

The Joint Initiative on Standardisation

Friends of Standardisation

Standards facilitate market access for businesses, build trust in the quality and safety of products and services, eliminate technical barriers to trade, ensure interoperability, support technological developments and the continued digitisation of the European economy. Standards also shape the everyday life of citizens and contribute to achieving the UN-Sustainable Development Goals.

The Single Market is one of the greatest achievements of the European Union and standardisation is at its heart. Voluntary standards, driven by market needs, play a crucial role in the development of the Single Market, its advancement and deepening, enabling it to be future-proof for the benefit of businesses and citizens.

The Joint Initiative on Standardisation reflects this crucial role. It has been a unique voluntary collaborative effort that started in 2016 under the NL-Presidency and that has brought a wide range of partners with an interest in standardisation around the table to help further modernise the European standardisation system and raise awareness of its benefits.

Over three years (2016-2019), it has been a launch pad for mutually beneficial results.

A shared vision

- To strengthen the competitiveness of European businesses and enhance societal welfare by supporting the further development of the European standardisation system and by ensuring the delivery of timely and state-of-the-art standards.
- To support EU policy priorities and objectives while respecting the roles of the various stakeholders, the national delegation principle and the different competences of the EU, EFTA and their Member States.

Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs: *“The role of standards is little known to the public, however they are essential to make our Single Market work on the ground and increase the global competitiveness of our industry. This initiative is about making our standardisation system ready for the technologies of the future. It has been highly successful in improving dialogue and understanding amongst the parties.”*

Christel Davidson, Director, Small Business Standards (SBS): *“The Joint Initiative on Standardisation demonstrated to be a unique opportunity to reach out to new audiences spanning from students to public authorities. Broadening the standardisation community whilst recurrently striving for the effective participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in standardisation is one of its greatest successes.”*

Elena Santiago Cid, Director General, CEN and CENELEC: *“We have achieved a great deal together. The CEN and CENELEC communities have invested considerable resources in the Joint Initiative, which has given us the chance to build even closer working relationships with our stakeholders, to help address misunderstandings, and to make clear cases to the Commission to benefit the European standardisation system. This networking effort will help to address together the remaining challenges to the implementation of EU Regulation 1025/2012 and to the citation of harmonised standards.”*

A unique approach

- More than 100 participants signed and endorsed the partnership.
- Signatories include EU and EFTA Member States, European and national standardisation bodies; associations representing consumers, environmental interests, workers, industry and SMEs; and individual businesses from several sectors.
- In true European spirit, the partnership has brought representatives around the table from across the economic and social spectrum, voluntarily working together and dedicated to delivering a set of actions.

Olivier Peyrat, Director General, AFNOR: *“This platform has indeed created a steady dialogue that has obviously delivered greater understanding and smooth cooperation, within a group that now usually refers openly to itself as the ‘Friends of Standardisation’.”*

Francesca Poggiali, Public Policy Director for Europe, GS1: *“In GS1 we say that we believe in the power of standards to improve the way we work and live and thanks to JIS, it was exciting to see that this is the common belief of so many friends of standardisation.”*

Clear objectives

- Strategically focusing on the important role of standards in key areas, such as digitisation, services, public procurement, research and innovation, and on awareness-raising with academia, public authorities and civil society.
- 15 actions in three cluster domains, with the emphasis on increasing the use of standards and inclusiveness of the process to promote high quality, market relevant and user-friendly European standards, which support European policies and European competitiveness globally as well as to improve and to facilitate everyday life for citizens.

Christophe Sykes, Director General of Construction Products Europe: *“Construction standardisation experts are satisfied with the documents developed within the JIS framework. The regulatory constraints and standardisation requirements are easily understood thanks to the clear guidance papers and templates developed under this process. Congratulations to all those involved!”*

Thomas Idermark, CEO, Swedish Standards Institute: *“We made it our mission that the role of standards within public procurement be better known, and that knowledge and tools to public servants be developed. This is highly beneficial for both the buyers and the suppliers. Following the hard work within the action we now know more on the situation in different European countries and we have contributed to improving the situation.”*

An active network

- Open, transparent and reflecting the public-private partnership in European standardisation.
- Regular meetings to assess implementation, progress and functioning of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation with concrete results on actions and recommendations for the future.
- Strong call for a permanent European collaborative platform.

