

CAPIEL Position - Response to the Public Consultation on the Revision of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 on European Standardization

CAPIEL, the Coordinating Committee for the Associations of Manufacturers of Switchgear and Controlgear equipment for industrial, commercial and similar use in the European Union, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the revision of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 on European standardization.

1. Preserving the Strength of the European Standardization System (ESS)

Standardization is a cornerstone of the Single Market, product safety, industrial innovation, and Europe's global competitiveness.

The ESS is a globally recognized model of public-private partnership. It is inclusive, transparent, and covers the needs of stakeholders in the industry, enabling the development of high-quality, market-relevant standards that support EU policy objectives while fostering innovation and competitiveness.

2. Key Concerns with Common Specifications

The proposed introduction of Common Specifications (CS) represents a significant deviation from the New Legislative Framework (NLF), threatening the balance between legislation and standardization. We wish to express our concern about CS potential negative impact on the **European Standardization System (ESS)**. We highlight the following critical issues:

- **Legal uncertainty:** CS can be modified without the consensus-based processes that underpin harmonized standards, creating unpredictability for manufacturers.
- **Lack of stakeholder participation:** Industry stakeholders, particularly SMEs, will have reduced ability to shape technical requirements that directly affect their products.
- **Fragmentation of expert resources:** Technical experts are already stretched; duplicating efforts across CS and international standardization is unsustainable, particularly for SMEs.
- **Risk of redesign:** CS may not align with existing ISO/IEC-based standards, potentially forcing costly product redesigns.

- **Lack of WTO alignment:** ESOs are embedded in the WTO framework; CS are not, risking international trade friction.
- **Technical ambiguity:** CS developed without industry expertise may result in unclear or impractical requirements. The release of common specifications requires specific technical know-how of the state of the art that might not be available within the Commission
- **Market fragmentation:** Divergence from international standards weakens the global competitiveness of European industry.
- **Unassessed financial burden:** The financial implications of developing and implementing Common Specifications have not been thoroughly evaluated. This includes the cost of setting up parallel technical structures, hiring external experts, and the potential duplication of efforts already covered by the European Standardization Organizations. These resources would be more effectively invested in improving the existing system, particularly the HAS assessment process.
- **De facto mandatory documents:** Although common specifications adopted via implementing acts are voluntary in their application, like harmonized standards, we believe that these **specifications** are likely to be seen as **being de facto mandatory by manufacturers**. This would disrupt the underlying idea of the NLF that requirements are defined in the legislation, while details are developed in the standards. Furthermore, manufacturers could find it difficult to deviate from the common specification, negatively impacting product innovation processes.

3. One important element to consider: Delays in Citation of Harmonized Standards

The EC evaluation report of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 on European Standardization fails to address the root cause of the current challenges of the ESS: the persistent delays in the citation of harmonized standards in the Official Journal of the EU (OJEU), originated by the unrealistic setting of applicability dates, the long process of adopting standardization requests and the management and implementation of the Harmonization Assessment System (HAS). This has led to:

- Manufacturers having to justify the use of non-cited standards, increasing compliance burdens.
- Technological stagnation, as cited EN standards remain static while international standards evolve.

- Inconsistent enforcement, as market surveillance authorities may not recognise non-cited standards.
 - A loss of European competitiveness due to the inability to leverage cutting-edge international standards.
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4. Constructive Proposals

We urge the Commission to:

- Prioritize the reform of the HAS assessment process and accelerate the citation of harmonized standards.
- Ask CEN, CENELEC and ETSI to shorten processes of development of standards to reduce the time to publish standards.
- Ask CEN, CENELEC and ETSI to build a fast-track for specific deliverables when there is an urgency and the development of a standard is not feasible.
- Reinforce the role of ESOs and strengthen collaboration with international standardization bodies (ISO, IEC, ITU).

The ongoing revision of the New Legislative Framework (NLF) presents a critical opportunity to keep flexibility for all stakeholders and reinforce the strengths of the European standardization model. In particular, the revised NLF must continue to guarantee that:

- **Harmonized standards provide presumption of conformity** with essential legal requirements, and
- **Manufacturers retain the right to use alternative technical solutions**, provided these are duly justified in the technical documentation.

These principles ensure legal certainty, foster innovation, and maintain the flexibility that has made the NLF a success.

5. A Call for Partnership

CAPIEL remains committed to a strong, efficient, and innovative-friendly European standardization system.



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