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

An EU Strategy on Standardisation
Setting global standards in support of a resilient, green and digital EU single market

An EU Strategy on Standardisation

Setting global standards in support of a resilient, green and digital EU single market

I. Introduction – Standards to foster EU values, policy objectives and regulatory implementation

Standards are at the core of the EU single market. Over the last 30 years, the European Standardisation System has delivered more than 3600 harmonised standards allowing companies to demonstrate compliance with EU law, plus many more European standards and technical specifications to promote inter-operability, the safety of EU citizens and protection of the environment. European standards have delivered great benefits for companies and consumers, creating a level-playing field in the single market for businesses and increasing consumer confidence.

European standardisation operates within an increasingly competitive global context. Many third countries are taking an assertive stance to standardisation, providing their industries with a competitive edge in terms of market access and technology roll-out.

Europe's competitiveness, technological sovereignty, ability to reduce dependencies and protection of EU values, including our social and environmental ambitions, will depend on how successful European actors are in standardisation at international level. This not only involves strong standardisation skills across industry and academia, but also requires European standardisation to become more agile, flexible and focused to anticipate the standardisation needs.

At the same time, European standardisation must respond to an increasingly rapid innovation pace and needs to deliver standards fast, while preserving high-quality outputs. Other, often private and non-European industry-led consortia are leaner and faster in developing standards. In particular in new and emerging technologies, the European standardisation system often fails to deliver in a timely manner and hence loses the important 'first mover' advantage through standardisation.

While European standardisation has been a success story for the establishment of the EU's single market, the strategic importance of standards has not been adequately recognised at the cost of EU leadership in standards-setting. This must change. Taking into account the feedback received on the roadmap¹, this strategy proposes a set of actions to put standards back at the core of a resilient, green and digital EU single market and to strengthen the global role of the European standardisation system.

II. Leveraging the European standardisation system – to deliver on the twin green and digital transition and support the resilience of the single market

The digital and green transition of EU industries and a well-functioning and resilient single market rely on a standardisation system that adequately reflects EU policy priorities. The EU's ambitions towards a climate neutral, resilient and circular economy cannot be delivered without European standards on testing methods, management systems or interoperability solutions. In the global race for digital leadership, the ability to shape international standards for digital products, processes and services as global benchmarks is essential for the EU's competitiveness. In short, the EU's policy ambitions on a resilient, green and digital economy will fall short if the accompanying standards are defined by other regions in the world.

Therefore, on top of the ongoing standardisation work across the industrial ecosystems, the European Union faces today critical 'standardisation urgencies', areas in which standards are needed in the

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13099-Standardisation-strategy/feedback_en?p_id=25976796

coming years in order to avoid strategic dependencies and to manifest the EU's global leadership in green and digital technologies. Stemming from the analysis of strategic dependencies in the updated Industrial Strategy² as well as stakeholder input through the industrial alliances, an urgent need for the development of standards has been identified in the following strategic areas: standards to overcome current obstacles in COVID-19 vaccine and medicine production; standards to support the recycling of critical raw materials (CRM); standards to support the roll-out of the clean hydrogen value chain; standards supporting low-carbon cement given the significant emissions-saving potential; standards for the certification of chips in terms of security, authenticity and reliability; and data standards enhancing data interoperability, data sharing and data re-use in support of the Common European Data Spaces.

In order to address these standardisation urgencies and better identify and anticipate future urgencies and needs, the Commission will put forward a range of measures.

First, the Commission will imminently act on the standardisation urgencies listed above, as reflected in the 2022 Annual Union Work Programme on standardisation. The Commission will launch standardisation requests, engage with the respective stakeholder communities in a timely manner and back up the work also with financing. The Commission calls upon the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs) to prioritise the delivery of this work without delay.

Second, a new High-Level Forum will bring together representatives of Member States, European Standardisation Organisations and National Standardisation Bodies, industry, civil society³ and academia to help set priorities, advise on future standardisation needs, coordinate effective representation of European interests in (international) standardisation fora and ensure that European standardisation activities meet the needs to make the EU economy more green, digital, fair and resilient. In addition, the Forum will work to strengthen technical expertise and skills in standards. Dedicated sub-groups will drive the work forward at operational level. The High-Level Forum will work in close collaboration with existing expert groups like the Industrial Forum, Data Innovation board, industrial alliances as well as the European Forum on Security Research⁴. This will allow the standardisation community to react faster and more in tune with the needs of innovators and users. The involvement of the European Parliament and Council in the discussion on the priorities for EU standardisation is key to ensure political concertation and will be facilitated by an annual high-level event.

