

Focus Group on Actions to Address Politicization of Standards Processes

Evolving Standards Landscape Summit

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Members: Focus Group on Actions to Address Politicization

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Scope: Focus Group on Actions to Address Politicization of Standards Processes

Considerations when defining “politicization:”

- Legitimate interest of policymakers in the development and use of standards
- The use of standards to pursue policy goals may be appropriate when consistent with broadly accepted approaches, but should not seek to **unduly** influence the standards development processes, particularly in independent standards organizations
- Policy makers may not fully understand the implications of their actions due to:
 - A limited understanding of how standards development actually works
 - Lack of awareness of the differences between standards development organizations and their processes
- Robust safeguards must be in place at standards organizations to ensure that standards development processes cannot easily be taken advantage of to favor any particular stakeholder interest
- Standards processes can be politicized knowingly or unknowingly

Examples that Further the Perception of Politicization in Standards Processes

1. European Standards Strategy and proposed legislation – inclusion of “European values;” steps to limit or exclude non-EU headquartered stakeholder participation
2. Efforts by the European Commission to force changes to governance structure and decision-making processes in ETSI
3. Inter-governmental organizations’ statements about standards reflecting shared democratic principles or values
4. Including standards participation in the scope of activities that would require a license from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security (*currently under revision*)
5. Legislative proposals in U.S. Congress that ostensibly seek to protect or promote U.S. leadership in international standards with actions inconsistent with a private-sector-led approach

Challenges and Opportunities: Politicization

These and other examples bring about concerns about how governments' engagement with standards development can undermine confidence in the independence and technical merits-based decision making that characterize most standards-setting activities.

Opportunities:

- Raise awareness among policymakers about standards development processes, how standards contribute to economic and technological development
- Engage and involve new stakeholders in standardization related activities, including standards development and related policy making

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you share the view that there is politicization of standards or that developments that might be perceived as politicization of standardization raise any concerns?
2. Has your organization encountered other challenges related to the politicization of standards processes, beyond those that we highlighted today?
3. What audience(s) would most benefit from education or awareness-building about standards processes?
4. What other actions can the standards community take to address the politicization of standardization while ensuring that the standards development processes continue to be open and welcoming to all interested stakeholders?