

Implementing Education and Engagement for Standardisation in Line with EU Values and Interests (Stand-EUVI): The Austrian Perspective



Austria as a good-practice case for Europe / EDU4Standards.eu AT policy brief

Purpose	Policy brief and recommendations by the Horizon Europe project EDU4Standards.eu for European policy makers and European Commission services concerned with prosperity and industrial strategy, startups, research and innovation, standardisation, skills, knowledge valorisation and higher education cooperation.
Primary addressee	EU policy makers. Implementation actors include industry, SMEs, standardisation bodies, education institutions, public research organisations, teachers, trainers, students, technology transfer offices and research services.
Scope	Twofold: standardisation education and standardisation engagement. Education refers to knowledge, skills and attitudes/responsibility developed through teaching, training, intended learning outcomes, the Innovative Teaching Concept on Standardisation and teacher support based on the Stand-EUVI perspective. Engagement refers to active participation in standardisation processes, including standards mapping, pre-standardisation, committee participation, CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements and the integration of standardisation into research and innovation projects.
Focus	Grounded in Stand-EUVI – standardisation in line with EU values and interests – the brief treats standardisation as an enabling capacity for European innovation, competitiveness, productivity, internationalisation, resilience, skills, knowledge valorisation and market uptake.
Case	Austria is used as a good-practice case, not as an exclusive or fully implemented model.
Evidence base	Publicly available Austrian and EU policy/governance documents, EDU4Standards.eu outputs, the EU Standardisation Strategy, Articles 2 TEU and 165 TFEU, the Code of Practice on Standardisation in the ERA, the European Standardisation Panel Survey, ISO and Menon Economics evidence, the 2025 EU SME Internationalisation Strategy study, the High-Level Forum on European Standardisation, CEN/CENELEC sources and the 2024 Commission mission letters.

Executive summary

Core message

Standardisation education and engagement are enabling capacities for Europe's competitiveness, innovation uptake, resilience and the green and digital transitions. Stand-EUVI – standardisation in line with EU values and interests – ensures that education and engagement in standardisation address not only technical procedures and market relevance, but also EU values under Article 2 TEU and strategic EU interests such as competitiveness, innovation, sustainability, resilience and the green and digital transitions.

Why action is needed now

Standards connect research, regulation, industry and markets. They support interoperability, trust, regulatory compliance, market access and deployment of innovation, especially where harmonised European standards support compliance with EU legislation through a presumption of conformity. The 2024 Commission mission letters, the Code of Practice on Standardisation in the ERA, the High-Level Forum on European Standardisation, the European Standardisation Panel Survey, Menon Economics evidence and the 2025 EU SME Internationalisation Strategy study all point to the need to build standardisation expertise earlier, more broadly and with stronger links to research, education, SMEs and industrial policy.

Austria as a good-practice case

Austria demonstrates feasibility without implying curriculum harmonisation. The Austrian Standardisation Strategy 2024 creates legitimacy; public-university governance offers routes through development plans and performance agreements; the University of Graz performance agreement 2025-2027 provides a concrete entry point for valorisation of knowledge through standardisation; cooperation with Austrian Standards International provides expertise; and EDU4Standards.eu provides ITCoS, Stand-EUVI intended learning outcomes, the Teacher Support Tool, Academic Standards Days, pilots and the draft CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement “Guideline for Education and Training on Standards and Standardisation”, for which public commenting closed on 9 July 2026.

What the European Commission can do

The Commission should support this agenda through enabling instruments, not prescriptive curricula and without limiting institutional or university autonomy: active support through funding, Horizon Europe and successor R&I programmes, knowledge valorisation policy, peer learning, European University Alliances, voluntary competence recognition, SME support networks and coordination with Member States and standardisation bodies.

Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes are more research results converted into usable standards and market applications in line with EU values and interests; faster standards development in strategic fields; stronger cooperation between education institutions, research organisations, standardisation bodies, industry and public authorities; improved SME access to standards-related support; and a larger, younger and more diverse pipeline of European standardisation experts.