Third, together with the High-Level Forum, the Commission will launch a process of reviewing existing standards, to identify needs for revisions or development of new standards to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and Europe's Digital Decade and support the resilience of the single market.

Fourth, on a technical level, the Commission will establish an *EU excellence hub on standards* to better coordinate and leverage the existing standardisation expertise scattered within the Commission, EU agencies and Joint Undertakings. In close collaboration with Member States, the hub will work on the anticipation of future standardisation needs, support the work in priority standardisation areas, and monitor international standardisation activities. The hub will make it possible to better respond to public sector requests for the development of guidelines and specifications in areas like eID, eGovernment or the European Blockchain Service Infrastructure. The Commission will create the function of a Chief Standardisation Officer to steer the work of the *excellence hub* and ensure overall oversight and coordination of the various standardisation activities across the Commission.

² COM(2021) 350 final

³ Including consumer organisations and environmental and social stakeholders

⁴ The Forum enables national authorities to exchange views and experiences on how to remove the main barriers to security research uptake and aims to support a consistent and strategic approach to policymaking on security research in the EU.

Fifth, in partnership with the ESOs, the Commission will work on solutions and set clear targets to accelerate every step of the development of standards that underpin the implementation of EU legislation. This requires enhanced efforts from all sides. It involves improving consistency of newly developed standards with EU law in order to facilitate their timely adoption. Furthermore, it requires ESOs to reduce the time between adoption of a harmonised standard and its formal delivery to the Commission.⁵ While the time between delivery and publication of the reference in the *Official Journal of the European Union* has decreased in 2020 and 2021, the Commission will also continue to work on faster publication of standards, while fulfilling its responsibility in verifying whether they satisfy the requirements of EU law.

On business services, progress in the past was relatively slow and services standards still represent merely a 2% of all European standards. The Commission has advanced with its assessment of the most pertinent areas where harmonised standards could improve competitiveness and reduce market barriers, including service standards for advanced manufacturing and construction. The Commission is engaging with stakeholders to bring this work on business services forward.

Public procurement as a tool to promote the uptake of standards for innovative, green and digital products is another area that the Commission will assess together with stakeholders.

The Commission will:

- Work with the ESOs, stakeholders and other partners to immediately address the identified standardisation urgencies, as regards COVID-19 vaccine and medicine production, critical raw materials recycling, the clean hydrogen value chain, low-carbon cement, chips certification and data standards.
- Set up a High-Level Forum to assist the Commission in anticipating upcoming standardisation priorities and engage with the European Parliament and Council to ensure political concertation on these priorities.
- Reflect the standardisation priorities in the Annual Union Work Programme on Standardisation from 2022 onwards.
- Review existing standards to identify needs for revisions or development of new standards to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and Europe's Digital Decade and support the resilience of the EU single market.
- Set up an *EU excellence hub on standards* to bring together the standardisation expertise, and nominate a Chief Standardisation Officer, who will steer this network and ensure Commission oversight on the alignment of standardisation activities with EU policy objectives and strategic interests.
- Work with the ESOs on concrete solutions and targets to accelerate the development and adoption of standards, implementing concrete solutions to achieve higher consistency of standards offered for publication by reference in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

III. Upholding the integrity, inclusiveness and accessibility of the European standardisation system – putting good governance principles in place

Within the European standardisation system, the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs) European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation CENELEC) and European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) have a privileged and prominent role: they are the only organisations that are eligible to work on standardisation requests issued by the Commission. This role derives from the choice of the EU legislator to request these organisations, which are governed by private law, to develop standards and

⁵ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European standardisation, SWD(2022) xxx

standardisation deliverables as per Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No. 1025/2012 on European standardisation.

