

CAPIEL[★]

european coordinating committee of manufacturers
of electrical switchgear and controlgear

CAPIEL Guidance

for voluntary registration of state-of-the-art product standards

March 26th, 2026

CAPIEL: Guidance for the voluntary registration of state-of-the-art product standards

1 Purpose of this document

This guidance document describes the preconditions for the registration of important product standards that represent the 'state-of-the-art' throughout Europe and internationally on the internet page of CAPIEL. Irrespective of a European listing in the EU Official Journal, the standards that meet the criteria of this guidance can be used for corresponding products to comply with European regulations.

+++ IMPORTANT +++

The final decision as to which standards are used in an (EU) declaration of conformity for a product always lies with the manufacturer and must be determined by the manufacturer regarding the product's area of application.

2 CAPIEL Products

CAPIEL is the European Coordinating Committee for the National Associations of Manufacturers of Low Voltage Switchgear and Controlgear equipment for industrial and tertiary markets.

Members of national associations represented by CAPIEL include small, medium and large-sized companies that in total directly employ more than 100,000 people in Europe. CAPIEL promotes and represents the common professional interests of its members in all areas of its competence. Essential association affairs are in the fields of standardization, legislation and common promotion.

The main products covered are:

- Contactors
- Circuit-breakers
- Control devices (switches and sensors, ...)
- Push buttons
- Fuses
- Motor starters
- Panels
- Cam switches
- Switch disconnectors
- Time relays

This guidance is focused on the relevant products of CLC/TC121A and CLC/SR121B.

3 Abbreviations

3.1 Abbreviations

BMWI Bundesministerium Wirtschaft, Germany

ECJ European Court of Justice

EMCD Electromagnetic Compatibility Directive

ESR Essential Safety Requirements

LVD Low Voltage Directive

NLF New Legislative Framework

OJE Official Journal of Europe

CAPIEL: Guidance for the voluntary registration of state-of-the-art product standards

4 Rationales and Concept of “voluntary” registered standards

4.1 Rationales for a “voluntary” registration

Due to various rulings by the European Court of Justice [ECJ], harmonized standards whose references are published and cited under their respective regulations in the Official Journal of the EU [OJEU], are considered extensions of European law and must therefore be available free of charge after being listed in the L series of the OJEU. Subsequently, these orders from the ECJ have led to numerous challenges, some of which have not yet been satisfactorily resolved, resulting in considerable delays in the listing of standards. For example, it is still unclear how listed standards that have been harmonized at the European level (EN standards) using the Frankfurt and Vienna agreements (based on international IEC and ISO standards) and are therefore still subject to the license terms of these international standards organizations can be provided free of charge. As things stand today, most of the harmonized EN standards referenced in the OJEU are outdated and no longer reflect the current ‘state-of-the-art’. In the event of a liability claim, the sole application of these outdated standards can become a major problem for a manufacturer placing their goods on the European market.

This is where the CAPIEL concept of a “voluntary” register of standards comes into play. The recommendation of CAPIEL for the voluntary registration of standards has the intention to restore the confidence of manufacturers, users, third-party bodies, authorities and market surveillance authorities by providing a common consensus on the current ‘state-of-the-art’. Based on this registration, a manufacturer of products can carry out a risk assessment related to the essential safety requirements of the corresponding European Directive/Regulation using the ‘state-of-the-art’ standard. Third-party bodies may also adapt their assessment criteria utilizing this ‘state-of-the-art’.

