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signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

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To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of  
the European Union

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EUROPEAN STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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**Standardisation package**

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**EUROPEAN STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

{SWD(2016) 186 final}

## EUROPEAN STANDARDS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

European standards contribute to Single Market integration and thus to ensuring job creation, overall growth of the EU economy, increased competitiveness, innovation and industrial leadership. Deepening the Single Market means extending the level playing field for economic operators, notably through technical harmonisation.

From goods to services and information and communication technologies (ICT), standards have proven to be a flexible way of raising quality and safety, improving transparency and interoperability, reducing costs and opening up markets for businesses, especially SMEs. Standards benefit consumers, companies and society at large.

Economic evidences show that a well-functioning standardisation system translates into GDP growth (see below page 3). Standard setting in Europe is largely industry driven. While standards are developed by a standards organisation, the market may also simply adopt the technical specifications developed by one company or by bodies active in the field, i.e. professional organisations.

The regulator can define essential requirements in legislation and request to the European Standardisation System (ESS) to develop, for indirect reference, voluntary European standards, which give presumption of conformity (or safety) after publication in the OJEU. So an efficient standardisation system can only be based on a close partnership between the regulator, the standardisation bodies and the industry.

*A standard is a voluntary technical document helping economic operators in a value chain to interoperate easier. For example, the standards on paper sizes (A3, A4, A5 etc...) facilitate the interaction between consumers, paper and envelop manufacturers, printing houses and photocopier producers. The standard gives visibility and technical certainty, a pre-condition for economic operators to invest.*

The ESS has been successful until now to issue high quality and efficient standards, while placing Europe on the global stage. Industry supports the European standards development and their regular and agile revision to take into account state-of-the-art technologies. In addition, the interaction between European standardisation and international one is constant: sometimes, European standards are proposed to international standardisation organisations, sometimes, international standards become European ones. This dialogue is important as it makes it easier for companies to go global, notably SMEs.

However, the standardisation environment is changing. New technologies and the progressive integration of digital solutions in industrial global value chains, as well as the fast evolving international context are putting pressure on the ESS which can still be leveraged to contribute more to EU jobs and growth. A new momentum is needed to respond effectively to the standards needs of industry, consumers and other stakeholders. Building on that new momentum ensures that Europe remains a global hub for standardisation. If not, standards would be set somewhere else and Europe would lose opportunities to benefit from first-mover advantage.

For that purpose, the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, as foreseen under the Single Market Strategy, sets out an innovative way of achieving these priorities through an open public-private co-operation.

In this Communication, the Commission sets out its vision for a single and efficient ESS that adapts to the changing environment, supports multiple policies and brings benefits to companies, consumers and workers alike.

The Communication also puts in context the Joint Initiative on Standardisation as a direct delivery of the Single Market Strategy. It is accompanied by documents exploring different facets of European standardisation such as an evaluation report, the Annual Union Work Programme for 2017 and a document on standards for services.

The European Standardisation Regulation 1025/2012 (hereinafter "Regulation") sets the legal framework for a long standing partnership between EU, Member States, standardisation organisations and bodies, social and societal stakeholders including those representing persons with disabilities, and users of standards.

The vision presented today draws on a REFIT<sup>1</sup> evaluation of this framework<sup>2</sup> and extensive public consultations<sup>3</sup> which concluded that the ESS is on track with achieving the objectives expected by the legislator<sup>4</sup> while recommending improved inclusiveness in the ESS, increased interaction and better communication within it.

In response to these calls and to reinforce the partnership between the European institutions and the European standardisation community, the Commission announced in its Single Market Strategy<sup>5</sup> its intention to launch a Joint Initiative on Standardisation, bringing together public and private institutions and organisations in a collaborative dialogue process. The shared objective is to promote a European standardisation hub with global impact, where standards are developed in a timely, open, transparent and inclusive manner, to support and promote innovation for all and to increase competitiveness of European companies in increasingly global value chains.<sup>6</sup>

The Joint Initiative is complemented by two other documents, more concretely addressing key areas for standardisation which have a cross-cutting impact on economic development: the European Commission Communication on "*ICT standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market*" adopted in April 2016<sup>7</sup>, as part of the Digital Single Market technologies and public services modernisation package (the "April ICT standards Communication") and a specific document on standards for services, which is part of the present package.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT): State of Play and Outlook, COM(2014) 368 final, 18.6.2014

