



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
INTERNAL MARKET AND SERVICES DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Services
Business-to-Business Services

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M/517 EN

**MANDATE ADDRESSED
To CEN, CENELEC AND ETSI
FOR THE PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENT OF
HORIZONTAL SERVICE STANDARDS**

1. BACKGROUND

(1) *General Context*

Services constitute the powerhouse of the European economy as they contribute to almost 70% of EU GDP and are the only sector of net job creation in the EU. Nevertheless, services markets remain strongly fragmented, with only 20% of the services provided in the EU having a cross-border dimension.¹ Hence, the full potential of the Single Market for services has not been reached.

One of the main objectives of the Services Directive 2006/123/EC² is to release the untapped growth potential of services markets in Europe. Besides removing legal and administrative barriers to trade in the services sector, the Services Directive also contains a number of measures aimed at encouraging Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, to develop a policy on the quality of services. One of these measures is the development of voluntary European standards³ with the aim of facilitating compatibility and comparability between services supplied by providers in different Member States, as well as facilitating information to the recipient and the quality of service provision. A study recently published by CEN⁴ shows that the benefits of standards to service providers and users include improvements in service quality and in the transparency of services offered.

In the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Commission has identified a number of flagship initiatives; new engines to boost growth and jobs. One of these flagships is "an industrial policy area for the globalisation era"⁵. In this context, standardisation has been

¹ A new strategy for the single market at the service of Europe's economy and society – Report to the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso by Mario Monti, Point 2.6.

² Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market, Official Journal of 27 December 2006, L 376/36.

³ Article 26(5) of Directive 2006/123/EC.

⁴ Study on the implementation of service standards and their impact on service providers and users; see <ftp://ftp.cen.eu/CEN/Sectors/List/Services/Technopolis20120124.pdf>

⁵ COM (2010) 614, Communication from the Commission on an integrated industrial policy era putting competitiveness and sustainability at centre stage.

designated as one of the key policies for strengthening the internal market by generating economic benefits through harmonisation and economies of scale.

Similarly, the revision of the European legislation on standardisation has been singled out as one of the 12 priority actions of the Single Market Act.⁶ The new Regulation on European standardisation⁷ will strengthen the role of European standards for services and asks national standardisation bodies to notify all work items for national service standards in their annual work programmes. In order to avoid fragmentation of the market by proliferating national service standards and to facilitate the cross-border provision of services standardisation should be developed at European level, taking full account of market needs.

(2) *Rationale for the Development of European Service Standards*

Progress in the development of European standards for services has been slow. European service standards represent only 3% of all standards (both for goods and services). Only 24 European service standards were developed in the period 2005 – 2009, while in the same time period, there was rapid growth in the number of the service standards at the national level, with the development of 453 new national service standards.

This trend may lead to proliferation of overlapping and heterogeneous national standards that could create new barriers to intra-EU trade in services by requiring businesses to adopt a range of different national standards within the internal market. Therefore, the timely development of service standards at European level should be seen as a window of opportunity to create the right conditions for better integration of the internal market for services.

(3) *Mandate M/371 "Second Programming mandate addressed to CEN in the field of services"*

In 2005, the Commission mandated CEN to examine the feasibility of taking a horizontal approach to European service standardisation (Mandate M/371). The outcome of this feasibility study is CEN's 'Horizontal European Service Standardization Strategy' (CHESSS Study), which was completed in 2008. The study shows that there is a horizontal dimension to services and that horizontal services standardisation can facilitate cross-border services in the EU.

However, since 2008 the thinking of the national standardisation bodies and other stakeholders has evolved. It now appears that the development of "narrower" horizontal service standards for particular elements of a service, such as complaints handling, outsourcing of services, the provision of inclusive services for vulnerable persons, etc., is favoured over the development of a single, all-inclusive horizontal service standard. Furthermore, businesses do not seem to be interested in some inclusive horizontal service standards already published in some Member States, as they do not meet market needs. If parts of an all-inclusive standard cannot be applied by certain sectors, it means that they would have to renounce from the use of such standard altogether, although other parts of

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Single Market Act Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence "Working together to create new growth" (COM/2011/0206), Point 2.5.

