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Standardization as Strategic Infrastructure: Technology Sectors Emphasize the Importance of International Standards

Competitiveness does not arise from internal corporate standards and specialized solutions, but rather from helping to shape common international rules. This is especially true for industries with a significant electrical engineering component, as shown by a first-of-its-kind special analysis by the German Standardisation Panel.

(Berlin/Hamburg/Frankfurt am Main, November 3, 2026) International and European norms and standards are a crucial part of the strategic infrastructure, particularly for companies in the electrical engineering, IT, energy, and automotive sectors. This is demonstrated by a special analysis conducted by the German Standardisation Panel in conjunction with the 2026 IEC General Meeting, which will take place in Hamburg in November.

Companies in these sectors attach significantly greater importance to European and international standards than the rest of the respondents. At the same time, they rate these as more important than national or internal company standards. “The results reveal a distinctive structural characteristic of technology-intensive industries,” says Michael Teigeler, DKE Managing Director for International Affairs. “They often operate in global markets and within complex value chains.” As a result, interoperability, regulatory harmonization, and market access depend heavily on common technical specifications that enable compatibility between products and systems across national borders. “Internationally recognized standards serve not only as a technical reference for them, but also as strategic catalysts for innovation, trade, and productivity growth,” Teigeler continues.

Interoperability—that is, the ability of different systems to work together—is one of the strongest arguments in favor of standardization. The special analysis shows that respondents from the relevant industries rate its importance significantly higher than the overall sample from. For

VDE Verband der Elektrotechnik Elektronik Informationstechnik e. V.
V.i.S.d.P. Head of Brand, Marketing and Communication: Regina Schnathmann
Merianstraße 28
63069 Offenbach am Main
www.vde.com
presse@vde.com

many of them, international electrotechnical standards form the basis for interoperable systems. Examples of this can be found in smart grids, industrial automation, and connected mobility.

4,000 experts at the IEC General Meeting

“In technology-driven industries, the benefits of standards are particularly evident. They help companies turn innovations into marketable products more quickly while ensuring compatibility and safety,” says Prof. Dr. Knut Blind, Professor of Innovation Economics at the Technical University of Berlin and head of the German Standardisation Panel. “Standards are at the heart of the quality infrastructure. They serve as the bridge between innovation and market acceptance and help organizations bring new technologies to market more quickly while ensuring compatibility, safety, and reliability.”

Electrical standards, for which the VDE-sponsored DKE is responsible in Germany, are developed at the international level by the IEC. Once a year, up to 4,000 experts from the international standards community gather for the IEC General Meeting—this year in November at the Hamburg exhibition halls. While the actual meeting is a closed-door event, there is a supporting program designed to introduce electrical engineering standardization to the interested public. Those interested can find more information on the website.

“Standardization, as the results clearly demonstrate, is a key mechanism for coordinating innovation and promoting the dissemination of technology in globally networked industries,” says Michael Teigeler, DKE Managing Director for International Affairs. “The technology-intensive industries examined show particularly clearly how standardization contributes to economic performance: it lays the foundation for scalable and interoperable markets.”

About the German Standardisation Panel

Since 2012, researchers at the Technical University of Berlin—currently led by Dr. Luzie Bettina Kromer—have been conducting an annual survey on behalf of the German Standardisation Panel to gauge the importance of standards among companies. The project is supported by the German Institute for Standardization (DIN e. V.) and the German Commission for Electrical, Electronic, and Information Technologies (DKE) under the patronage of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. To date, the German Standardisation Panel has incorporated data from more than 8,000 companies, including more than half of the DAX 40 corporations as well as many small and medium-sized enterprises. For this analysis, a special sample of respondents from the electrical engineering, IT, energy, and automotive sectors was drawn and compared with the overall sample collected over the course of the German Standardisation Panel’s existence to date.

Further information and the complete results can be found at www.normungspanel.de

About DKE:

The DKE German Commission for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies (DKE) is the national platform for about 10,000 experts from industry, science and public administration to elaborate standards and safety specifications for electrical engineering, electronics and information technology. Standards support global trade and, among other things, the safety, interoperability and functionality of products and systems. As a competence centre for electrotechnical standardization, the DKE represents the interests of German industry in European (CENELEC, ETSI) and international standardization organizations (IEC). In addition, the DKE provides comprehensive services in the field of standardization and VDE specifications.

For more information, visit www.dke.de

About VDE:

VDE, one of the largest technology organizations in Europe, has been regarded as a synonym for innovation and technological progress for more than 130 years. VDE is the only organization in the world that combines science, standardization, testing, certification, and application consulting under one umbrella. The VDE mark has been synonymous with the highest safety standards and consumer protection for more than 100 years.

Our passion is the advancement of technology, the next generation of engineers and technologists, and lifelong learning and career development “on the job”. Within the VDE network more than 2,000 employees at over 60 locations worldwide, more than 100,000 honorary experts, and around 1,500 companies are dedicated to ensuring a future worth living: networked, digital, electrical. Shaping the e-dialistic future.

The VDE (VDE Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies) is headquartered in Frankfurt am Main. For more information, visit www.vde.com

Press contact: Matthias Schmidt-Stein, Phone +49 69 6308-398, presse@vde.com