<sup>2</sup> The Article 24 report forms part of this package

<sup>3</sup> Independent review of the European standardisation system, ISBN: 978-92-79-46201-6; DOI: 10.2873/720891; ET-01-15-151-EN-N

<sup>4</sup> The Regulation harmonises the previously fragmented standardisation legislation, extends its scope to services and standardisation deliverables other than standards and, finally, better incorporates societal stakeholders and SMEs into the system. The REFIT evaluation considers the framework itself fit for purpose and shifts its focus on how its implementation can best support the ten priorities of the Commission. Given the recent entry into force of the Regulation, a full ex post evaluation of the Regulation could not be achieved due to the fact that a full cycle of the standardisation work requested by the Commission since 2013 has not yet been completed. Nevertheless, the Independent Review, which was a key part of the REFIT evaluation, raised a lot of interest among stakeholders. Their main concerns relate to the fact that the current ESS should increase the participation and representation of stakeholders.

<sup>5</sup> COM(2015) 550 final

<sup>6</sup> Inclusive processes are important to avoid that standards imply excessive costs of compliance and certification or risk impeding competition.

<sup>7</sup> COM (2016) 176 final

In that way, new forms of cooperation will set a new best practice for a more collaborative and agile approach in line with the Better Regulation principles<sup>8</sup>.

In support of the new vision on standards and in line with the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, the Commission proposes to launch an **inter-institutional dialogue**, including an integrated annual reporting preserving the diversity of different domains, with the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU standardisation policy and the contribution of European standards to EU policies in general and to jobs creation, competitiveness and growth in particular.

## **1-STANDARDS MATTER**

### **...because they promote innovation**

In the past, standards have at times been perceived as slowing down innovation. As a matter of fact, standards promote innovation: they allow for an early market uptake of innovative products and services in particular if they address performance criteria instead of prescribing the use of specified products or procedures, allow technology transfer and facilitate research. Standards also typically ensure interoperability between different devices and services, allowing for innovation to take place "on top of innovation". Standardisation allows different individuals, firms and institutions to coordinate on a particular technology or methodology. Once standards are developed, typically within European Standardisation Organisations, they provide valuable input for further innovation, resulting in the creation of new products and services. Inclusive innovation processes based on the Regulation make sure that standards work for both standards developers and standards users, thus helping making standards a vehicle to open markets and innovation.

### **...because they increase quality and safety**

Standards also raise the quality and safety of products and services, benefitting consumers, workers, companies and society at large. Health, safety and environmental standards define the features of many products and services.

### **...because they enable jobs and growth**

Standards are an essential enabler for jobs and growth in Europe. A properly functioning standardisation environment is instrumental to competitiveness. Several national studies demonstrate that standards positively impact economic growth and competitiveness. Studies from, for example, France<sup>9</sup>, Germany<sup>10</sup> and the UK<sup>11</sup> have confirmed that standardisation increases a country's GDP. For France, the impact of standards on growth is estimated at 0.8 %, for United Kingdom at 0.3 % and for Germany at 0.9 % of GDP. To put this in monetary terms, the German standard body, DIN estimates that in Germany alone, standards generate up to EUR 17 billion a year. Another recent study from the UK' also confirms that the use of

<sup>8</sup> COM(2015) 215 final; [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/better\\_regulation/key\\_docs\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/better_regulation/key_docs_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> AFNOR (2016): Economic impact of standardisation, January 2016, Paris, France; AFNOR (2009): The Economic Impact of Standardisation – Technological Change, Standards and Long-Term Growth in France.

<sup>10</sup> DIN (2000): Economic Benefits of Standardisation, 3 volumes. Berlin: Beuth. (Update 2011)

<sup>11</sup> DTI (2005): The Empirical Economics of Standards, DTI ECONOMICS PAPER NO.12. London

standards benefits the national economy: standards contributed to around EUR 11 billion of the EUR 40 billion GDP growth in 2013 (2014 prices) and to around EUR 8.5 billion to UK exports. The same study shows that standards help to enhance quality, with 70% of respondents stating that standards had improved the quality of products and services<sup>12</sup>.

### **...because they support global value chains**

Standards also support global value chains, because they can open markets for companies beyond the EU: European and national standardisation bodies cooperate with international standardisation ones like ISO and IEC to develop international standards that are used worldwide.