⁷ Regulation 1025/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European standardisation, OJ L 316/12

it could have been beneficial to them. This explains the preference for the development of 'narrower' service standards that would be better suited to satisfy businesses' needs.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MANDATE

This mandate encourages the development of voluntary European standards with the aim of facilitating compatibility between services supplied by providers in different Member States, information to the recipient and the quality of service provision in accordance with Article 26(5) of Directive 2006/123/EC. As result, it is expected that the service standards developed under this mandate would contribute to an increase of cross border provision of services.

The objectives of this mandate are twofold: (i) to establish a clear programme for the development of horizontal European service standards; and (ii) to develop a number of voluntary horizontal European service standards, which would correspond to market (and societal) needs and raise the quality of services offered in the EU.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANDATE WORK

Phase I: Preliminary programme of horizontal service standardisation

The first objective of the mandate for CEN, CENELEC and ETSI (hereafter European Standardisation Bodies or "ESOs") is to develop a preliminary standardisation work programme and, thus, to identify horizontal service standards that could be developed. Although the initial idea was to develop a single, all-inclusive horizontal service standard, "narrower" horizontal service standards for particular aspects/parts of a full service provision are now considered more appropriate.

The CHESSS study⁸ contains a list of topics that could be covered by a single generic European service standard. It contains topics for six different areas. Each of the topics could be suitable for development into "narrower" horizontal service standards. For the purposes of the current mandate, the list of topics elaborated by the CHESSS study has been completed on the basis of CEN Guide 15:2012 Guidance Document for the development of service standards (see Annex 1).⁹

On that basis, ESOs are invited to:

1. Identify existing international¹⁰ and national standards and examine the extent to which these standards are being used by market players and meet market needs.
2. Identify six or seven most suitable proposals for standardisation on the basis of the topics given in Annex 1. The suggested proposals should correspond to a variety of different areas (for example, from several different headings in view of developing horizontal service standards in the second phase of the mandate. As

⁸ Project M/371-1, CEN Horizontal European Services Standardization Strategy, CHESSS, Feasibility Study, Section 1, page 20.

⁹ According to CEN Guide 15:2012, a service standard is a standard that specifies requirements to be fulfilled by a service, to establish its fitness for purpose.

¹⁰ Some of the relevant ISO standards are, for example, ISO 10001 Customer codes of conduct, ISO 14552 Network services billing, ISO 10002, Complaints management and ISO 10003 Dispute resolution.

market needs may have evolved since the publication of the CHESSE study, ESOs have the possibility to modify the topics in Annex 1, if there is a market request and a need for standards on that specific topic.

The selection of the six or seven proposals for standardisation should be based on the assessment of a number of factors. Existing standards (both international and national) for the various topics listed in Annex 1 should be identified. An assessment needs to be carried out to identify those standards that have achieved wide acceptance by service providers and users. In addition, the intended end users of the standard should be clearly identified, and the way in which the proposed standard will contribute to the development of a single market in services should be described. The selection decision should be based on the opinions of stakeholder organisations and anticipated market acceptance taking into account any legal constraints which could limit acceptance of these voluntary standards at national level.

When preparing the preliminary standardisation work programme, ESOs shall take account of relevant specifications and standards currently available or being prepared at national, international and European levels. This analysis will be indispensable to ensure that future service standards would not include any requirements or statements that contradict applicable legislation of the same or higher level relating to occupational health and safety. The programming should also take account of the scope of service sectors as defined in the NACE (Nomenclature statistique des Activités économiques dans la Communauté Européenne). European standards on services, and thus those included in the resulting preliminary work programme, must take the public interest into account and be consensus-based and market-driven, whereby the needs of the economic operators and stakeholders directly or indirectly affected by the standard in question are taken into consideration.

In this Phase I the Commission expects the following deliverables:

- Analysis and comparison of the existence and use of horizontal service standards both at international and national level in the areas listed in Annex 1.
- Description of the methodology (criteria) to be used in the determination of whether a horizontal service standard could meet the needs of economic operators.
- Identification of six or seven proposals for standardisation.
- Analysis of whether a European standard would raise or reduce the level of quality for the topics that are already covered by existing national or international standards.
- An evaluation of the estimated overall economic costs and benefits of the potential standardisation work to be done in the selected areas, in order to be taken into account in the final selection of the work programmes.
- The end report will include any important consideration related to the development of these standards including the identification and prioritisation of possible needs relevant to the development of European horizontal standards for services including justification and an indicative time schedule for such research.

- Development of a roadmap with prioritization of the selected proposals for standardisation together with a tentative work programme including suitable and realistic indicative timing for each of the proposals. It is to be kept in mind that the horizontal service standards to be developed should cover issues common to many service sectors and should typically focus on how a service is provided.