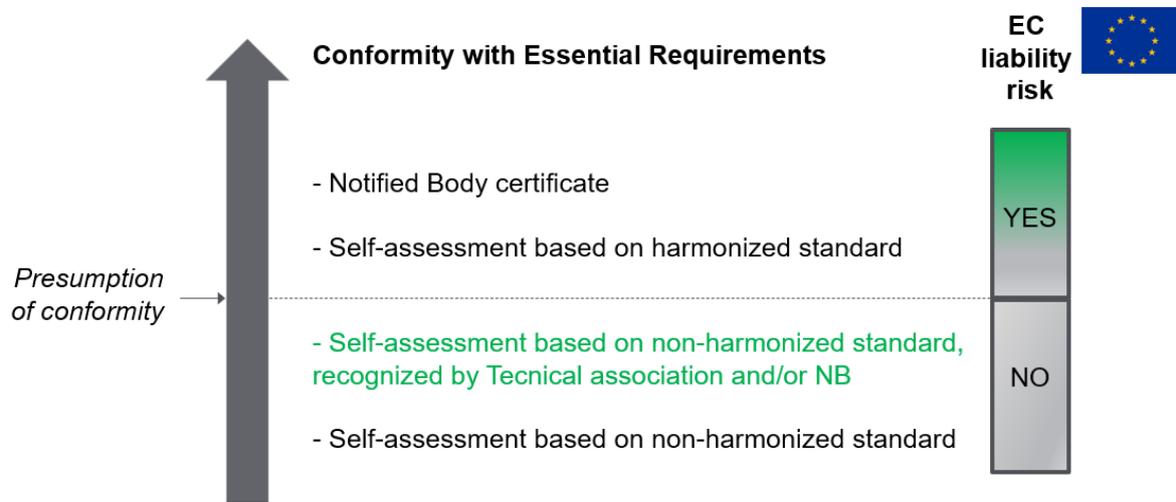
4.2 Concept of the “voluntary” registration

Proof of conformity with the essential safety requirements of a NLF Directive (CAPIEL products, depending on their application and technology, may be impacted by several European Regulations including the Low Voltage Directive, Electro-Magnetic Compatibility Directive, Radio Equipment Directive, Cyber Resilience Act, etc.) can be achieved via various assessment levels from an EU's perspective. The type of assessment also always depends heavily on the protection objectives and the criticality for the typical application of a product, so that a higher-quality EU type examination is generally only mandatory for very safety-critical products or applications. Figure 1 shows the value of an assessment approval related to the presumption of conformity.

This approach provides a valuable practical resource, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, but can only offer supportive and temporary guidance. Registrations by industry associations without involvement or recognition at the European level cannot replace a structural solution and carry the risk of fragmentation. A broader approach for a horizontal industry solution is proposed with a [position paper of ZVEI](#). This will provide a long-term solution.

CAPIEL: Guidance for the voluntary registration of state-of-the-art product standards

Figure 1 Certificates of conformity with the ESR of an European NLF Regulation.



Regarding EMCD and LVD, it was previously common for manufacturers to carry out an assessment based on a listed harmonized standard for a product and to store this assessment in their technical documentation, which can then be reviewed on request by the market surveillance authority. However, the ECJ's James Elliott judgement brought about a significant change. Under liability law, the EU Commission bears joint liability for listed standards, as the listed standards in the OJEU form part of European law.

"The EU is not liable for damage resulting from errors in a harmonized standard itself. However, liability can be considered for decisions taken by the Commission under the Standardisation Regulation on standardisation requests, publication of references to harmonized standards in the Official Journal or formal objections. The EU's liability therefore only extends as far as the Commission's duty of scrutiny."

Source: Dingemann/Kottmann, legal opinion on behalf of the BMWi, Germany

There is currently no solution in sight as to how the dilemma can be resolved. The application of harmonized standards remains voluntary. This means that manufacturers can generally also rely on other standards or documents to demonstrate conformity with the requirements of a Regulation. However, without harmonized standards, there is no presumption of conformity. This can make it more complicated for manufacturers to provide evidence, which in turn can lead to delays and additional costs. There is also a lack of reliability, particularly in the case of standards that were previously harmonized but are no longer updated (and have therefore expired): if manufacturers refer to them, they often cannot be sure whether they still define the 'state-of-the-art'.

This is where the concept of a "voluntary registration" comes in (see: **green line** in Figure 1) and attempts to close the gap using the latest 'state-of-the-art' standards based on consensus within the relevant International standards development working group. Furthermore, this "voluntary registration" makes it possible to maintain the international licensing conditions of standards, as the registrations are no longer part of European law.