For all these reasons, calls for standards are part of various EU policies, from the Energy Union to Climate Action and circular economy to the Digital Single Market.

### **...because the European standardisation process overcomes costly fragmentation in the single market**

The ESS is built on a long standing and successful public-private partnership between European and National Standardisation Bodies (NSBs) as suppliers of standards, the Commission using European standardisation to support the implementation of the Union's legislation and policies, as well as industry, SMEs, workers, environmental organisations and citizens groups. It is a private sector-based system<sup>13</sup> which covers standardisation of products and services, across sectors. The standardisation setting process itself is based on WTO principles<sup>14</sup> as well as inclusiveness of SMEs and societal stakeholders<sup>15</sup>. Being consensus-based, the expected market uptake allows for market penetration of innovative products at reduced production costs.

There are three European Standardisation Organisations (CEN, Cenelec, ETSI), recognised by the Regulation. They respectively deal with various kinds of products, materials, services and processes (CEN), with the electro-technical engineering field (Cenelec) and with Information and Communication Technologies (ETSI).

"European standards" are voluntary, market-driven and adopted by the European Standardisation Organisations: they replace conflicting national standards in all 28 member States. This makes life of businesses, notably SMEs easier. An important feature of European standards is also that they are regularly updated in order to incorporate state-of-the-art knowledge and technology. There are currently roughly 20 000 European standards developed by CEN-Cenelec for products and services and 35 000 standardisation deliverables by ETSI.

"Harmonised European standards" are a specific type of European standards, developed by the European Standardisation Organisations in response to standardisation requests ('Mandates')<sup>16</sup> from the Commission for the application of Union harmonised legislation.

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<sup>12</sup> British Standards Institution (BSI), 'The Economic Contribution of Standards to the UK Economy', 2015

<sup>13</sup> Recital 2 of Regulation 1025/2012: "European standardisation is organised by and for the stakeholders concerned based on national representation (the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (Cenelec) and direct participation (the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI))"

<sup>14</sup> Transparency, Openness, Impartiality and Consensus, Effectiveness and Relevance, Coherence, Development dimension ("The WTO Agreements Series" – Technical Barriers to Trade Decisions and recommendations adopted by the TBT Committee since 1 January 1995 Part 1: Decisions and recommendations, [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/publications\\_e/tbttrade\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/tbttrade_e.pdf))

<sup>15</sup> Annex III Organisations, Regulation (EU)1025/2012

<sup>16</sup> Article 10 of Regulation (EU)1025/2012

After publication in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)<sup>17</sup>, the EU companies choosing to use harmonised standards benefit from a 'presumption of conformity' to the requirements set out in the corresponding European legislation<sup>18</sup>. They can market, without further hurdle, their products or services throughout the Single Market – reaching over half a billion potential consumers. There are currently 4000 harmonised European Standards developed by CEN-Cenelec and almost 500 by ETSI.

## 2. STANDARDS TOGETHER: A SINGLE PLATFORM SERVING MULTIPLE POLICIES

Rapidly evolving technology cycles, increased complexity and interaction in industrial systems, blurring of the borders between products, services and ICT, diversification of business models put current regulatory systems under strain. This is also true for the ESS.

Faced with such challenges, an efficient, open, transparent, inclusive and agile ESS is needed to produce state-of-the-art standards in support of market needs and public policies, providing a predictable and stable investment framework to economic operators.

A single standardisation policy in support of multiple economic sectors and stakeholders is crucial for European leadership. Timely and high quality standards built in an inclusive way among all actors and allowing innovative companies to scale-up in the single market and worldwide, are a win-win for regulators, industry and consumers alike.

To that end, as mentioned, the Single Market Strategy announced the launch of the '**Joint Initiative on Standardisation**' (JIS) between the public and private partners in the ESS, including European and national standardisation organisations and bodies, industry associations, SMEs, consumer associations, trade unions, environmental organisations, EFTA, Member States and the Commission.

Discussions among all the partners took place in a unique format based on an open, innovative, consensus-based and collaborative drafting process. This was characterised by a pro-active engagement of all the above-mentioned stakeholders. The result of this process includes a common vision for all partners as well as a shared process to focus together on a variety of initiatives seeking to modernise, prioritise, speed up and streamline the delivery of standards by the end of 2019.

The participants endeavour to sign up to and jointly implement the vision articulated in the JIS on a voluntary basis and without prejudice to existing legislations, in particular Regulation 1025/2012. Each of the partners will contribute to the process according to their expertise and interest.

