



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Single Market : regulatory environment, standardisation and New Approach  
**Standardisation**

## *Vademecum on European Standardisation*

### Part IV

#### European Standardisation in the International Context

#### Chapter 1

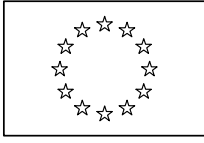
#### Strategy for the international promotion of standards

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## STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION OF STANDARDS

The Commission's strategy on standardisation in the global context is a coherent and established one. Due to our role in standardisation -a market-led system- the Commission pursues a partnership approach and acts by way of dialogue with all European players rather than playing an aggressive and visible role as done by the US administration.

Our approach was laid down two years ago by the publication of the European policy principles on international standardisation (document SEC (2001) 1296). These policy principles are essentially:

**I. Europe has an interest in international standardisation** because of its potential to eliminate technical barriers to trade and to increase market access for all. International standardisation also offers the possibility to promote and disseminate technologies.

**II.** The standards making process should respect some **basic requirements: openness, transparency, consensus and a balanced participation of stakeholders.** If regulatory authorities decide to make recourse to international standards it is important that they can make use of standards from standards bodies which can be held accountable for establishing consensus between all national positions and interested parties.

**III. International, European and National Standardisation complement each other:** it can be of particular value to consult between stakeholders nationally and represent national positions independently in the international context. For that purpose, it is important that the national standardisation systems allow under fair conditions for effective participation by all interested parties, and that national positions are coherent with European policies and legislation, if existing.

**IV.** To have one applied standard and one accepted test for each product, process or service is a trade-facilitating objective. International standards have a maximum effect in trade facilitation when they are part of a **single and coherent set of standards.** If international standards are used in relation to technical regulations as promoted by the WTO TBT Agreement, international standards bodies need to have a clearly defined constituency. The WTO principles taken as a whole ensure that **international standardising bodies**

**are open to participation by national standards bodies and produce international standards that do not conflict with each other.**

**V. The use of standards in regulation requires a clear definition of each party's roles and competencies.** Voluntary standards can nevertheless reduce the need for regulation, respectively government intervention.

**VI. Measures to improve efficiency of international standards bodies should further be deployed. Striving for more efficiency should not conflict with accountability.**

**VII. It may be beneficial to channel standards, specifications and other deliverables that have reached a certain consensus outside international standards bodies into the international standardisation process. Fairly balanced co-operative arrangements with international standards bodies offer a systematic framework to take over international standards** and/or to contribute to the international standards making process. The Vienna and Dresden Agreements between ISO and CEN, respectively the IEC and CENELEC are useful examples how to enable for input, to avoid double work or to speed up standardisation work. In this regard, it is important to ensure that the maintenance of the international standard is considered first with the international standards body who may decide whether or not to delegate the maintenance responsibility to the originating body.

**VIII. The Community generally supports, in line with its political objectives, the development of a (preferably regional) infrastructure for standardisation. This would facilitate greatly the establishment of international standards since it would permit a reduction of "players". The EC also promotes the creation of legal and economic conditions which facilitate trade and which are receptive to the use of voluntary consensus standards.**

**IX. European actors should communicate with each other to ensure mutual understanding and positions in respect of legal requirements or in support of policies of the EC. While representing their own constituencies in specific discussions European actors are invited to follow the principles set out in this paper which, taken together, define the European policy in relation to international standardisation.**

The **tools** for the promotion of European standards and the European standardisation system are:

**(1) Business Dialogues**

Standardisation, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment are a regular topic of talks between businesses. This is the case in the Transatlantic Business Dialogue (TABD), in the Mercosur-European Business Forum (MEBF) and in the EU-Russia Industrialists' Round Table (EU-Russia IRT). Business talks with Japan also dedicate attention to the subject and a dialogue with China has also started to tackle this field.