1. Why standardisation education and engagement matter for EU competitiveness and innovation

The political rationale should start from European outcomes. Europe needs to turn research excellence into applied innovation, industrial strength, resilient supply and value chains, and trusted solutions for the green and digital transitions. Standardisation is one channel through which research, regulation, industry and markets are connected. It supports the circulation and deployment of knowledge and technology, scalability, interoperability and trust. It can reduce development risk for innovative products, support regulatory compliance and help new solutions reach European and international markets. Standardisation can also translate EU values and interests into technical, organisational and market practice.

The Commission’s 2024 mission letters provide a clear policy opening. The mission letter to Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, calls for faster development of systemic standards for resilience and the twin transitions. The mission letter to Ekaterina Zaharieva, Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, places research, innovation, science and technology at the centre of EU competitiveness and highlights skills, cooperation between academic, private and public-sector actors, University Alliances, innovative SMEs, startups and scale-ups.

Standardisation education and engagement sit precisely at this intersection. Education builds the knowledge, skills and responsibility needed to understand standards and standardisation processes. Engagement enables researchers, teachers, students, PhD students, technology transfer offices, research services, standardisation bodies, companies and SMEs to participate in standardisation, identify standardisation potential early in research and innovation, and translate research results into usable standards and market applications. Standardisation should also be understood as a global field in which EU values and interests must be articulated clearly and responsibly.

This is consistent with EU research and knowledge valorisation policy, in particular the Code of Practice on Standardisation in the European Research Area, which treats standardisation as a means of connecting research and innovation with market and societal uptake. It addresses higher education institutions and research organisations, including standardisation policies, career development, education and training, technology transfer offices, indicators and evaluation systems. The High-Level Forum on European Standardisation addresses horizontal issues including education and skills, and the RESSE project is developing a Pan-European Certificate on Standardisation to validate and recognise standardisation knowledge and skills across the EU and EFTA.

The European Standardisation Panel Survey reinforces the urgency. It gathered more than 3,700 responses, predominantly from industry, and highlights standardisation as a knowledge valorisation channel for research and innovation. It also points to the need to strengthen standardisation awareness, support and future expert capacity in strategic fields.

Recent evidence also strengthens the business-value rationale and points to a policy gap between the economic importance of standards and their treatment in SME support.

Key facts	Policy relevance
25% of labour-productivity growth from 1970 to 2019 was associated with standardisation in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands; if recent trends continue, the model estimates about EUR 2.6 billion in annual GDP/productivity-related gains.	Standardisation capability is a productivity and industrial-policy asset.

Around 9% of export growth from 1995 to 2019 was associated with standards; continuing recent trends corresponds to about EUR 2 billion in additional annual exports across the countries studied.	Standards support market access, value-chain integration and internationalisation.
The 2025 EU study mapped 251 Member-State SME internationalisation instruments and found that SMEs still describe the support landscape as complex and difficult to navigate.	Build on existing networks through a clear “no wrong door” approach.
The study shows that many instruments provide financial or advisory support, while external market-entry barriers, including standardisation-related issues, remain less systematically addressed.	Integrate standards expertise into both funding and advisory instruments.
Evaluation and performance-indicator coverage across mapped support instruments remains uneven.	Build baselines, monitoring and outcome evaluation into pilots from the start.

The 2023 Menon Economics study identifies five principal channels through which standards support productivity: interoperability, quality assurance, competition, innovation and international trade. Standards disseminate technical knowledge and create common platforms on which firms can innovate, cooperate and scale. The figures are model-based estimates for the six countries studied and should not be read as direct forecasts for the EU as a whole.

The study also identifies substantial positive externalities: benefits extend beyond the standardising firm to customers and value-chain partners. Because firms do not capture the full social return, private investment in standardisation may remain below the socially optimal level. This provides an economic rationale for public capacity-building and targeted support, comparable in principle to public support for R&D.

ISO case studies complement this macroeconomic evidence. They show that standards can create value across R&D, engineering, procurement, production, logistics, marketing, sales and services through more efficient operations, lower waste and procurement costs, reduced product-introduction risk, support for innovation, scale-up and market entry.

