



PRESS RELEASE

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TOGETHER FOR EUROPE'S RECOVERY: EUROPEAN STANDARDS SUPPORT THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

On 1 July 2020, Germany took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. With the coronavirus pandemic having a dramatic impact on Europe, Germany has set itself the objective to overcome its negative effects and ensure the EU's economic and social recovery, reinforcing its resilience and social cohesion in the long term. In this historic challenge, European standards play an essential role.

Under the motto "*Together for Europe's recovery*", Germany has established the focus areas that will guide its Presidency of the Council of the European Union: overcoming the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis for the long-term as well as economic and social recovery; a stronger and more innovative Europe; a fair Europe; a sustainable Europe; a Europe of security and common values; and a strong Europe in the world. Taken together, and in the context of the recently presented EU Recovery Plan, these priorities establish a vision that not only focusses on present challenges, but sets the course for a successful future, for a Europe ready to navigate the transformations of our time, capable of protecting its interests and respect its responsibility in the world.

The German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), which represents Germany in the EU Committee on Standards (CoS), sees the German Council Presidency as an opportunity to put cooperation between private sector standardization and the European legislator on the agenda of the European Council. In cooperation with the Commission, standardization organisations, industry and like-minded Member States, their aim is to press for faster and more cooperative procedural rules and to restore the balance in the division of labour between standardization and the Commission services. In accordance with this, the BMWi is planning the following three actions:

- A legal opinion focussing among other things on questions of the legal nature of harmonized standards, the European Commission's review of standards intended to be cited in the Official Journal of the EU, and the role of Member States in the CoS;

- the revival of the Council Working Group on Standardization;
- two workshops focusing on the contribution standards can make to support the “European Green Deal” and AI technology in Europe.

The [European Committee for Standardization \(CEN\)](#), the [European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization \(CENELEC\)](#), and their German national members, respectively the German Institute for Standardization ([DIN](#)) and the German Commission for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies ([DKE](#)) congratulate Germany for its ambitious Presidency’s programme that seizes this historic opportunity and highlight the essential contribution that European standards make not only to the German Presidency’s priorities, but to the long-term development and growth of Europe, across a wide range of sectors.

The European Standardization System (ESS) constitutes one of the foundations of the Single Market: it works in support of European market harmonization, making it more sustainable, easier and safer for citizens, companies and public institutions to buy and sell goods and services, travel across borders and rely on the same high level of services across Europe. These benefits were in full display during the COVID-19 pandemic, when CEN, CENELEC and their members made [available a series of European Standards \(ENs\)](#) for medical devices and personal protective equipment that is being used to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

For this reason, CEN, CENELEC, DIN and DKE believe that European standardization represents a reliable solution to the many challenges that the German Presidency will have to face in the next six months. First of all, re-establishing the efficiency of the **Single Market** is of strategic importance in times of crisis. Standardization provides a powerful tool to achieve this: European Standards help dismantle barriers to trade and support companies to bring to market competitive products and services.

A second priority of the German Presidency, and one of the areas with the biggest potential to unleash Europe’s growth, is **digitalisation**. The CEN and CENELEC communities are committed to help Europe reap the benefit of new technologies such as AI, IoT and 5G. Among CEN and CENELEC’s efforts regarding digitalization and new technologies are the recent establishment of a TC on [Blockchain and DLTs](#), the ongoing work on [cybersecurity](#) and for an ethical AI, or the implementation of the [Strategic Plan for Digital Transformation](#), which aims to create standards fit for the digital age. We are looking forward to explore, together with the German Presidency, the possible ways forward in the coming months.

Another key area for the EU’s recovery and resilience is **sustainability**, in the framework of the recently announced European Green Deal. Also in this regard, the commitment of European standardization is long-standing: as an example, two dedicated special bodies, the CEN-CENELEC [Strategic Advisory Body for Environment \(SABE\)](#) and CENELEC/[TC 111X ‘Environment’](#) have recently been set

up to ensure that environmental considerations are always taken into account in standardization work.