The JIS is based on the value chain of standardisation (see Figure 1) and will be delivered by 15 actions in three areas (see Annex 1):

- i. Awareness, education and understanding about the ESS;
- ii. Coordination, cooperation, transparency and inclusiveness; and
- iii. Competitiveness and international dimension.

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<sup>17</sup> According to Article 10 of the Regulation

<sup>18</sup> This statement applies to a large extent to European standards developed in application of the General Product Safety Directive (2001/95/EC), which give presumption of safety after publication in the OJEU.

These actions aim at improving the ESS functioning in line with its core values, such as consensus and the voluntary nature of standards.

### **Main expected achievements of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation (JIS)**

In 2013, the average time for the development of European standards required 36 months on average (down from 60 months in 2009). **Speed** of standard development needs to be squared with **inclusiveness and quality** of the standard. There are interesting experiments in different parts of the standardisation community for improving the timely delivery of high quality standards. These involve new ways of producing standards with a view to halving the time needed by 2020. Best practice exchange and enhanced collaboration across organisations under the JIS will induce the required standard setting processes.

**Timely development** of standards in a fast evolving technology context also requires early consideration of standard relevance already at the R&D stage. The partners of the JIS propose to speed up standards setting through new ways of collaborative development of standards.

Efficient anticipation and planning of standardisation through R&D are important. In fact, foresight studies can help to anticipate the need for standards development, by linking emerging technologies, their research needs for future products and processes to the definition of policy. A recent foresight study of the Joint Research Centre<sup>19</sup> investigated the future industrial landscape and areas of improvement for the ESS to fulfil the future needs while respecting the core value of the system. The JIS explores how the gap between **research/innovation priorities** and European standardisation could be analysed in a more systematic and forward looking way to finally bridge it more effectively so as to generate an early standardisation reflex in R&D work and its absorption by the ESS to better support the marketing of innovative products and services. This will help align priorities with standards developments and testing activities supported in particular by the Horizon 2020 programme.

Another important element is the **education and awareness building** on the competitiveness potential of standardisation. At European level, there is little to no presence of standardisation neither in formal education nor in vocational training, and in particular, the EU standardisation model. Therefore, there is a need to explore and promote standardisation as an element of formal education, academic and vocational training, in co-operation with experienced Member States, as well as engaging academia and get the next generation of standardisers ready in due time. The JIS foresees the development of training programmes on standardisation for national and European public administrations as an important element in the frame of this innovative educational project, supporting smart and innovation-friendly legislation and public policies.

**Prioritisation** of standardisation activities is crucial to contribute to the competitiveness of the European industry. Efficient prioritisation requires dialogue and joint analysis between the EU and standardisation stakeholders in determining market relevance and policy needs. This includes opinions by social and societal stakeholders in standard-setting and an early involvement of industry through enhanced information exchange with the Commission in line with Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the Standardisation Regulation. Better prioritisation will also allow a more efficient use of the available expertise in Europe (roughly 60 000 experts contributing to the ESS today). Better prioritisation is also a key element highlighted in the

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<sup>19</sup> "How will standards facilitate new production systems in the context of European innovation and competitiveness in 2025?", ISBN: 978-92-79-45414-1