The 2025 Commission-commissioned SME Internationalisation Strategy study shows where this support should connect. It maps a broad but complex landscape of Member-State SME internationalisation instruments and indicates that external market-entry barriers, including standardisation-related issues, remain insufficiently addressed. Education and engagement should therefore link education institutions and standardisation bodies with existing SME advisory, export, innovation, cluster and networking services rather than create a parallel support architecture.

At the same time, the EU competence boundary and institutional autonomy must remain clear. The European Commission cannot prescribe curricula, harmonise national education systems or direct autonomous university choices. Under Article 165 TFEU, the Union may support and supplement Member State action while respecting national responsibility for teaching content and the organisation of education systems. The appropriate EU role is therefore enabling rather than harmonising: active support through funding, R&I programmes, guidance, peer learning, voluntary competence frameworks, knowledge valorisation policy and support for cooperation, while safeguarding institutional and university autonomy.

EDU4Standards.eu is directly relevant to this enabling approach. Its core added value is Stand-EUVI: standardisation education in line with EU values and interests. The project develops and pilots the Innovative Teaching Concept on

Standardisation (ITCoS), provides Stand-EUVI intended learning outcomes, makes teaching support available through the Teacher Support Tool, organises Academic Standards Days and pilots standardisation education and engagement formats. If finalised and taken up, the draft CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement “Guideline for Education and Training on Standards and Standardisation”, for which public commenting closed on 9 July 2026, can provide an additional common reference after the project ends.

2. Target state and addressees: who should act, and towards what?

The target state is not a single European curriculum and not a restriction of institutional or university autonomy. The target state is institutional capacity for standardisation education and engagement in line with EU values and interests. Policy instruments can support the early consideration of standardisation in research and innovation, its teaching where relevant to each discipline, its recognition as part of academic and professional careers, support by standardisation bodies and public instruments, and its connection to visible but supported demand from industry and SMEs. This requires active promotion of Stand-EUVI through funding, R&I programmes, knowledge valorisation instruments and cooperation support, while leaving institutional choices to universities and other education institutions.

This European policy brief has EU policy makers as its primary addressee. Other actors are essential for implementation, but they have different responsibilities and support needs.

Stakeholder	Role in this brief
European Commission	Enable through soft law, funding, R&I programmes, peer learning and knowledge valorisation instruments; connect standardisation education and engagement to competitiveness, research and innovation, skills and resilience priorities, while incorporating EU values and interests and respecting institutional and university autonomy.
Member States	Translate EU orientation into national strategies, governance instruments, funding mechanisms and incentive structures.
Education institutions, including HEIs and schools	Can anchor standardisation in teaching, research support, technology transfer, knowledge valorisation, recognition and institutional strategies, where relevant and in line with institutional profiles and autonomy.
Standardisation bodies	Provide expertise, access to standards and standardisation processes, guest lecturers, pathways into committees and support for CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements or pre-standardisation.
Companies and SMEs	Provide demand signals, cases, guest lectures, internships, thesis topics, projects and engagement pathways. SMEs should not merely be expected to act; they require support, awareness and access structures.
Teachers, trainers, TTOs and research services	Act as multipliers and operational connectors between research, teaching, standardisation bodies, innovation projects and company needs.

Students and early-career researchers	Build competences and participate in future standardisation ecosystems as the next generation of experts.
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3. Why Austria is a useful good-practice case for implementation

Austria is not presented as a fully implemented model or as the only relevant Member State case. It is a good-practice case because several elements that are often separated can be connected through existing structures.

