

5 Steps to Adopt an ISO Standard Under the Vienna Agreement

A Guide by Danish Standards for the European Commission
2023-2025 EISMEA EUACT-AI

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Understanding the Vienna Agreement

1. Introduction

This guide is composed by Danish Standards as part of the 2023-2025 project EUACT-AI for the European Commission EISMEA service. It is intended for individuals from SMEs and others involved in standardization who are not highly experienced. It is particularly aimed at those who are new to the Vienna Agreement. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the implementation of the Vienna Agreement. The aim is to describe the process in practice and ensure collaboration between global and European standardization efforts.

2. Technical Cooperation Between ISO and CEN

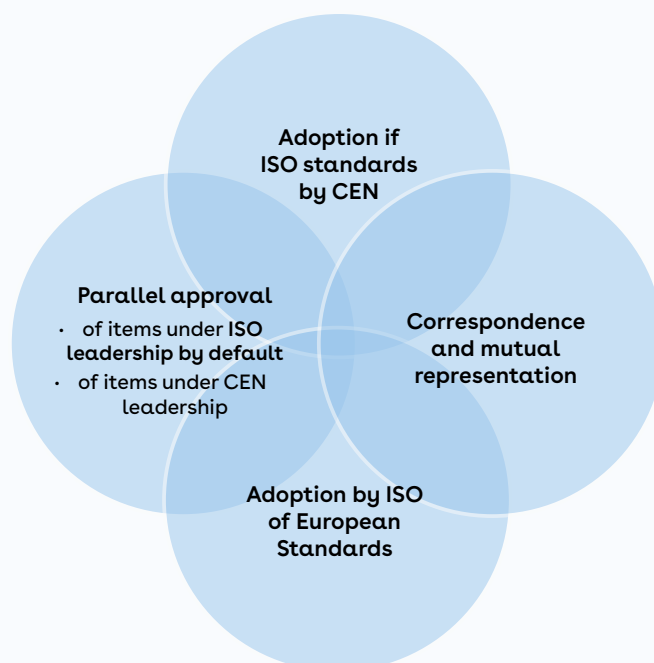
The Vienna Agreement is a formal cooperation agreement between the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). It was signed in 1991 and is designed to prevent the duplication of standardization activities, increase transparency and streamline the development of international and European standards.

The Vienna Agreement describes the different modes of cooperation between ISO and CEN and how information can be shared between them, as illustrated below.

It is a CEN policy that priority is given to cooperation with ISO and alignment of European standards with international standards whenever appropriate. This is the so-called "International first" principle, which helps ensure that European standards are harmonized with global standards, reducing technical barriers to trade and promoting alignment between products and services globally.

Link to the Vienna agreement text and implementation guidelines can be found here: <https://www.cencenelec.eu/europe-an-standardization/international-cooperation/iso-and-iec/>

A similar agreement exists between CENELEC and IEC. In the case of a Joint Technical Committee (JTC) between CEN and CENELEC, the committee follows either the Vienna or Frankfurt agreement.



3. Modes of Cooperation Between ISO and CEN

3.1 Correspondence and Meetings

The Vienna Agreement outlines two key methods of cooperation between ISO and CEN: cooperation by correspondence and cooperation through mutual representation at meetings.

Cooperation by Correspondence

Information is exchanged between ISO and CEN committees, including

- Work programs
- Draft standards
- Results of voting
- Resolutions from meetings

Committee managers and secretaries from both organizations also check whether new projects can be developed under the Vienna Agreement either by adoption or parallel process.

Cooperation Through Mutual Representation at Meetings

Representatives from a standardization organization can attend meetings in another standardization organization (e.g., a person from a CEN technical committee can attend a meeting in an ISO technical committee) when there are questions of common interest. However, representatives must be formally appointed by their respective ISO or CEN committee.

It's important to note that while mutual representation is possible, it may not always be necessary and is decided on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, common meetings between ISO and CEN are not preferred, but consecutive meetings in the same location may be beneficial.



3.2 Adoption

ISO and CEN can adopt each other's published standards by submitting them to their own adoption procedures.

Ideally, standards are adopted without changes (identical standards). If changes are needed, there are two options:

- Preferred: Revision of the publication using parallel ISO-CEN approval.
- Alternative: Adoption of a modified version of the available publication.

Key Aspects

The agreement recognizes the primacy of ISO standards over CEN standards, which is in line with World Trade Organization rules and is also called the "international first" principle.

It allows for the exchange of information and increases the transparency of CEN work to ISO members.

The agreement helps ensure that work is not duplicated at regional and international levels.

When an International Standard is simultaneously approved as a European Standard, it automatically becomes a national standard for all CEN members.

5 Steps to Adopt an ISO Standard Under the Vienna Agreement



1. Identification and Agreement

CEN identifies a relevant ISO standard for adoption and agrees with ISO for the adoption process.



2. Translation

The ISO standard undergoes an 8-week translation period, primarily for the German and French versions.



3. Vote

A 12-week vote is conducted among CEN members to approve adopting the ISO standard.



4. Technical Review

CEN technical committees review the standard to ensure it meets European legislative and market requirements



5. Publication

Upon approval, the standard is published as an EN ISO standard, replacing any conflicting national standards in CEN member countries.

3.3 Parallel Work

The parallel process in the Vienna Agreement facilitates the simultaneous development and approval of standards by ISO and CEN. Here's how it works:

Initiation and Leadership

The process begins with a decision to develop a standard in parallel, which should be made as early as possible. ISO lead is the preferred option, but CEN lead is possible in exceptional cases.

Development Process

The committee responsible for the lead organisation drafts the document according to its policies and procedures. ISO and CEN must approve the new work item in their respective systems.

Upon approval, the standard is published simultaneously as an EN ISO standard.

Alignment and Adoption

The goal is to produce identical standards in both organizations. CEN members automatically adopt EN ISO standards as national standards and withdraw conflicting national standards.

This parallel process ensures synchronization between ISO and CEN, reduces duplication of work, and promotes the alignment of international and European standards.

5 Steps to Parallel Work Under the Vienna Agreement



1. Initial Coordination

Identify potential joint standard development and establish lead organization (typically ISO).



2. Draft Development

Create initial committee draft (CD) and circulate draft to both CEN and ISO technical committees.



3. Technical Consultation

Perform technical quality checks and resolve potential conflicts or differences.



4. Synchronized Review and Voting

Conduct parallel review processes and synchronize voting stages.



5. Final Approval and Publication

Conduct final technical validation and obtain formal approvals from both CEN and ISO.