The special status of the European standardisation organisations comes with responsibilities. More than ever, standards do not only have to deal with technical components, but also incorporate core EU democratic values and interests, as well as green and social principles. For example, standards for cybersecurity or the resilience of critical infrastructure carry a strategic dimension. This is particularly important as regards harmonised standards, adopted on the basis of EU harmonisation legislation and whose references have been published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, which the Court of Justice considered as part of EU law for the purposes of interpretation of those standards⁶. To ensure that the European standardisation system delivers in this respect, measures should be taken to ensure that it promotes EU interests and values.

The Commission is concerned that today's decision-making processes within the European standardisation organisations, in particular in ETSI, allow an uneven voting power to certain corporate interests: some multinationals have acquired more votes than the bodies that represent the entire stakeholder community. This is why the Commission believes that administrative and good governance principles need to be put in place when the European standardisation organisations act upon European standardisation requests and develop standards used to show compliance with rules imposed in the interest of EU citizens.

Therefore, the Commission presents today a proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012. This prescribes that to be eligible for standardisation requests from the Commission, the delegates of the national standardisation bodies of the EU and the EEA must be the ones with the decision-making power in each stage of the development of a standard requested by the Commission. Through a balanced representation that includes societal stakeholders in national standardisation bodies, this will enhance the openness, transparency and inclusiveness of the process.

SMEs are important drivers of innovation and users of standards. However, their access to standard development processes and to standards needs to be improved. Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 foresees more SME-friendly conditions (free access to draft standards, access to the activities of national standardisation bodies, applying special rates to standards, etc.).

With this in mind, to complement the amendment of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012, the Commission calls on the ESOs to make proposals by the end of 2022 to modernise their governance. This should include addressing uneven and intransparent representation of industrial interests and increasing the involvement of SMEs, civil society and users. The ESOs should also consider free access to standards and other deliverables. The Commission stands ready to engage with the ESOs in a constructive dialogue using the existing fora to assist them in achieving this objective. If insufficient progress is made, the Commission will consider proposing a revision of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012, as necessary. The Commission will launch an evaluation of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 in Q2 2022.

More can be done at national level to improve the access to standardisation development and standards themselves. Therefore, the Commission will launch a peer review process between EU Member States and national standardisation bodies to exchange good practices and foster new ideas on how to facilitate SME-friendly conditions and the involvement of civil society and users across the Union. In addition, the Commission will leverage existing networks – including the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), to reach a broader SMEs audience and organise trainings, information sessions and guiding material.

⁶ Judgement of the Court of 27 October 2016, C-613/14, ECLI:EU:C:2016:821. .

Recent legislation⁷ and Commission proposals⁸ provide for a Commission power to adopt technical or common specifications via implementing acts in specific cases. Given the role of harmonised standards in EU harmonisation legislation, this option has been integrated as a fallback solution, so as to ensure that the public interest is served where harmonised standards are absent and insufficient. To avoid a fragmentation of sectoral approaches, the Commission will work towards a horizontal approach in terms of criteria and processes for when and under which conditions the Commission could be empowered to develop common specifications via implementing acts, in those cases where the relevant legislation provides for this. This could, for example, be the case when standards are late or the process is blocked due to a lack of consensus between stakeholders. The newly created *EU excellence hub* announced in this strategy will provide the necessary technical expertise to develop those common specifications.

The Commission:

- Presents a legislative proposal amending Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012, in which it proposes basic criteria that must be adhered to when handling European standardisation requests under Art. 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012.
- Calls on the European standardisation organisations to make proposals by the end of 2022 to modernise their governance to fully represent the public interest and interests of SMEs, civil society and users and to facilitate access to standards.
- Will launch the evaluation of Regulation (EU) 1025/2012 to assess whether it is still fit for purpose.
- Will launch a peer review process amongst Member States and national standardisation bodies by the end of 2022 to achieve better inclusiveness, including of civil society and users, and SME-friendly conditions for standardisation.
- Will develop a horizontal approach to the development of technical or common specifications through implementing acts under sectoral legislation

IV. Global standards-setting: supporting the EU's leading position as a forerunner in key technologies and promoting EU core values

Traditionally, the European Union has had a strong global footprint in international standardisation activities and a good track record in translating international standards to European standards. Today, European experts and national standardisation bodies remain important players, but the geopolitical landscape has significantly shifted in recent years: other actors follow a much more assertive approach to international standardisation than the EU and have gained influence in international standardisation committees. The EU's objective is to shape international standards in line with its values and interests, but it is in strong competition to do so.⁹

The EU and its Member States must promote a more strategic approach to international standardisation activities, namely in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), but also in other relevant global partnerships, fora and consortia¹⁰, in order to

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 on fertilising products, Regulation (EU) 2017/745 on medical devices, Regulation (EU) 2017/746 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2017 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices, Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies, and Regulation (EU) 2019/881, Cybersecurity Act.

