



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee 'Harmonised standards: Increasing transparency and legal certainty for a fully functioning Single market' {COM(2018)764 final}.

The Commission values the engagement of the Camera Deputaților in the efforts to further strengthen the European standardisation system that has been the cornerstone of the Single market for more than 30 years. The Opinion is an important contribution to the debate initiated by the Communication.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaților for the public-private partnership between the Commission and the European standardisation organisations, as well as the support for the promotion of the use of European standards.

The Commission has taken due note of the views, proposals and recommendations expressed by the Camera Deputaților in its Opinion. In response to the respective views, the Commission would like to refer to the attached annex.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Camera Deputaților in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bienkowska
Member of the Commission*

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The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților in its Opinion and is pleased to offer the following observations:

Point 1: Extended use of European standards and their alignment with international standards:

The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaților. The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaților that for European businesses to be able to grow internationally, the adoption of standards recognised at international level is crucial, as a means to eliminate technical barriers to trade, to increase market access and disseminate innovations. By driving standardisation in areas where Europe has a leading role, the competitiveness of European industry and its positioning at the global level can be further maximised.

The importance of the coordination of standardisation processes at international level is clearly established in the Commission Communication ‘A strategic vision for European standards: Moving forward to enhance and accelerate the sustainable growth of the European economy by 2020’ {COM(2011)311 final} stating that ‘The European standardisation system [...] recognises the primacy of international standards. [...] European standards should, wherever possible, be based upon the internationally accepted standards of the International Organization for Standardization, the International Electrotechnical Commission and the International Telecommunication Union.’

The Commission supports the competitiveness of European businesses in the global market by promoting the development of internationally recognised standards and strengthening the cooperation between standardisation actors and companies at a global level.

Point 2: Standardisation and innovation

The Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaților that innovation is key for future success of Europe in the global economy. European competitiveness depends on our ability to foster innovation in products, services and processes.

The importance of standards for innovation is highlighted in the Commission Communication ‘A strategic vision for European standards: Moving forward to enhance and accelerate the sustainable growth of the European economy by 2020’ {COM(2011)311 final}, as well as in the Commission Communication ‘European standards for the 21st century’ {COM(2016)358 final}. Well-designed and timely European standards can support innovation in a number of ways. They can help to bridge the gap between research and marketable products and services. The Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaților that this is particularly important for emerging technologies.

Point 3: Public-private partnership between the Commission and the standardisation community

The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaţilor for the public-private partnership between the Commission and the European standardisation organisations that forms the backbone of the European standardisation system.

The Commission puts a great emphasis on cooperation with the European standardisation organisations in the digital field, which was also highlighted by the Camera Deputaţilor as an area of particular interest. The standardisation needs in support of EU policies are outlined in the annually updated rolling plan for Information and communications technology standardisation published by the Commission. The 2019 edition of the Rolling Plan for Information and communications technology standardisation is publicly accessible on the webpages of the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs:

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/ict-standardisation_en#rolling_plan_ict_standardisation

Point 4: Transparency and inclusiveness in the development of harmonised standards

The Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaţilor that transparency and inclusiveness are crucial for the possibility to participate in the development of harmonised standards. This is particularly important for small and medium-sized enterprises who form the backbone of the European economy, however often lack the necessary human and financial resources in order to be able to effectively participate in the standards development process.

The Standardisation Regulation, which came into force in 2013, established a strong framework for inclusiveness requirements, allowing interests of small and medium-sized enterprises to be taken into consideration in the standardisation process. In addition, the Commission supports and promotes other measures to further increase the inclusiveness and transparency with regard to harmonised standards, such as e.g. the publication of abstracts of harmonised standards by the European standardisation organisations.

Point 5: Vademecum on European standardisation

The Vademecum on European standardisation provides guidance on standardisation requests by which the Commission asks the European standardisation organisations to carry out standardisation work in support of EU legislation or policies. It consists of three parts describing the role (Part 1), the preparation and adoption (Part 2) and the execution (Part 3) of standardisation requests.

The Vademecum was developed by the Commission's services in 2015, following an extensive consultation of stakeholders. It is publicly accessible on the websites of the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs:

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/vademecum_en

Currently, there are no intentions to revise the Vademecum. Nevertheless, it is obvious that at some point in the future, the Vademecum will have to be updated in order to

reflect the developments in the standardisation process, EU legislation and the case law of the Court of Justice. The proposal of the Camera Deputaților to ‘supplement it with references to international standards relevant for export operations to third markets’ will be duly considered during such update.

Point 6: Management of the standardisation process

The Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaților that the introduction of innovations in the management of standardisation processes is beneficial. To that end, the Commission supports the relevant initiatives of the European standardisation organisations such as the Digital Transformation Initiative that aims to address the needs of the industry and the stakeholders for high quality standards, while keeping an eye on the increased use of digital solutions in many sectors of the European economy.

Point 7: Cooperation with Canada on standardisation:

The Canadian standardisation body – Standards Council of Canada – signed a formal cooperation agreement with the European standardisation bodies – the European Committee for Standardization and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization– during the negotiations of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada. The Standards Council of Canada is the recognized national standards body of Canada and in this capacity facilitates the development and use of national and international standards and accreditation services to enhance Canada’s competitiveness and social well-being.

This partnership between standardisers has triggered valuable exchanges in the field of smart energy grids and timber structures, as well as the support we all offer to the International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Commission.