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CEN-CENELEC reply to the European Commission consultation on the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013

Introduction

In its Communication on 'Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' COM (2010) 2020 the European Commission underlines that a strong, deep and extended Single Market is vital for growth and job creation. To answer the challenges set to achieve the Europe 2020 goals, a Single Market with well functioning open markets and empowered consumers is essential.

CEN and CENELEC – two of the three recognized European Standardization Organizations - believe that standardization has a major role to play in assisting to reach the objectives of the possible successor CIP-programme. Indeed, in the past standardization has already contributed in essential ways to promote new technologies and to foster innovation. As an open and transparent system bringing together a wide spectrum of stakeholders, standardization is the tool-of-choice to facilitate the market introduction of new technologies.

Especially in those areas where technology-acceptance in the market is heavily related to consumer confidence and demand for safe, compatible and reliable products and services, standardization plays an important role in significantly reducing time-to market.

The Commission's background paper lists as the main challenges:

- how EU programmes can better support enterprises, in particular SMEs
- how to foster competitiveness and innovation in sectors with major development potential
- how to stimulate a wider uptake of innovative ICT-based services and the exploitation of digital content across Europe
- how to promote the use of renewable energies and energy efficiency

As identified by EXPRESS, the Expert Panel for the Review of the European Standardization System, European standardization has been a central element in the delivery of the Single European Market, in particular, through the use of Directives in key areas under the 'New Approach' policy, integrated into the New Legislative Framework. For decades, European Standards have enabled products to be placed on the market without national barriers throughout the EU.

Looking towards the year 2020 and beyond, a number of [key strategic challenges](#) have been identified for standardization. These reinforce the critical importance of standards for the single market, and in terms of opening up public procurement in a level playing field, but their invaluable role as a support to the competitiveness of European industry, in particular for innovative products. The results of our European standards activities can easily be projected at international level, through our global partners ISO and IEC.

1. How EU programmes can better support enterprises, in particular SMEs .

As a key actor in the European market, it is important that SMEs are aware of the added value of standards for their business and the various ways to participate in the standardization process. CEN and CENELEC are committed to help Small and Medium sized Enterprises as they play a vital role in the European economy.

Standardization allows SMEs to increase productivity and reach wider markets. Initiatives for SMEs have been taken at national and European level to join the standardization process, but also to facilitate identification and use of the appropriate standard for their business. In 2006, a study initiated by the European Commission identified some 26 best practices already put in place by national members to support SMEs and that, in 2009, CEN and CENELEC sponsored a study, which proposed 58 recommendations for improving SME access to standardization and to standards. The vast bulk of these recommendations also are of potential benefit to other stakeholders, of course.

A CEN-CENELEC SME helpdesk is at the disposal of SMEs with national contact points to respond to their specific requests, and a dedicated SME web portal (<http://sme.cencenelec.eu>).

A closer collaboration between the Europe Enterprise Network and CEN and CENELEC and their national members would ensure SMEs can improve:

- their business framework conditions by applying the right standards and working in accordance ;
- have access to the adequate information, ensuring that they find the right standards and thus reduce time from product and/or service to market;
- facilitate the internationalisation of SMEs so they can reap greater benefits from the EU and global markets by applying standards, which are identical in all the 31 members of CEN and CENELEC.

2. How to foster competitiveness and innovation in sectors with major development potential

In relation to fostering competitiveness and innovation, we read in the Commission's background paper that industry's ability to take up innovative market solutions is adversely affected by problems at national level related to risk and indeed market size. Standardization can be one important way to help address this.

It plays an important and inherent role to reduce time-to market for innovations, as it fosters technology-acceptance in the market through building consumer confidence. Standardization is therefore a vital mechanism to fight the "underlying causes" that the Background Paper identifies. There is a growing need for a faster and more efficient transfer from research to development and open markets. CEN and CENELEC have an important role in this respect and in improving the throughput of research by opening markets. This can be done by transforming the linkage between research and other innovation projects and standardization into a more mature, predictable and efficient process. This creates an opportunity for innovators to demonstrate that their value.

For example, CEN and CENELEC have advocated in their [STAIR-publication](#) on "An integrated approach between standardization, innovation and research" that standardization steps, as a tool for knowledge transfer and results' dissemination be funded in a work package within innovation projects, in parallel with the other activities. This facilitates participation of innovators in the standards process, assures an infrastructure and a speedy acceptance of the results. Frequently, our standards activities innovative areas is now in open and fast Workshops, which can deliver valuable initial consensus where markets are not yet mature.

We believe the STAIR approach is even more relevant for "near-market" programmes such as the CIP and therefore should be an integral part of any successor arrangements. In summary:

1. Standards promote innovation

Standards help promote innovative products and services by building confidence among industrial users and consumers and creating a large-scale market.