5 Registration and De-registration processes

5.1 Registration criteria for registering a candidate

5.1.1 General requirement

Standards that are published in the standardization committees IEC TC121, IEC SC121A, IEC SC121B or CLC/TC121A and relate to essential requirements of the applicable European regulations can be included in the CAPIEL candidate list for a voluntary registration process.

A quality assessment of the respective candidate standard(s) shall be carried out by the International Technical Committee responsible for the publication of the standard(s) prior to the registration on the CAPIEL homepage.

5.1.2 CAPIEL registration process for registering standards according to the LVD and EMCDD.

Figure 2 describes the process for registering CAPIEL candidates for an European Regulation.

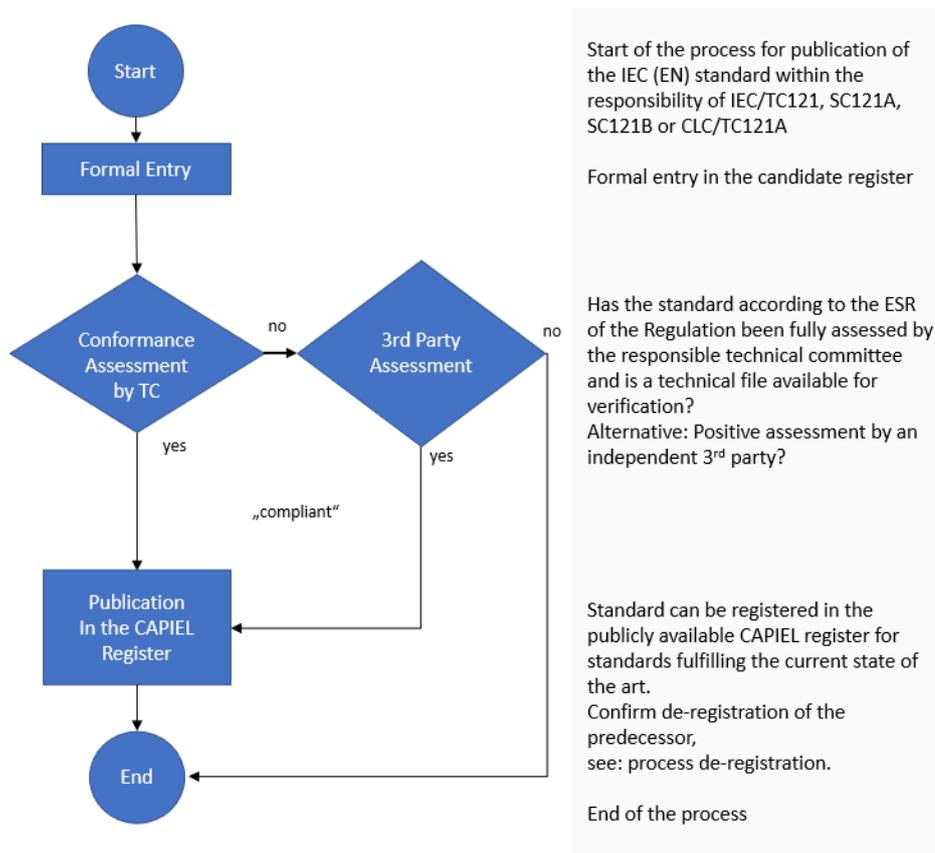
Process-No.: CAPIEL-001

Process-Owner: CAPIEL Steering Committee

Process-Name: Registering process

Process-Class: Qualification for registration candidates

Figure 2 Process for the registration of standards at CAPIEL



CAPIEL: Guidance for the voluntary registration of state-of-the-art product standards

5.2 De-registration of a CAPIEL registered standard

Figure 5 describes the process for the de-registration of a previously registered standard.