1. National policy framework. The Austrian Standardisation Strategy 2024 creates an explicit opening for standardisation in education and higher education. It gives national legitimacy to a topic that is otherwise easily perceived as technical, optional or external to academia.
2. Higher education governance. Public universities conclude three-year performance agreements with the Federal Ministry; development plans and the Gesamtösterreichischer Universitätsentwicklungsplan provide strategic and institutional routes. These instruments can translate policy objectives into institutional priorities, measures and funding-related commitments. The different governance of universities of applied sciences and schools should be addressed separately in the Austrian brief.
3. A concrete university entry point. The University of Graz performance agreement 2025-2027 includes valorisation of knowledge through standardisation, including a status analysis of the standardisation situation and an awareness measure. This shows that standardisation can be linked to existing university governance, funding and knowledge valorisation instruments.
4. Cooperation with Austrian Standards International. Cooperation between ASI and education institutions provides access to expertise, practice, standardisation bodies, guest lectures, awareness formats and teaching-related activities. The First Austrian Academic Standards Day showed that standardisation can be addressed across universities, universities of applied sciences, policy, industry, research funding, academic teaching and student engagement.
5. EDU4Standards.eu implementation basis. ITCoS, Stand-EUVI intended learning outcomes, the Teacher Support Tool, Academic Standards Days, pilots and the draft CWA provide transferable European outputs that can be connected to national and institutional implementation routes.
6. Industry and SME relevance. Companies benefit when standards support efficiency, innovation, interoperability, risk reduction, market access and competitiveness. Existing SME internationalisation channels offer a practical opportunity to embed standards-related advice, market intelligence and access to expertise. For SMEs, this potential requires public support, awareness-raising and accessible pathways rather than simply expecting them to engage on their own. Austria's Industrial Strategy 2035 reinforces the relevance of key technologies, competitiveness and industrial transformation; standardisation should be linked to this agenda as an enabling capacity for market readiness, scalability and international connectivity.

Austria is useful for the European brief because it demonstrates feasibility. It shows how European objectives can be translated into national and institutional action without interfering with Member State responsibility for education.

4. Gap to target state: institutional capacity for education and engagement

The central gap is not the absence of individual initiatives. The central gap is the absence of stable institutional capacity for standardisation education and engagement.

Visibility in education institutions. Standardisation in line with EU values and interests is not yet systematically visible in education institutions. Work in standardisation bodies, technical committees, CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements, teaching, knowledge transfer or research valorisation is often difficult to recognise in reporting, teaching portfolios, research assessment or academic activity frameworks.

Recognition and incentives. Standardisation-related work may be treated as voluntary engagement or transfer, but not necessarily as a recognised contribution to research, education, innovation or societal impact. Ministries and institutions should therefore consider mechanisms in career models, performance agreements, teaching portfolios and research assessment that support accountable standardisation engagement.

Curricular integration. Standardisation appears in individual courses and initiatives, but not yet as a systematic element of research-led education. A single mandatory course for all students would not be appropriate. Flexible formats are needed: guest lectures, short modules, case studies, electives, microcredentials, project-based learning, PhD skill development, summer schools and train-the-trainer formats.

Teacher support. Many teachers are not opposed to standardisation; they are unfamiliar with it and often not used to thinking in terms of EU values and interests. They need concrete materials, discipline-specific examples, access to standards, guest lecturers, teaching modules, learning outcomes and recognition of the time invested.

TTO and research-service capacity. Research projects increasingly need early standards mapping, standardisation readiness, pre-standardisation planning and pathways into committees or CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements. Without support structures, these tasks are often left to individual researchers.

Expert pipeline. The expert pipeline is a strategic concern. The ageing expert community makes standardisation education and engagement a matter of Europe's industrial capacity, technological sovereignty and resilience, not merely a niche teaching topic.

SME support. Industry and SMEs are part of the solution, but not the first addressee. SMEs may need support from public programmes, standardisation bodies, chambers, associations and education institutions to engage effectively.

Sustainable use of EDU4Standards.eu outputs. EDU4Standards.eu outputs are available, but they need anchoring. The teaching concept, intended learning outcomes, Teacher Support Tool, pilots, Academic Standards Days and draft CWA will only become sustainable if connected to governance instruments, teacher support, research services, technology transfer structures and industry cooperation.

5. Strategic recommendations by level of action

R1. Align EU soft-law instruments with Commission priorities on competitiveness, innovation and resilience

The **Commission** should use existing instruments, in particular the Code of Practice on Standardisation in the ERA, to position standardisation education and engagement as enabling capacities for prosperity, industrial strategy, research and innovation, skill development, SME competitiveness, resilience and the green and digital transitions. The objective is not curriculum harmonisation, but capacity-building across Member States and institutions.