## **(2) Co-operation and Partnership Agreements of the European Standards Organisations**

CEN and CENELEC have framework arrangements with ISO and IEC. In the telecommunications field, a co-operation agreement has been concluded between ETSI and the ITU. These agreements help to avoid duplication of work at the regional and international level and ensure the operation of a coherent international system.

To help other regions with their integration process, CEN and CENELEC concluded MoUs with AMN, the Mercosur Association for Standardisation. CEN has also signed an agreement with EASC, the Euro Asian Council on Standardisation, which is a co-operation among the standards organisations of the CIS. CEN has advanced co-operation contacts with AIDMO (the Arab Industrial Development and Mining organisation, the co-ordinating body for standardisation in the Arab countries). ETSI is collaborating with Asian partners in particular Japan, China and Korea as well as with American partners in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Partnership Project (3GPP). In Latin America a co-operation agreement was concluded with the Inter-American telecommunications conference, CITEL. The @LIS project supported by the Commission for the co-operation with Mercosur countries regarding interoperability in the telecom sector advances well. ETSI entertains an institutional co-operation with the League of Arab States and the ITU Regional Office for Arab States.

## **(3) Promotion of standards-receptive regulatory models**

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), in particular its Working Party on Technical Harmonisation and Standardisation Policies<sup>1</sup>, published an international model for technical harmonisation via the use of international standards. This concept is similar to the EC New Approach and encourages governmental co-operation on essential legal requirements. Governments would also identify the relevant international standards and conformity assessment requirements needed to meet the common regulatory objectives. The CIS countries, including the Russian Federation want to use this model for technical harmonisation in their inter-state context. Representatives from global telecommunications companies have suggested to regulators from the UNECE countries to apply this recommendation for certain ICT products. Further, the Russian Federation stated recently in the context of their WTO accession their intention to align their legislation to areas covered by about 20 New Approach Directives with it of the European Union.

## **(4) Promotion of “PECA type”<sup>2</sup> agreements**

The alignment of legislation and infrastructure so that the same standards and legal requirements are applicable to the EU and third countries should not be limited to candidate countries. As European standards are an important part of possible PECA type agreements, the countries wanting to align their legislation should be able to

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<sup>1</sup> See website <http://www.unece.org/trade/tips/stdpol/>

<sup>2</sup> These agreements are now called ACAAs (Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products). For further information, please see internal note 815387 of 25 June 2006.

participate in the work of the European standards organisations. CEN and CENELEC have created the possibility for 'partner' standardisation bodies to take part in their work, albeit without voting rights. ETSI membership is open to organisations from non-European countries, but they have no voting rights on European standards.

#### (5) Technical Assistance

Technical assistance plays a pre-eminent role in the pursuit of the Commission's objectives. Emphasis is placed on better co-ordination within the Commission and also with the member states on the donor side in order to avoid projects, which create overlap or gaps. Efforts were made to ensure that the amounts spent do reflect Community priorities, and that the timing of projects is matched against the availability of European experts.

Geographically, Europe's **targets** can be presented by means of concentric circles.

- The candidate countries form part of an inner circle since they are taking over the *acquis* and their standards organisations have already or will become full members of the European standardisation family. This target is therefore considered achieved.
- The next circle concerns the Mediterranean basin. The Mediterranean countries are interested in using European standards for reasons of trade with the EU. However, their standards institutes will not join the European system, but may be interested in becoming **partner standardisation bodies** of CEN and CENELEC. Neighbouring countries like Russia and the Ukraine build another circle for activities in relation to standards. Here, much will depend on the implementation of the economic partnership with the Russian Federation.
- Outside Europe's geographic boundaries, attention is dedicated towards countries heading for **regional integration**. Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay building up the Mercosur are attractive targets for the promotion of European standardisation. Finally, there is a group of countries like China, India and the some Asian-Pacific countries including Japan and Australia which offer interesting **trade opportunities**.

The coherent use of international standards is a goal Europe must share with these countries. Depending on the level of development of the individual trade partner from these regions, different activities are pursued.