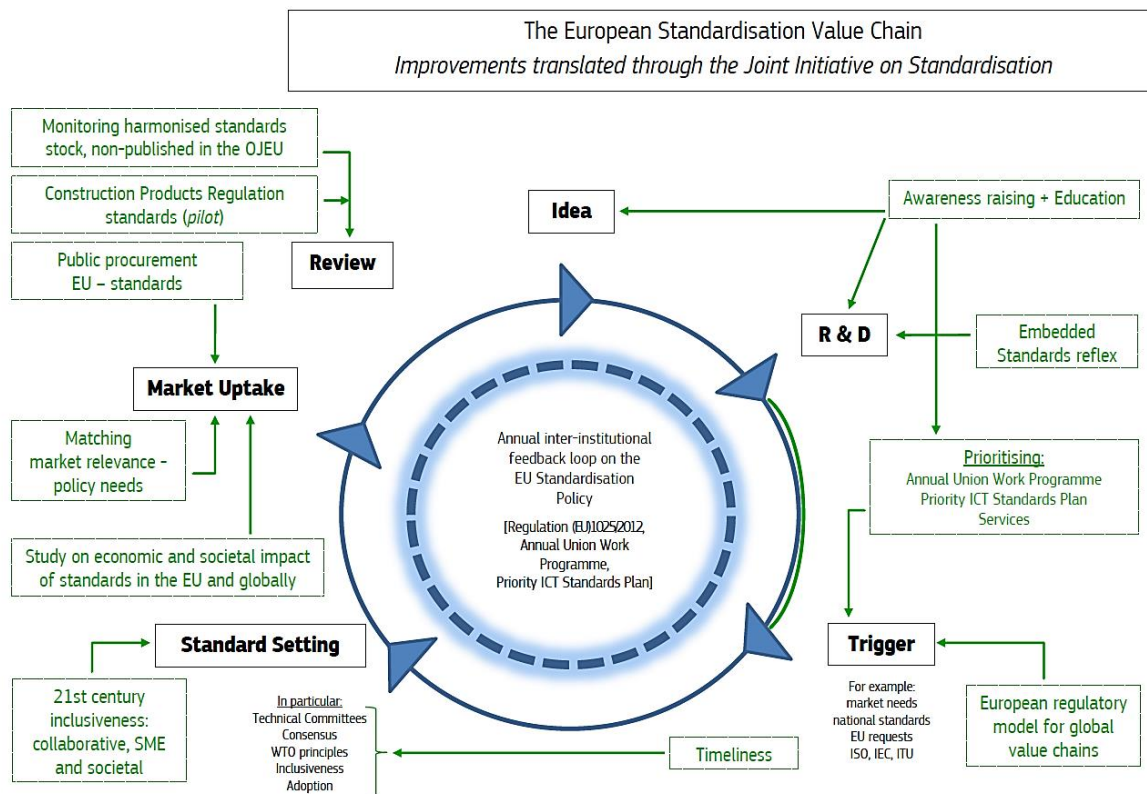
above-mentioned ICT standards Communication setting out a comprehensive strategic and political approach to standardisation for priority ICT technologies that are critical to the completion of the Digital Single Market, and in the Services Standards document, accompanying this Communication. These initiatives share the same vision as the JIS and thus their follow up will be done in line with it in these cross-sectoral areas. Additionally, three pilot projects will seek to enhance the support of standardisation in priority areas such as the construction sector, for public procurement and for participation of SMEs, social and societal stakeholders in international standardisation.

At the same time, the Commission will be able to better monitor the stock of non-published harmonised standards which have been proposed by the European Standardisation Organisations for publication in the OJEU so that it becomes an EU harmonised standard.

As markets are becoming increasingly global, so is standardisation. At **international level**, Europe's trade and investment potential is strengthened by pursuing the promotion of the European regulatory model in third countries. The JIS aims at encouraging stakeholders to internationally promote the use of tools such as developing common regulatory models in international organisations and negotiations as a basis for standardisation, to build a common understanding with relevant trade partners of which are the relevant international standards in the different sectors, as well as to support European SMEs, social and societal stakeholders in international standardisation processes, e.g. by promoting best practices for SMEs at International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) level. For that purpose and other policy topics, regular contacts and structured dialogues with these organisations will be held by the Commission.

Overall, these actions have to be seen as a whole and reinforcing each other. The entire value chain of standardisation thus will be more transparent, inclusive and efficient to respond to future challenges along the ten Commission priorities.

**Figure 1: The European Standardisation Value Chain, concept & layout: EC.**



The **Joint initiative on Standardisation** sets out a vision and aims at **modernising the way standards are produced in Europe**. It will in particular focus on key elements: promoting faster standards development, closing the gap between research priorities and European standardisation, clearer prioritisation, and stronger international presence.

The setting up of a Steering Group, chaired by the European Commission, is foreseen to monitor the follow-up of the different individual actions and identify new ones, where appropriate. The actions are expected to be tabled for the first time on the occasion of the World Standards Day 2016 (14 October 2016). The Steering Group is an informal consultative body and its suggestions will be without prejudice to regulatory framework established by Regulation 1025/2012 and to the Commission's prerogatives. The European Commission shall consider whether to endorse other actions which might be proposed.

