

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: ICT Standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market (COM(2016) 176 final).**

**FINAL DOCUMENT**

The Committees on Transportation and on Economic Activities of Italy's Chamber of Deputies, having examined, pursuant to Rule of Procedure 127 of the Chamber of Deputies, the Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: ICT Standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market (COM(2016) 176 final),

Whereas:

All economic sectors are increasingly reliant on digital technologies, which are evolving very rapidly and outpacing the rate of change in traditional sectors and industries. Accordingly, ICT standards need to be defined and harmonised without delay to enable European industry to compete in and bring new products to the world market;

The task of setting technical standards is, moreover, made all the more difficult by the fact that digital systems increasingly derive their value from applications and data that intersect with several diverse fields, as well as from technological convergence, and so what is needed are interoperable solutions that are based on open systems and interfaces;

In some areas (such as the "internet of things") technical standards have proliferated as several different communities enter the field. It is therefore essential to map all the relevant standards, so that the bodies responsible for setting them may navigate the complexities involved;

The basis for an efficient single digital market will be the adoption of common standards that are independent of manufacturers, technical specifications or countries of origin, and they should lead to the fluid and reliable integration of the different technologies. The standards should also ensure interoperability, promote innovation, lower the entry barriers to the digital single market, and this openness should apply to media channels as well as to educational and cultural content. Persevering with divergent national standards, on the other hand, could significantly slow down innovation and put European businesses at a disadvantage with respect to the rest of the world;

"Industry 4.0" is predicated on interoperability, and allows processes to be shared among parties from different Member States. Common standards will form the supporting pillars of the new model of production, and whoever defines them will enjoy a huge competitive advantage;

While ICT standardisation must continue to be primarily a voluntary and consensus-driven exercise, and must comply with principles of transparency, openness, impartiality and consistency, a clearer set of priorities would motivate national ICT standardisation bodies to enter into more cross-sectoral partnerships, and would strengthen their cooperation with European standardisation organisations;

Mindful that the present final document needs to be transmitted promptly to the European Commission as part of the political dialogue, as well as to the European Parliament and the Council;

do hereby express a favourable opinion

*with the following remarks:*

- a) At a general level, the Communication envisions a broad spectrum of initiatives that will exceed the current scope of Regulation (EU) No. 1025/2012, and not only set the general regulatory framework for standardisation, but also identify specific priority areas of action, along with specific objectives for each of these areas. In this regard, it needs to be assessed whether the matter can be entirely addressed through the setting of the technical standards to which the Communication refers, or whether it might not be necessary, with regard to at least some aspects, to take the precautionary step of preparing a set of rules based on legislative acts that establish certain parameters and objectives, and to allocate appropriate resources, so that greater transparency may be achieved in the framing of the standards, and so that Member States may thus closely monitor and evaluate the standards whose adoption is being proposed;
- b) It is particularly important to ensure that Europe does not adopt standards that replicate or privilege those of certain national systems, or fail to make allowances for the distinctive manufacturing and production realities of different Member States, since to do so would be to create the premises for the possible distortion of fair competition, to the benefit of some and the detriment of others;
- c) The Italian Government must therefore not remain inattentive to the question of standardisation, which offers opportunities for our companies, for Industry 4.0 and for the growth of the entire country, and must ensure that in all relevant bodies in which the content of the standards is being determined, the priorities and needs of our national system of production are adequately represented;
- d) Given that certain aspects of standardisation that seem merely technical in nature also have implications for privacy, data protection, free enterprise and property rights, adequate and effective safeguards need to be put in place.