Sibylle Gabler, Head of Government Relations at DIN: *“JIS (Action 4) has created a great momentum for networking amongst Friends of Standardisation from national public authorities and national standardisation bodies with the aim of improving standardisation awareness. This has been an exciting and rewarding experience.”*

Professor Henk de Vries, President of the European Academy for Standardisation EURAS: *“Remarkable and great that the European Commission, though initiator of the initiative, did not take any hierarchical position – all stakeholders could participate on equal basis and in the ‘Action on Education’ I was involved in, the EC was really supportive. JIS has been a perfect example of cooperation between the European Commission and other stakeholders.”*

Some examples of important achievements

- Project: 'BRIDGIT2', promoting the integration of research and innovation into standardisation for the market uptake of innovations from H2020 and other EU-financed projects
- New set of classroom teaching materials on ICT standardisation - a comprehensive textbook, 'Understanding ICT Standardisation: Principles and Practice'
- Case studies on how standards can help public authorities to implement regulation and/or achieve policy goals
- Structured dialogues with industry through the Standards Market Relevance Roundtable ('SMARRT')
- ETSI '3SI Programme' designed to increase the visibility of the societal stakeholders' and SMEs' interests in ETSI's standardisation activities
- Right of Opinion for societal stakeholder organisations (Annex III of Regulation EU1025/2012) on CEN-CENELEC (final) draft standards
- Inclusiveness embedded in the Long Term Strategy (LTS) of ETSI
- eLearning tools and courses on standardisation for societal stakeholders
- European guide for referencing standards in public procurement
- Analysis on using and referencing standards in public procurement (Report on analysis of public sector procurement activities, ISBN 978-963-9584-01-3)
- Establishment of CEN Technical Committee (TC461) on Public Procurement aiming at defining a European standard on integrity and accountability in the context of EU public procurement
- Dissemination package with examples and exercises for workshops on the use of standards in public procurement
- Creation of the 'Rail Standardisation Coordination Platform for Europe' (RASCOP)
- Full implementation of the strategy to promote service standards, supported by a CEN and CENELEC communication package
- Set-up of the 'Digitising European Industry initiative (DEI)' under the Multi-stakeholder Platform on ICT Standardisation (MSP)
- DEI model for the synchronisation of the various standardisation activities
- Creation of a CEN-CENELEC Coordination Group on Smart Manufacturing

Oliver Grun, President of the European DIGITAL SME Alliance: "SMEs in the technology sector benefit from standards as key enablers for interoperability. Likewise, the JIS platform contributed to an 'interoperability' among all interested stakeholders in the context of a constructive dialogue. This joint effort paved the way for concrete initiatives to enhance SME inclusiveness, such as the 3SI program by ETSI."



Five priorities and recommendations from the participants of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation for the next Commission

Continue to engage as a network for structured dialogue to deepen cooperation in the standardisation world, to identify new opportunities and to propose solutions with the support and participation of the European Commission.

Promote the voluntary development and use of standards to fulfil market needs and support for the application of policy and regulation to strengthen the Single Market, intensifying the collaborative nature of the public-private partnership in the New Legislative Framework; promote standardisation in Horizon Europe projects given the relevance of standards in innovation cycles and value chains.

Support the enhanced resilience of the European standardisation system to internal and external changes through an open dialogue, in particular on how to address the particularities of harmonised standards.

Facilitate, at all levels of standardisation development, the effective participation of SMEs and societal stakeholders such as consumers, workers and environmental organisations.

Foster the use of a common set of standards within the European standardisation system that integrates the national, European and international levels: by globally promoting the European regulatory model of market harmonisation underpinned by common voluntary standards; by reflecting the role of standards in international trade agreements; and by seeking further improvement through education and in the awareness of the role of standards in public authorities.

Arnold Pindar, President, ANEC (the European consumer voice in standardisation): "A European standardisation system that is inclusive, and designed to meet business and societal needs simultaneously, helps give Europe a competitive edge on the global stage."