### **3. STANDARDS IN SUPPORT OF POLICIES THAT CUT ACROSS THE ECONOMY: SERVICES AND ICT**

The increasing digitisation and servicification of the economy made ICT and services standards crucial enablers working across the whole economic spectrum. Their potential still needs to be fully realised, therefore standardisation in these two areas has been addressed by the Commission specifically and as a priority. Therefore, the Commission already adopted in April 2016 the ICT Standards Communication and is presenting a specific guidance for services standards with "*Tapping the potential of European service standards to help Europe's consumers and businesses*", accompanying this Communication.

#### **...ICT standards**

Common **ICT standards** ensure the interoperability of digital technologies and are the foundation of an effective Digital Single Market. They guarantee that technologies work smoothly and reliably together across sectors and industries, provide economies of scale, foster research and innovation and keep markets open. The development of ICT standards in priority technologies that are critical to the completion of the Digital Single Market requires a focused and sustained European response. These considerations are at the basis of the April ICT standards Communication, with the aim to ensure that ICT-related standards are set in a way that is more responsive to policy needs, agile, open, more strongly linked to research and innovation, better joined-up, and thus that they ultimately have more impact for the wider European economy as it transforms into a digital one.

Public-private partnerships and other large scale, industry-driven research initiatives enable European companies to link their research to standardisation. There is a need for further collaboration between the relevant stakeholders, including European industry, European and international standardisation bodies and forums aiming at comprehensive standardisation roadmaps. Encouraging open standards is of particular importance for the Commission. Open and cross-cutting ecosystems for standard development should be preferred to proprietary solutions, purely national approaches and standards that limit interoperability.

The Commission will monitor on-going work on ICT priority areas in relevant international standardisation and other fora and continue to proactively engage with key international partners to ensure global alignment of priorities in the ICT domain.

#### **.... and standards for services**

A service standard is a standard that specifies requirements to be fulfilled by a service to establish its fitness for purpose, e.g. by providing definitions, indicators of service quality and their levels or specifying time of delivery<sup>20</sup>.

Voluntary European standards for services can yield many of the same benefits as for products. Services account for 70% of the EU economy, yet service standards only account for 2% of all European standards. In addition, a recent stakeholder consultation exercise showed that national service standards can constitute barriers to cross-border service provision. Yet this is at a time when services are increasing as a percentage of GDP across all Member States, service providers are ever more involved in global value chains and manufacturers are more and more providing services with products, often referred to as 'servitification'. This can be held up where standards for products are not matched with standards for accompanying services.

This lower level of development of European service standards is a cause of missed opportunities for European service providers looking to offer cross-border and for European manufacturers looking to offer services with their products across borders. Because of this and its impact on the European economy as a whole, there have been several calls for concerted European action.

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<sup>20</sup> Examples are the standard on handling customer complaints in postal services, standards on requirements for tourist information services or on facility management processes.

As announced in the Single Market Strategy, and in response to calls from industry, consumer associations, Member States and standard setters, the Commission is presenting its approach for service standards in the attached staff working document. The document looks at the challenges for service standards and sets out both a general framework and practical policy solutions to promote the greater development of European standards for services, address national barriers, and improve information provision. It will provide a basis for the Commission, Member States, standard setters and stakeholders to work together to ensure that service standards make their full contribution across the economic spectrum. It complements the Joint Initiative as well as measures on integrating Europe's service markets.

In line with the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, **ICT and service standards** should be key priorities of the European Standardisation System so that Europe can fully grasp the benefits of the digitisation and servicification of the economy. On the service standards in particular, the Staff working document included in this package aims at giving a first analysis of the need of service standards.

#### 4. Way forward

Currently, European Standardisation policy is developed through different policy instruments, namely the **Annual Union Work Programme for European Standardisation (AUWP)**<sup>21</sup> and **the ICT Rolling Plan**<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, a dialogue on standards takes place in various places, namely the Committee on Standards<sup>23</sup> and the European Multi-stakeholder Platform on ICT Standardisation<sup>24</sup>. A modern system needs to be based on a single and coherent European standardisation policy aligning the different EU policy priorities and instruments.

To deliver this, the Commission considers it important to align all these instruments in a comprehensive annual governance cycle on EU standardisation policy. Central to the cycle will be the adoption of the AUWP in July every year, which, as of 2017, is proposed to be preceded by an inter-institutional dialogue in spring to ensure the full involvement of the European Parliament and of the Council, and the European Economic and Social Committee as well as the Committee of the Regions. The dialogue will be based on a single report from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament on the implementation of the AUWP, the ICT Standardisation Priorities for the Digital Single Market, the JIS and the development of European service standards.

