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Eurima recommendations for the standardization strategy

Eurima welcomes the intention of the European Commission to improve the European Standardisation System(ESS) to strengthen the single market.

Standardisation is indeed a highly strategic activity as it ensures harmonization of the technical language, transparency and the use of common procedures to assess the products placed on the single market leading to fair competition among manufacturers. Today's challenge is to ensure that the system is future-proof ready to answer the regulatory and market needs in terms of quality, fairness, speed of delivery and innovation.

With regards to the construction sector, we believe that the current ESS fits for purpose to support European strategic interests. However, some adjustments would be needed to clarify some procedures and responsibilities and guide the different organizations involved thus avoiding the current standstills. Here, we mean in particular that:

- There should be a reliable mechanism at CEN level to promote a consensus-based approach. We suggest putting in place robust rules-of-procedure, including clear structure and governance by CEN, as well as increased guidance by the European Commission, based on clear and broadly supported standardisation requests.
- To improve overall understanding and compliance, CEN should offer support and training to convenors and secretaries of the different Technical Committees and Working Groups. The increased use of web-based meeting platforms and related digital solutions can help the standardisation process.
- The strategic involvement of the European Commission and/or HAS consultants throughout the drafting process can support the improved governance and implementation of standardisation. Regular communication and exchange are also needed with CEN, we therefore welcome the creation of the joint task force between the Commission and the European standardization organizations.
- The technical committees in CEN should continue to develop assessment methods for essential characteristics. Allowing one unique method per EU characteristic is the only way to safeguard common technical language.
- To anticipate and define standardization priorities, Member states must commit by providing the human resources which would share the right regulatory expectations of the country. This is the only way to ensure inclusiveness and exhaustiveness.
- It is important to involve all stakeholders from the beginning of the process, especially industry which usually holds the technical expertise.

To achieve the new European goals in terms of digitalization and circular economy, here harmonized European standards are not enough. The European commission has an important role to play in the creation of supporting European common databases and/or harmonizing the rules, structure and data quality of these databases. This is essential to ensure reproducibility, transparency and fair competition on the single market.

To ensure that EU can leverage and promote global leadership in standards setting, we think that similar agreements such as the Vienna and Frankfurt agreement should be established with other international standardization organizations (such as ASTM, IEC, etc), ensuring if possible, that CEN/CENELEC lead in standard developments for global usage. This would certainly require additional human and financial resources, however necessary to ensure the EU competitiveness in the global market.