Furthermore, in a moment of crisis it is even more important for the EU to defend its position in the global economy and strengthen its **resilience and sovereignty**. The German Presidency wants to fight unjustified barriers to trade. European Standards support international trade, reduce trade barriers and help European goods and services access the global market. The strength of the European standardization system lies in its agreements with the international standardization organizations (ISO & IEC) and in the fruitful work undertaken to promote global standards.

“The European Standardization System is based on a voluntary and inclusive approach, which has already shown its strength in supporting the EU’s policy objectives”, commented **Elena Santiago Cid, CEN and CENELEC’s Director General**. “The standardization community is ready to engage, in the full spirit of the [New Legislative Framework](#), to enable Europe’s full recovery: CEN and CENELEC, together with DIN and DKE, are ready to engage with the German Presidency to help Europe deliver on its promise”.

Christoph Winterhalter, CEN Vice-President Policy and DIN’s Chairman of the Executive Board, said: “DIN has been working closely with the German Government to put standardization on the agenda of the German presidency of the Council. We very much welcome the fact that the Ministries involved will highlight the contributions of standards for the twin transitions, green and digital. We consider it very encouraging that Germany also decided to tackle some of the issues we face in the development of harmonized standards by reinvigorating the discussion on standardization in the Council Working Groups.”

Michael Teigeler, DKE’s Managing Director, added: “DKE welcomes the call of Germany’s Presidency for a Europe that plays an important role in shaping standards worldwide, and is ready to give all the necessary support to achieve this goal. In line with the number one priority of the German Presidency, protecting EU citizens is also a DKE priority: European standards help society in contributing to the well-being and health of people in coming out from the COVID pandemic crisis. They also play a key role in achieving European digital sovereignty, as well as secure and trustworthy new technologies. The strategic role of electrotechnical standardization for the strengthening of the European Single Market and for the global competitiveness of our industry has been long recognised at the German level, also thanks to the well-established collaboration between DKE and the German Government. DKE is confident that the German Presidency will help to increase this recognition at European level and enhance the cooperation between the European Commission and the European Standardization Organizations, based on the successful New Legislative Framework.”

CEN and CENELEC

CEN (European Committee for Standardization) and CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) are recognized by the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) as European Standardization Organizations responsible for developing standards at European level.

The members of CEN and CENELEC are the National Standardization Bodies and National Electrotechnical Committees of 34 European countries. European Standards (ENs) and other standardization deliverables adopted by CEN and CENELEC, are accepted and recognized in all of these countries. European Standards (ENs) contribute to enhancing safety, improving quality, facilitating cross-border trade and strengthening the European Single Market. CEN and CENELEC work to promote the international alignment of standards in the framework of technical cooperation agreements with ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission).

CEN website: www.cen.eu

CENELEC website: www.cenelec.eu

CEN-CENELEC website: www.cencenelec.eu

Media contact:

Giovanni Collot

Project Manager Strategy & Governance

CEN-CENELEC Management Centre

T: +32 474 98 21 17

Email: gcollot@cencenelec.eu

Twitter: [@Standards4EU](https://twitter.com/Standards4EU)

DIN

Website: www.din.de

Twitter: @DIN_Norm

Media contacts:

Julian Pinnig

Press Officer

DIN e. V.

Saatwinkler Damm 42/43

13627 Berlin

T: +49 30 2601-2812

Email: julian.pinnig@din.de

DKE

Website: <https://www.dke.de/en>

Twitter: @DKEAktuell

Media contact:

Melanie Unseld

Press Officer, Brand, Marketing and Communication

VDE Verband der Elektrotechnik

Elektronik Informationstechnik e. V.

Stresemannallee 15

60596 Frankfurt am Main

T: +49 69 6308 461

Email: melanie.unseld@vde.com