry;
22. Draws attention to Parliament's resolution of 6 May 2010 on electric cars¹, which stresses the need for effective standardisation processes in various areas to accelerate the market introduction of electric cars in the interests of competitiveness and the environment;
23. Asks the Commission to place particular emphasis on standards in its Research Framework and Competitiveness and Innovation Framework programmes, and in particular to promote a systematic approach further upstream, between research, design and standardisation;
24. Calls on the Commission to consider implementing a 'relevance to standardisation' section in the evaluation of Commission-funded R&D projects;
25. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the issue of standardisation is raised within the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme;
26. Welcomes the Commission's White Paper on Modernising ICT Standardisation in the EU;
27. Calls on the Commission to introduce into the legal framework the possibility of referring, solely in the field of ICT and solely on the condition of compliance with certain basic standardisation principles, to deliverables of fora and consortia;
28. Calls on the Commission, in order to support other EU policies, to implement a modernised and extended EU standardisation policy for information technology, which should, amongst other things, ensure interoperability, legal certainty and the application of appropriate safeguards including, with respect to certification, conformity assessment bodies and accreditation, while minimising additional burdens for business, risks for

¹ Texts adopted of that date (P7_TA-PROV(2010)0150).

- users and obstacles to the free movement of information technology;
29. Calls on the Commission to use the New Approach and the New Legislative Framework as a model for a modernised ICT standardisation policy in support of EU policy;
 30. Calls on the Commission to make effective use of existing legal bases enabling information technology standardisation;
 31. Calls on the Commission to identify additional information technology sectors, areas or applications where effective use of EU standardisation could be used to support EU policies, and to present appropriate proposals accordingly;
 32. Calls on the Commission to make sure that the achievement of EU policy goals is not put at risk through uncoordinated standardisation efforts or competing or unnecessary standards, an excess of certification schemes, a lack of trustworthiness of standardisation and verification, etc.;
 33. Stresses the imperative need to adapt ICT standardisation policy to market and policy developments, which will lead to achieving important European policy goals requiring interoperability, such as e-health, accessibility, security, e-business, e-government, transport, etc., and will contribute to the development of international standards for personal data protection;
 34. Emphasises the role relevant ICT stakeholder categories could play as an advisory group assisting the Commission in developing a harmonised European ICT standardisation policy platform;
 35. Notes the increasing number of standards developed by industry fora and consortia, which are well-established global standardisation structures in the ICT sector; considers that the European ICT infrastructure cannot be realised without making more use of standards from such industry fora and consortia;
 36. Calls on the Commission to put in place a mechanism for recognising specific standards developed by industry fora and consortia which could have a significant impact on filling standardisation gaps and on international cooperation in ICT standardisation matters;
 37. Calls on the Commission to enhance the coordination between the ICT fora and consortia and the formal standard-developing bodies, which could increase interoperability and minimise the risk of duplication and conflict between standards in the ICT sector;
 38. Calls on the Commission to coordinate its standardisation activities with our international partners, for instance within the transatlantic dialogue;
 39. Encourages the Commission, with this in mind, to consider and take the necessary measures to reinforce the influence of European standardisation at world level so as to enhance the competitiveness of Europe's products and services in international trade;
 40. Urges the Commission to adopt and submit without delay a proposal for a modern, integrated standardisation policy in its Communication on a more integrated European Standardisation System, including a revision of Directive 98/34/EC, Decision 87/95/EEC

on ICT standardisation and Decision 1673/2006 on the financing of European standardisation, as stated in the Commission Work Programme for 2010;

41. Calls on the Commission to simplify procedures where possible, and specifically to take the ‘think small first’ principle into account in future changes;
42. Calls on the Commission to present an action plan aiming at a more integrated EU standardisation system, more efficient and effective standards-setting, better access to standardisation, in particular for innovative and high-growth companies, a stronger EU role in standard-setting at international level and a more sustainable financing system for the development of standards;
43. Calls on the Commission to present annual reports to Parliament on the European standardisation process – the standardisation mandates given by the Commission – and on progress with its fulfilment.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	13.7.2010
Result of final vote	+: 53 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Jean-Pierre Audy, Zigmantas Balčytis, Ivo Belet, Bendt Bendtsen, Jan Březina, Reinhard Bütikofer, Maria Da Graça Carvalho, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Giles Chichester, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Lena Ek, Ioan Enciu, Gaston Franco, Adam Gierek, Robert Goebbels, Fiona Hall, Jacky Hénin, Edit Herczog, Arturs Krišjānis Kariņš, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Béla Kovács, Philippe Lamberts, Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, Marisa Matias, Angelika Niebler, Jaroslav Paška, Aldo Patriciello, Anni Podimata, Miloslav Ransdorf, Jens Rohde, Paul Rübig, Amalia Sartori, Francisco Sosa Wagner, Konrad Szymański, Britta Thomsen, Evžen Tošenovský, Ioannis A. Tsoukalas, Niki Tzavela, Marita Ulvskog, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, Henri Weber
Substitutes present for the final vote	Francesco De Angelis, Vicky Ford, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Satu Hassi, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Yannick Jadot, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Mario Pirillo, Theodoros Skylakakis, Hannes Swoboda, Silvia-Adriana Țicău, Catherine Trautmann