

Standards

CEN – EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDISATION

European standards and other CEN deliverables

Introduction

The European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) is one of the three recognised European standardisation bodies. CEN develops voluntary European standards and other deliverables (workshop agreement, technical specification, technical report, etc.) covering a very wide range of sectors.

CEN members are the national standardisation bodies of EU and EEA countries.

European standards can be developed at the request of the European Commission to support the Single Market (technical integration) as well as other EU policies (consumer protection, sustainability, etc.). They can also be developed at the own-initiative of the industry and users.

Once adopted, European standards become national standards; existing national standards possibly conflicting with new European standards have to be withdrawn.

Relevance for the hospitality industry

European standards and other CEN deliverables can be very relevant to the sector if they cover services (or facilities) directly provided by hospitality businesses. They can also indirectly impact the sector if they deal with horizontal aspects of service provision or touch upon tourism-related issues.

Examples of European standards which concern the hospitality industry include:

- EN 13809:2003 / EN ISO 18513:2003 on the terminology of hotels and other types of accommodation
- EN 15288-2:2008 on safety requirements for the operation of swimming pools (including hotel pools)

State of progress

CEN and its members are currently preparing an action plan, in response to a formal mandate (M/371) given in 2005 by the Commission to CEN for the development of a standardisation work programme to support the internal market for services.

On the basis of this mandate, CEN worked over the period 2007/2008 on a number of projects (so-called “feasibility studies”) to assess the opportunity of standardisation activities in relation to certain services. Some of these projects are of interest to the hospitality industry:

- Project on “*Accessibility in transport and tourism services*” (project leader AFNOR, France)
- Project on “*Welcome and reception services*” (project leader AFNOR, France)
- Project CHESSS on a “*CEN Horizontal European Services Standardisation Strategy*” (project leader BSI, UK)

HOTREC position

High quality services are crucial for the hospitality industry but standards developed at European level on the initiative of EU institutions and/or standardisation bodies are not a necessary prerequisite for quality.

Furthermore, the need for standardisation of services, in particular hospitality services, is not as obvious as it is for goods. Hospitality services are generally custom-made and tailored to the customer. This is very different from goods where, for instance, the diameter of a tap must correspond exactly to the diameter of the tube it has to adjust to. Heterogeneity is a main competitive feature for the hospitality industry.

HOTREC, which is not against standards per se, believes that standardisation activities should remain fully market-driven. Initiatives should only come from the industry/users and be based on commercial considerations as well as on sound business impact assessments. HOTREC does not support in any manner a top-down approach (i.e. Brussels-centralised standardisation initiatives) for the development of standards covering services provided by hospitality businesses. The role of the standardisation bodies should be limited to assist with methodology and logistics in case the players on the market, including the industry concerned, ask for the development of a specific standard. This is all the more important that, although supposedly voluntary in principle, standards become easily mandatory.

HOTREC is also concerned by the lack of proper consultation of the sector at European level. As a matter of fact, HOTREC and many of its Member Associations have been encountering several difficulties over the last years in relation to the working procedures of standardisation bodies. At European level, membership of CEN Technical Committees is reserved for the national standardisation bodies. The European industry can only apply for "liaison status" (observer with no voting rights). Even when a liaison status is granted, consultation of the industry at European level can be by-passed under the argument that it has - supposedly - already taken place at national level.

Since years, HOTREC has drawn the attention of the European Commission to the difficulties the sector encountered and it hopes that its concerns will be taken into account in the ongoing reflection process to reform the European standardisation system.

See also:

HOTREC updated [position paper](#) of November 2009 on standards at European and International level

HOTREC [reply](#) to the Commission Communication on standards and innovation, April 2008

HOTREC [letter](#) to AFNOR / CEN on the project on "Welcome / Reception services", March 2008

HOTREC [letter](#) to AFNOR / CEN on the project on "Accessibility in transport and tourism", January 2008

HOTREC [letter](#) to BSI / CEN on the project "CHESSS", August 2007

Official references

Second Programming Mandate [M/371](#) addressed to CEN in the field of services, 19 July 2005

Programming Mandate [M/340](#) addressed to CEN in the field of services, 8 October 2003

See also:

Directive [2006/123/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market, O.J. L 376 of 27.12.06

CEN [website](#) on the service sector

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