⁸ Artificial Intelligence (COM/2021/206), Batteries (COM/2020/798), Machinery Products (COM(2021)202), Hydrogen and Gas Market (COM(2021) 804).

⁹ See also the analysis in the Commission's Strategic Foresight Report (2021).

¹⁰ E.g., 3GPP, OneM2M, IETF, IEEE, W3C, OASIS, ECMA International, UN/CEFACT.

ensure the EU's global competitiveness, security and open strategic autonomy, as well as the ability of the EU to promote its values.

EU Member States, EU standardisation bodies and EU industries do not effectively coordinate and share resources in support of international standardisation processes and principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO), such as openness, transparency and consensus. This has led to a situation whereby in sensitive areas, like lithium batteries, facial recognition or the digital twin, other world regions are taking the lead in international technical committees promoting their technological solutions, which are often incompatible with the EU's values, policies and regulatory framework.

Coordination between EU Member States, national standardisation bodies and EU stakeholders must be improved to strengthen the EU's voice in global standardisation. The *EU excellence hub on standards* will monitor relevant international standardisation activities and coordination will be promoted at a political level through the High-Level Forum as announced in this strategy.

A particular critical situation relates to internet standardisation to promote a free, open, accessible, inclusive and secure global internet. In recent years, international standardisation on internet protocols has become increasingly politicised, at the risk of limiting the evolution of the global open internet and hampering the digitisation process across the world. The Commission will actively address this issue: in close coordination with like-minded partners, linking to the work in the G7¹¹ and the EU-US Technology and Trade Council (TTC), it will work towards increased European presence in relevant international fora. The newly established *EU excellence hub on standards* announced in this strategy will support this work. The Commission will monitor the deployment of internationally agreed key internet standards and make this data and related good practices available on an EU internet standards monitoring website. The Commission will also propose possible policy measures to foster the deployment of key internet standards such as IPv6.¹²

The introduction of sustainability requirements under Ecodesign and the forthcoming Sustainable Products Initiative will require the development of standards for the European market. The EU should work to promote global adoption of these standards in order to ensure a wider international pursuit of the underlying policy goals and secure a competitive advantage for first-mover industries.

The Commission also monitors international standardisation on space traffic management and is developing an EU approach, given its direct impact on the safe and sustainable use of outer space and the role of space technologies for EU efforts towards technological sovereignty. As part of its Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries¹³, the Commission, in close cooperation with other key stakeholders, will present a plan to promote the use of existing hybrid civil/defence standards and take leadership in the development of new standards at international level.

The Commission encourages EU Member States to support the participation of civil society, SME experts, trade unions and consumer representatives in international standardisation activities. As standards do not only regulate the technical aspect of a product, but can have an impact on people, workers and the environment, an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach can bring important check and balances to standards-making.

The EU's social, environmental and ethical values are shared with many like-minded global partners. In trade agreements concluded by the EU, chapters on technical barriers to trade and good regulatory practices already play a role in promoting EU standardisation objectives, notably by fostering the adoption of international standards by trading partners and through cooperation between the respective standardising bodies. However, there is scope for a more strategic approach in leveraging

¹¹ Ministerial Declaration G7 Digital and Technology Ministers' Meeting (28 April 2021)

¹² JOIN(2020) 18

¹³ COM(2021) 70 final

trade agreements and partnerships to support shared interests in international standards-setting with key partners. Ongoing discussions with the United States on more cooperation and collaborative action within the scope of the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) or future discussions on standards in the planned Digital Partnerships with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore are good examples of EU standardisation cooperation with international partners.