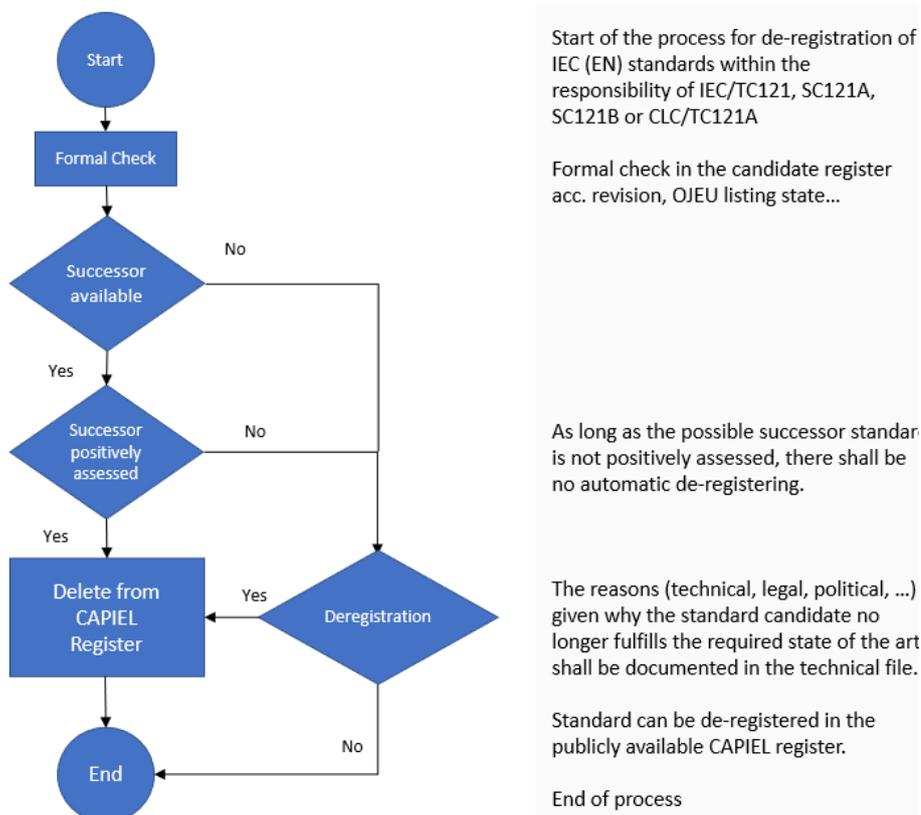
Process-No.: CAPIEL-003

Process-Owner: CAPIEL Steering Committee

Process-Name: De-registration

Process-Class: Qualification for de-registering candidates

Figure 3 Process for de-registration of CAPIEL standards



6 Maintenance Reporting and Responsibilities

The registration request can be initiated by the responsible IEC or CLC Committees.

The responsibility for the monitoring and correct maintenance on the CAPIEL registration page shall be the appointed CAPIEL liaison officer by decision of the CAPIEL plenary committee.

CAPIEL: Guidance for the voluntary registration of state-of-the-art product standards

7 Example of registration

Table 1 shows an example of the future registration under CAPIEL ownership.

Table 1 Example of CAPIEL registration

Standard	Edition	Directive	Date of withdrawal	Comment
EN IEC 60947-1	7	LVD, EMCD		
...				

8 History of this document

Stage	Revision	Date	Remark
NP	0.1	2025-02-04	First rough draft for CAPIEL circulation
Update	0.2	2025-05-21	Pre-publication review
Update	1.0	2025-07-01	Post plenary review
Update	2.0	2026-03-26	Replacement listing by registration

Contact

Dr. Markus Winzenick • CAPIEL Secretary General

Email: markus.winzenick@zvei.org

CAPIEL – European Coordinating Committee of manufacturers of electrical switchgear and controlgear - 17 rue de l'Amiral Hamelin - 75016 PARIS – France

EU Transparency Register ID: REG 498106892228-27 • www.capiel.eu

Date: 26.03.2026