R2. Support transferable pilots that can be anchored nationally and institutionally

The Commission should support pilots through active funding and R&I programme instruments without prescribing curricula or limiting institutional autonomy. EDU4Standards.eu already provides a basis through ITCoS, Stand-EUVI intended learning outcomes, the Teacher Support Tool, Academic Standards Days, pilots and the draft CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement "Guideline for Education and Training on Standards and Standardisation", for which public commenting closed on 9 July 2026. These resources can support modular teaching materials, open educational resources (OER), train-the-trainer formats, microcredentials, summer schools, guest lectures and European University Alliance formats.

R3. Encourage Member States to use national governance and incentive instruments

Member States should identify where standardisation can be anchored in existing governance, funding and incentive mechanisms. Austria illustrates one route: national standardisation policy creates legitimacy, while development plans

and performance agreements can translate this into institutional priorities, measures and funding-related commitments.

R4. Make standardisation engagement visible in research funding, innovation and knowledge valorisation

In **higher education institutions and public research organisations**, research and education are closely linked. Policy instruments can support the early consideration of standardisation in research projects and research-led teaching. Funding guidance and R&I programmes can encourage standards mapping, standardisation readiness, stakeholder engagement, access to standards, participation in technical committees, CWA pathways and pre-standardisation activities. This would help convert research results into usable standards and market applications without interfering with national education competence or institutional and university autonomy.

R5. Recognise standardisation in responsible research assessment and competence frameworks

In **higher education institutions** engagement in standardisation in line with EU values and interests could be made visible in career development, research assessment, teaching portfolios and knowledge valorisation frameworks, where this fits institutional profiles and autonomous governance arrangements. This should be qualitative, contextual and evidence-based, for example through a Standardisation Contribution Profile documenting committee participation, standards-related outputs, teaching, knowledge valorisation and cooperation. It should not become a simplistic quantitative “stand-factor”. Voluntary European competence recognition, such as a Pan-European Certificate on Standardisation, can complement this by making competences portable and visible in the labour market.

R6. Integrate standardisation into SME internationalisation and business-support services

Companies, SMEs, chambers and industry associations should be supported in making demand for standardisation competences visible. Public programmes should connect education institutions and standardisation bodies with the Enterprise Europe Network, clusters, chambers, industry associations and national or regional export and innovation agencies through a clear “no wrong door” route. Standards-related support should combine financial and non-financial instruments: access to standards and expertise, standards mapping, market-specific requirements, sector advice, business cases, partner matching, internships, thesis topics and pathways into committees or CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements.

6. Implementation anchors and safeguards

- Start from European outcomes, not from activities alone: competitiveness, innovation uptake, resilience, twin transitions, skills, knowledge valorisation and the expert pipeline.
- Respect the EU competence boundary and institutional autonomy: the Commission enables, supports and coordinates through funding, R&I programmes, guidance and cooperation instruments; Member States and education institutions remain responsible for curricula and institutional implementation.
- Use the twofold scope consistently: education builds competences; engagement connects these competences to research, innovation, standardisation bodies and market uptake.
- Do not place industry at the top of the policy hierarchy. Industry and SMEs are essential implementation partners, but SMEs in particular require public support, access structures and awareness. Use existing SME internationalisation and innovation networks and apply a “no wrong door” principle.
- Use EDU4Standards.eu outputs as starting points rather than duplicating them: ITCoS, Stand-EUVI intended learning outcomes, the Teacher Support Tool, Academic Standards Days, pilots and the draft CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement “Guideline for Education and Training on Standards and Standardisation”.
- Use low-threshold formats to open the topic. Academic Standards Days and comparable awareness formats can help newcomers engage before moving to systematic questions of standardisation, research and education.
- Avoid replacing citation-based reductionism with standardisation-based reductionism. Recognition should be accountable and evidence-based, but not reduced to a narrow metric.

- Differentiate implementation contexts. Public universities, universities of applied sciences, schools, research organisations and companies operate under different governance and funding frameworks.
- Connect financial and non-financial support. Funding alone is insufficient; standards-related market intelligence, sector-specific advice, access to expertise and partner networks should accompany it.
- Design monitoring from the outset. Establish baselines and track institutional uptake, SME access, market-entry pathways and value-chain participation rather than relying only on activity counts.