The Commission will continue its dialogue with other countries such as China and explore possible areas of cooperation, for example in support of the European Green Deal. To strengthen the economic relationship of the Union with neighbourhood countries and other important partner regions like Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean, it is necessary to promote and facilitate the adoption of European and international standards by these countries, as well as their participation in standard-setting. For this purpose, the Commission will develop initiatives, including building on existing partnerships and cooperation projects between the European Standardisation Organisations and standardisation bodies in third countries. It will also leverage the Global Gateway strategy to promote these standards through its infrastructure financing activities¹⁴. The role of international research and innovation cooperation is equally important to promote the EU's leading role as a global standards-setter.

The Commission will:

- Set up a mechanism with EU Member States and national standardisation bodies to monitor, share information, coordinate and strengthen the European approach to international standardisation (ISO, IEC, ITU and other relevant international fora), supported by the *EU Excellence Hub on Standards*;
- Foster the development and deployment of international standards for a free, open, accessible and secure global internet and establish an EU internet standards monitoring website.
- Monitor the effective implementation of existing commitments on standardisation in EU trade agreements and use such trade agreements, as well as regulatory dialogues and digital partnerships, to cooperate on standardisation with like-minded partners in strategic areas and coordinate positions in international standardisation bodies.
- Promote international cooperation on standardisation and EU standards with the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE) and Horizon Europe, also with a view to support stakeholder participation in international standardisation (SMEs, civil society, academics).
- Fund standardisation projects in selected African countries as part of its development cooperation policy and the Global Gateway. The EU will promote key European standards in partner countries with accession perspectives/closer integration with the EU's internal market, starting in the EU's Neighbourhoods.

V. Cutting-edge innovation that fosters timely standards

EU standardisation leadership depends on the innovation capacity of its industrial ecosystems. EU research, development and innovation (R&D&I) projects allow new technologies to enter into a more mature phase, favouring their applicability on a larger scale and promoting their market uptake. Therefore, Europe's R&I base, including via Horizon Europe and its predecessor programmes, needs to be exploited more in identifying and transferring relevant research for new standards.

There is untapped potential in EU-funded pre-normative research in support of standardisation needs. Proper resource allocation to pre-normative research can help ensure that Europe takes the lead in international standardisation processes. The Commission's annual 'foresight on standardisation' action under the Putting (more) Science into Standards (PSIS) initiative, in cooperation with CEN and CENELEC, is an important exercise to identify future standardisation opportunities early on and build important bridges between the research, innovator and standardiser communities.

¹⁴ JOIN(2021) 30.

Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training (Euratom R&T) programme, including via their direct actions and partnerships, such as Joint Undertakings and the Digital Europe Programme, as well as the ERA common industrial technology roadmaps, play an important role. They anticipate standardisation needs and link strategic priorities with pre-normative research. This is why the evaluation and review process of EU funded R&D&I projects already considers standardisation needs, for example as part of Key Performance Indicators and reporting obligations.

The Commission will assess how to better support researchers and innovators participating in EU funded R&D&I projects to take part in relevant standardisation activities. It will launch the ‘Standardisation Booster’, a platform to help beneficiaries, whose Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe research results are likely to lead to the revision or creation of a standard, to test the relevance of their results for standardisation. Engaging the research and innovation community early on in standards development also provides an opportunity to build expertise and skills in standardisation. Today, researchers, spin-offs and start-ups often do not consider standardisation as a priority: they are not always aware of the benefits of standardisation, they do not have the necessary resources or they consider that time spent on standardisation activities is not sufficiently rewarded. A consistent approach to facilitate standardisation activities and raise strategic awareness among researchers and innovators will be promoted by a dedicated European Code of Practice for researchers on standardisation.

Beyond R&D&I, successful uptake of standards directly depends on how quickly lead markets can be established across the Union. Building critical mass for early deployment of technologies like connected cars, intelligent factories, digital healthcare systems creates European momentum that supports EU leadership in these areas. In that context, deployment programmes like the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and Digital Europe Programme (DEP) are critical for industrial capacity building around global standards in Europe, and their role should be reinforced in the future.

The standards of the future should move from texts to machine-readable formats, which are more user-friendly, in particular for SMEs. The Commission will support this transition. In addition, it will call upon European standardisation organisations to integrate open source solutions into their activities, which can provide SMEs with quick inter-operability solutions in the uptake of technological solutions.