2. Standards further the creation of new markets

Standards can help ensure compatibility and interoperability of products and services. The end-user benefits from reduced prices.

3. Standards ensure quality of products

Standards improve the quality of products, applying state of the art technologies and techniques and at the same time ensuring safety aspects.

4. Standards support research

Standards foster competition, creating a level playing field for R&D and hence cutting R&D costs.

5. Standards enhance visibility

Standardization is essential for market penetration of R&D results, helps reduce production costs and avoids lock-in to proprietary or immature solutions.

6. Standards facilitate trade

Standards support exports by removing technical barriers to trade in the European Single Market, and globally.

7. Standards strengthen regulation

European Standards support European legislation. By implementing referenced standards, industry can meet legal requirements for placing goods on the market.

8. Standards increase safety and environmental protection

Standardizers lay down basic rules not just for safe, environmentally sound products, but also to ensure that companies make these a fundamental part of their culture in fields such as safety, consumer protection and the environment.

9. Standards are universally recognized

Standards give you access to 500 million consumers. European standards align with international standards (ISO, IEC, ITU-T) as far as possible.

10. Standards accelerate time to market

Standardization is the best tool to ensure the fast introduction of innovative products and technologies at the earliest stage possible. Standardization shortens the cycle between initial concept and global market access.

3. How to stimulate a wider uptake of innovative ICT-based services and the exploitation of digital content across Europe

In fields such as information technology and communications, the role of standards is also crucial to market access. We simply draw attention to the CEN-CENELEC comments on the Communication COM(2010) 245 on "A Digital Agenda for Europe"

ftp://ftp.cencenelec.eu/cen/Services/Innovation/Digital_Agenda_Europe/A%20digital%20agenda%20for%20Europe.pdf where we listed our relevant activities and suggested actions.

4. How to promote the use of renewable energies and energy efficiency

The development of renewable energy sources and the better and more rational use of energy have become essential for the sustainable development of our modern society. Standardization is an important element that can contribute to this objective. Standardization can promote best practices, optimize installations and systems, improve energy efficiency performance, promote innovation and help the market introduction of new technologies.

Standards will indeed be essential in the deployment of new applications and technologies and in the development of the infrastructures necessary for the market penetration of new products such as electric vehicles. CEN and CENELEC, sometimes in collaboration with ETSI, are already working on smart grids, smart meters and electric vehicles under European Commission standards mandates. CEN and CENELEC have developed standards in areas such as energy efficiency of buildings, bio-fuels, energy management, photovoltaic and solar thermal energy, wind turbines or energy efficiency services.

Already CEN and CENELEC have published European Standard EN 16001 on Energy Management Systems. This is an important tool for organizations in order to establish the systems and processes necessary to improve energy efficiency, thereby reducing costs and increasing productivity and the benefits to the environment, and aspects are now being taken up at global level by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). European Standard EN 15900 covers energy efficiency services.

Other relevant areas on which we are working include standards for guarantees of origin and energy certificates, energy efficiency and saving calculations, energy efficiency benchmarking and energy audits. A CEN-CENELEC Sector Forum for Energy Management gathers relevant stakeholders in a forum to assess priorities for standardization in this field.

The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme recognises the importance of standardization and has included in its work programme specific funding for standardization actions in the past. Nevertheless, we believe that the programme would benefit from a more integrated approach with regard to standardization. This can be done by including where relevant the provision of consensus platforms to develop standardization deliverables as part of the dissemination of the results of specific projects funded under the programme.

ABOUT CEN

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) is a business catalyst in Europe, removing trade barriers for European stakeholders such as industry, public administration, service providers, consumers and other stakeholders. Its mission is to foster the European economy in global trading, the welfare of European citizens, and the environment. Through its services, CEN provides a platform for the development of European Standards and other specifications.

CEN's 31 National Members work together to develop voluntary European Standards (ENs) in various sectors to build a European Internal Market for goods and services and to position Europe in the global economy. By supporting research, and helping disseminate innovation, standards are a powerful tool for economic growth. More than 60.000 technical experts as well as business federations, consumer and other societal interest organizations are involved in the CEN network that reaches over 480 million people.

For further information, please visit: www.cen.eu

ABOUT CENELEC

The European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization is officially responsible for standardization in the electrotechnical field. In an ever more global economy, CENELEC fosters innovation and competitiveness, making technology available not only to major businesses but also to SMEs through the production of voluntary standards. CENELEC creates market access at the European level but also at the international level through its cooperation agreement with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

Through the work of its 31 Members together with its experts, the industry federations and consumers, Electrotechnical European Standards are created in order to help shape the European Internal Market, to encourage technological development, to ensure interoperability and to guarantee the safety and health of consumers and provide environmental protection.

Detailed information available at www.cenelec.eu