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<sup>21</sup> The AUWP, according to Article 8 of Regulation (EU)1025/2012, identifies strategic priorities for European standardisation, taking into account Union long-term strategies for growth. It shall indicate the European standards and European standardisation deliverables that the Commission intends to request from the European standardisation organisations.

<sup>22</sup> Document elaborated yearly by the Commission, in cooperation with the European Multi-Stakeholder Platform on ICT Standardisation that provides a multi-annual overview of the needs for preliminary or complementary ICT standardisation activities to undertake in support of the EU policy activities.

<sup>23</sup> Article 22 of Regulation (EU)1025/2012

<sup>24</sup> The MSP was set up by Commission Decision of 28 November 2011 - setting up the European multi-stakeholder platform on ICT standardisation (2011/C 349/04). It is an advisory group to the Commission on matters related to ICT standardisation policy. It includes Member States, European, international and global standardisation bodies, industry and societal representatives.

Moreover, to further enhance the evidence base of this report and as requested by the Council<sup>25</sup>, the Commission will launch an EU-wide study on the economic impact of standardisation to complement national studies.

Together with the April ICT Standards Communication and with the Joint Initiative, today's standardisation package lays down a coherent Commission vision on the role of standardisation in support of policy making. It is made up of the following documents:

1. The **Annual Union Work Programme for European Standardisation 2017**: identifying strategic priorities and objectives for European standardisation, taking into account the EU's long-term strategies for jobs and growth such as the action plan on circular economy<sup>26</sup>, and indicating the European standards and European standardisation deliverables that the Commission intends to request from the European standardisation organisations in 2017.
2. The **“Article 24 Report” and REFIT Document** setting out evidence on the functioning of the ESS and supporting the policy developments under the JIS.
3. **Service Standards Staff Working Document**: *"Tapping the potential of European service standards to help Europe's consumers and businesses"*.

## 5. Conclusion

As a follow-up of the Single Market Strategy, in the present standardisation package the Commission presents a coherent vision which aims at creating new momentum for standardisation in support of EU policy making, aligning with the rapidly changing economic landscape and the blurring frontiers between manufacturing, digital and services. The first action in this regard is the agreement reached on the Joint Initiative on Standardisation, to better interconnect with the different actors in the European standardisation system, with a common goal: to deliver on the Commission priorities and contribute to jobs and growth in the EU. Being based on a holistic approach to standardisation, this vision integrates also the recently adopted ICT Standards Communication.

The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee as well as the Committee of the Regions to endorse this Communication and the accompanying documents with a view to contribute to complete the Single Market and to actively engage in its implementation, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

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<sup>25</sup> Council conclusions March 2015

<sup>26</sup> COM(2015) 614 final, 2 December 2015

## **Annex I: The proposal of the Joint Initiative for a first draft set of actions, accompanied with pilot projects:**

### *1. Awareness, Education and Understanding about the European Standardisation System*

- 1) Study on the economic and societal impacts as well as access to standards in the EU and EFTA
- 2) Linking research and innovation with standardisation
- 3) Programmes for education in standardisation/Training and awareness on standardisation
- 4) Improvement of standardisation awareness at national public authorities level specifically
- 5) Pilot Project: Enhance the support of standardisation to the Construction Products Regulation (CPR)

### *2. Coordination, Cooperation, Transparency and Inclusiveness*

- 6) Standards Market Relevance Roundtable (“SMARRT”)
- 7) Optimisation of operational aspects of Regulation (EU)1025/2012
- 8) Provide high-quality standards delivered and referenced in a timely manner
- 9) Inclusiveness, transparency & effective participation of all stakeholders in the European Standardisation System
- 10) Facilitating participation of all stakeholders at national level
- 11) Pilot Project: Increased use of standards in Public Procurement and a better compliance with the public procurement Directives

### *3. Competitiveness and International dimension*

- 12) Encouraging the greater development and use of European service standards to help integrate Europe’s service markets
- 13) Promote the European regulatory model supported by voluntary standards and its close link to international standardisation in third countries
- 14) Modernisation, including digitalisation, of the European industry in a global context
- 15) Pilot Project: Improve the representation of European SMEs and societal stakeholders' interests in international standardisation processes

None of the actions shall have an additional impact on the EU budget; however, financing can be considered eligible under the current multi-annual financial perspectives.