The Commission will:

- Launch the ‘Standardisation Booster’ to support researchers under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe to test the relevance of their results for standardisation.
- Develop a Code of Practice for researchers on standardisation to strengthen the link between standardisation and research/innovation through the European Research Area (ERA), by mid-2022.

VI. Ensuring future standardisation expertise – the need for education and skills

The use of standards is growing, the importance of standardisation for the competitiveness and public good is undisputed, but the general awareness and training on standardisation is comparably small. There is no formal education nor vocational training on standardisation. Many EU companies – whether large or small – lack a structured and strategic approach to standardisation capturing its relevance for various economic operations, whether it is legal compliance, market access or general business strategy.

This is worrying and reflected in the overall difficulty to recruit technical experts for the standardisation development work. The success of the European standardisation system rests on a plethora of experts from industry, public administrations, civil society, research or academia to deliver on all the critical aspects of standards development. It is largely thanks to the investment of companies, universities, research institutions and public administrations that the European

standardisation system has been successful. Europe needs the best standardisation experts to successfully pursue its global ambitions and support a digital, green and resilient single market.

The problem is aggravated by an upcoming generation change. Many of the experts, who worked on standardisation in the last decades, will retire. At the same time, the standardisation landscape becomes more complex: new technology challenges and horizontal considerations – like artificial intelligence, data protection or cybersecurity – will require new skills in the development of standards. The standardisation activities are layered across different levels, with initiatives in national, European and international organisations informing standardisation trends and uptake.

In education, the development of dedicated standardisation modules in business, law or engineering degrees can be an important impetus to broaden standardisation awareness and knowledge. The Commission will promote the organisation of Standardisation University Days for awareness among academics and students. Platforms between academics active in standardisation, like the Commission's EU Academy¹⁵, can provide a forum of exchange and stimulation for developing teaching modules.

More outreach within regions and clusters can be effective levers to promote standardisation knowledge and encourage the development of standardisation expertise through vocational and education training (VET). There is potential in pre-normative activities within EU funding programmes, where researchers gain important knowledge that could contribute to standard development. So far, there have been no initiatives to valorise such expertise amongst researchers and the Commission will start by exploring a dedicated research network on standards in the scope of the Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) actions.

The Commission will:

- Organise Standardisation University Days to promote standardisation awareness among academics and students.
- Deploy initiatives for young researchers and networks from Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training programme, including the COST Association, for the valorisation of research and innovation through standardisation and pre-normative research.
- Use the Commission's EU Academy platform for the dissemination of standardisation e-learning training material; promote the development and dissemination of standardisation academic teaching modules within the High-Level Forum to attract and train young professional in standardisation and promote re-skilling opportunities.

VII. The way ahead – future of the European standardisation system

Standards are not a purpose in itself. They are embedded in policy objectives geared towards industrial competitiveness, free movement of goods and services in the internal market, innovation, safety, consumer, worker and environmental protection as well as open strategic autonomy and a climate-neutral, resilient and circular economy. It is therefore of paramount importance to ensure the usability, effectiveness and usefulness of standards along industrial value chains, including SMEs and societal actors.

The EU has the potential to be the first-mover vanguard and lead international standards-setting, leveraging its cooperation with other like-minded international partners, in particular with regard to future technology areas of strategic interest. Therefore, the Commission is committed to making the European standardisation system more functional and agile, to deliver on the standards that make our industries more competitive, serve the EU's public interest, promote sustainability, and preserve and reinforce democratic values.

¹⁵ <https://academy.europa.eu/>

Transparency in the standards making process will contribute to removing bottlenecks in the standards-development process and making the European standardisation system more efficient. Transparency will also allow public and private actors to have a better grasp of the current gaps and future needs of standards.

The engagement and regular contribution of all relevant actors – including the inter-institutional partners, European standardisation organisations, civil society, industry and academia – and the effectiveness of checks and balances will be critical for the success of the European standardisation system.

With this strategy, the Commission underpins the EU's role as a global frontrunner in the development of standards, supporting EU values and providing industries with a competitive edge.

The Commission will:

- Publish along with the Annual Union Work Programme and the ICT Standardisation Rolling Plan on European standardisation an annual dashboard on the planned, current and completed standardisation activities for more transparency in the European standardisation system.