7. Expected outcomes and next steps

The recommendations form a connected implementation chain. EU guidance and funding establish standardisation in line with EU values and interests as part of research training, knowledge valorisation and career development; national governance instruments translate this orientation into institutional priorities; EDU4Standards.eu resources and pilots turn Stand-EUVI policy intentions into teaching and engagement formats; research funding and knowledge valorisation instruments move standards mapping and pre-standardisation earlier in R&I projects; competence recognition makes standardisation knowledge visible and portable; and supported industry and SME partnerships provide real cases and pathways into practice.

Together, these actions should support five European outcomes: more research results converted into usable standards and market applications that are in line with EU values and interests; faster development of standards in strategic fields; stronger cooperation between education institutions, research organisations, standardisation bodies, industry and public authorities; improved SME productivity, value-chain integration and international market access; and a larger, younger and more diverse pipeline of European standardisation experts who understand standardisation as a means of promoting EU values and interests.

This policy brief does not claim to provide exact impact measurement. That should be addressed in a follow-up project. The first implementation phase should establish baselines; later programmes can define realistic European and national targets. The SME study indicates that evaluation and performance-indicator coverage remain uneven across mapped support instruments; monitoring and evaluation should therefore be designed into pilots and support instruments from the beginning.

Possible implementation indicator	Illustrative evidence to be developed
Institutional anchoring	Number or share of participating education institutions or public research organisations that include standardisation in strategies, development plans, teaching curricula, performance agreements, knowledge valorisation policies or comparable instruments.
Research and innovation uptake	Number or share of relevant EU-funded projects applying standards mapping, standardisation-readiness assessments, pre-standardisation activities or contributions to committees and CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements.
Teaching capacity	Number of teachers trained, modules introduced, students reached and programmes using EDU4Standards.eu learning outcomes or teaching resources.

Competence and expert pipeline	Number of students and early-career researchers receiving recognised standardisation competences and later participating in companies, standardisation bodies, R&I projects or technical committees.
Industry and SME engagement	Number of company-supported cases, guest lectures, internships, thesis projects, student projects and job profiles explicitly requiring or valuing standardisation competence.
SME market access and value-chain integration	Number or share of SME support instruments integrating standards advice, standards mapping, access to expertise and market-specific requirements; number of supported SMEs progressing towards new markets, partnerships or value chains.
Support visibility and effectiveness	Share of relevant instruments using a “no wrong door” referral route; share with baselines, performance indicators or evaluation; user feedback on accessibility and relevance.

8. Conclusion

Standardisation education and engagement should be understood as enabling capacities for Europe’s competitiveness, innovation uptake, resilience and green and digital transitions. Through Stand-EUVI, these capacities are developed in line with EU values and interests, ensuring that standardisation is not treated only as a technical or market instrument, but also as a means of connecting research excellence with deployment, market access, trust, interoperability and societal impact.

The economic case is substantial. Standards are associated with productivity and export growth, and their benefits extend beyond individual firms to customers and value-chain partners. At the same time, implementation gaps persist: SMEs face a complex support landscape, and standardisation remains insufficiently addressed among external market-entry barriers. The policy response should therefore connect standardisation education and engagement with research, innovation, knowledge valorisation and SME internationalisation instruments.

Austria provides a useful good-practice case for the European policy discussion. It shows how national standardisation policy, higher education governance, cooperation with a national standards body, EDU4Standards.eu outputs and supported industry engagement can be connected without EU curriculum harmonisation. The case is not exclusive and should be complemented by experiences from other Member States.

For the European Commission, the central policy implication is clear: standardisation education and engagement should be supported through enabling instruments, not prescriptive curricula. This includes guidance, funding, peer learning, competence recognition, research and knowledge valorisation incentives, and support for national and institutional anchoring. Without such investment, Europe risks weakening its capacity to shape future standards, markets and technologies. Internationally, this also means strengthening Europe’s ability to articulate EU values and interests in global standardisation. Through mechanisms such as the Vienna and Frankfurt Agreements, European and international standardisation can be better aligned, duplication can be reduced and Europe’s competitiveness beyond the Single Market can be supported.

Sources and public evidence basis

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