Upon receipt of these deliverables, the Commission will have a scrutiny period in view of approving the proposals for standardisation that shall be included in Phase 2 of this mandate¹¹.

Towards the end of Phase I, the ESOs shall organise a conference in cooperation with the European Commission in view of consulting the wider public.

Phase II: Development of horizontal service standards

Phase II will start after the agreement by the Commission on the deliverables of Phase I.

Phase II will be dedicated to the development of the horizontal service standard(s) in the identified priority topics and agreed upon by the European Commission. The execution of all standardisation tasks shall be carried out in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

ESOs are invited to ensure that the deliverables developed are in full compliance with the *acquis communautaire* (European legislation and jurisprudence).

4. BODIES TO BE ASSOCIATED

Service users may have a strong interest in service standards that would enable them to compare services offered by different providers. Therefore, the preparation both of the standards programme for services and of the service standards themselves should include service users (both consumers and businesses) as well as providers, in particular businesses, workers and public authorities.

The representative bodies in standardisation at European level – ANEC, ECOS, NORMAPME and ETUI– should also be associated with the mandated work¹².

5. EXECUTION OF THE MANDATE

The ESOs shall inform the Commission within two (2) months after the receipt of this request, if they accept this mandate and of the arrangements to be adopted during its execution.

Phase I: Preliminary programming of horizontal service standardisation

¹¹ Note: This approval makes reference only to the selection of proposals for standardisation to be covered by this mandate. The ESOs are free to start voluntary European standardisation on topics not approved by the Commission and not covered by this mandate.

¹² ANEC is the 'European consumer voice in standardisation'. ECOS is the European Environmental Citizens Organisation for Standardisation, NORMAPME stands for "European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium sized Enterprises for Standardisation" and its main objective is making standards better for SMEs. ETUI is the European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety.

- The ESOs shall organise a conference to consult all interested parties.
- A mid-term report shall be sent to the Commission six (6) months after acceptance of the mandate by the ESOs.
- Final deliverables of the preliminary programming work shall be sent to the Commission no later than twelve (12) months after acceptance of the mandate by the ESOs.

Scrutiny period for the Commission:

The Commission shall inform the ESOs no later than one (1) month after receiving the final deliverables of the preliminary programming work on the proposals for standardisation to be developed during Phase II.

Phase II: Development of horizontal service standards

- The ESOs shall ensure that European standards or other deliverables fully respect the *acquis communautaire* (EU legislation and jurisprudence).
- During Phase 2, the ESOs shall report annually on the execution of the final standardisation programme until all the identified priority work items have been published as European standards or, failing that, as other European standardisation deliverables and have regular meetings with European Commission as necessary.

6. FOLLOW-UP

This mandate is issued after consulting the Article 5 Committee under 98/34/EC Directive in November 2012. The progress of the work under this mandate will be closely followed by the European Commission.

The ESOs shall assess the use and effectiveness of the European standards published as a result of this mandate and in terms of the objectives set out in Section 2 of this mandate, and report to the European Commission after 5 years of the acceptance of the mandate.

Enclosure: Annex 1

ANNEX 1

SUBJECT	TOPICS
Design	Strategy for customer centricity Applicable compliance requirements identification Risk assessments on the service Enterprises resource planning Customers contact planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Channels - Response times Customer notification plans
Information provision to customers	Service description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is being delivered? - What customers should expect? - What customers should not expect? - Where is the service to be delivered? - When is the service to be delivered? - How is the service to be delivered? (service sequence) - Restrictions Price (without hidden charges) Billing and payments Contact information Terms and conditions Compliance with standards and industry codes Customer communication channels Dispute resolution methods, channels and response times Accessibility information Safety risks of the service Notification of changes to service Marketing and awareness Reference to the contract or agreement Information before/after agreement Need for customer involvement (requirements on the client)
Service provider	Compliance with legislation Human resources Facilities and equipment Continuous improvement Subcontracting After sales service Service termination Innovation and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Periodic improvement plans based on customer feedback - Periodic risk assessment - Periodic review of compliance requirements (measurements) - Service continuity plans
Agreement	Information to be included in the contract Customer confirmation of agreement Provider confirmation of agreement
Billing	Compliance with ISO billing standards
Complaint and Redress	Compliance with European complaints and redress standards