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**MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND GERMAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS  
ON THE TOPIC OF STANDARDISATION**

**25 JANUARY 2019**

*This is not an exact or complete verbatim but rather an overview of the topics that were covered during the discussion. It has not been validated nor approved by the participants present at the discussion.*

**Participants:** [redacted] Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (*Zentralverband Elektrotechnik- und Elektronikindustrie* / ZVEI); [redacted] Mechanical Engineering Industry Association (*Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau* / VDMA); [redacted] Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (*Zentralverband Elektrotechnik- und Elektronikindustrie* / ZVEI); [redacted] Federation of German Industries (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* / BDI).

**Commission:** Mr Martin Selmayr (Secretary-General); Mr Marcel Haag, Director, (Secretariat-General, Directorate D, Jobs, Growth and Investment); Ms Cristiane Canenbley (Member of Cabinet of President Juncker); [redacted] Secretariat-General); [redacted] ); [redacted] DG GROW).

On 25 January 2019, the Secretary-General met with the representatives of three German business associations to discuss the European standardisation process and the New Legislative Framework (NLF). The meeting was set as a follow-up to the 'Save the Single Market' event, which the associations had jointly organised on 6 November 2018.

[redacted] opened the discussion by underlining the importance of standardisation for the competitiveness of industry. In particular, he highlighted the need to ensure interoperability of European products and services, including at international level. In view of the accelerated pace of changes facing the industry (*Industrie 4.0*) and the intensifying competition at international level (primarily with China), [redacted] considers it increasingly important that the standardisation system can react faster to new developments. Speed is of essence when trying to succeed in international competition.

[redacted] cited cybersecurity as an example where standardisation can play a major role. In this context, he noted that he still sees room for improvement regarding the state of play of the negotiations on the Cybersecurity Act. In particular, he criticised the change in focus away

from the development of product requirements and towards a rather one-sided focus on the securitisation of critical public infrastructure. Responding to this, the Commission representatives acknowledged the change of focus in the negotiations on the Cybersecurity Act, pointing to the high degree of politicisation surrounding the topic, especially in Germany.

█ also highlighted the importance of standardisation for an efficient roll-out of *Industrie 4.0* applications. In this context, she welcomed the European Commission's Communication on harmonised standards, published on 22 November 2018, addressing *inter alia* the problem of backlog in the listing of harmonised standards. She confirmed that a substantial part of the backlog has been reduced already, while pointing out that some bottlenecks remain:

- (1) industry has been waiting for listings in the machinery area for over a year;
- (2) the transition of the old Directive to the new Medical Devices Regulations poses a major challenge;
- (3) while the role of 'Harmonised Standards Consultants' (HAS) is welcome there are timing issues with regard to the work of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and compliance with Annex Z requirements;
- (4) and the new role of China at these organisations with an increased presence in the relevant secretariats.

Mr. Selmayr thanked the associations for organising the conference 'Save the Single Market', which he views as a great catalyst for a series of broader discussions on the Single Market. He noted that there are two sides to the debate. On the one hand, there is the technical level, focusing on an efficient, faster and politically sensible delivery of the standardisation process. On the other hand, there are strategic/geopolitical considerations that broadly fall under the category of '*Industriepolitik*', which has gradually re-emerged as a prominent concept in German and European politics.

Addressing the technical side first, Mr Selmayr informed the associations that in the past months the Commission put in place a number of measures to address the backlog of harmonised standards and the latest information as well as the feedback received from the associations suggest that the backlog has indeed been significantly reduced. Mr Selmayr also responded to sector specific problems, asking that industry should give the Commission the necessary time to ensure that the changes take effect. He promised that the services will look into the concrete issues mentioned with regard to the listing of standards for mechanical engineering and medical devices.

In this context, █ reconfirmed the Commission's interest in a close cooperation with industry on this matter. █ clarified that while the Commission will look into the machinery and ISO/IEC issues with regard to China, the work of the HAS consultants just started and the compliance with Annex Z (i.e. essential requirements with EU legislation) is critical for speedy translation of ISO/IEC provisions into EU standards. As regards medical devices, a priority effort with industry has been done in order to scale work according to the most patient- and industry-critical standards (from over 100 to currently ca. 30 standards).

Coming back to the strategic/geopolitical aspects of standardisation, Mr. Selmayr emphasised the important role of the Single Market, describing it as Europe's key asset when competing for global standards. He noted that while the Single Market has an important internal focus, it always carries with it a careful consideration for the international dimension. He also pointed to the Commission's Single Market Communication published in November last year, which pays particular attention to this international dimension and mentioned the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Japan, standing witness to the Single Market's power of attraction abroad.

M. Selmayr confirmed that the European Commission continues to defend the principles of an open and free economy also when it comes to competition from third countries such as China or India. However, he also stressed that an open and free economy does not coincide with a naïve and careless economic policy. In contrast, if the European Union wants to uphold these principles also internationally, it needs to be able to use the market power of its Single Market to its advantage. For standardisations this means that the EU needs to be faster and more strategic than in the past. To this end, Mr Selmayr invited the associations to continue the close cooperation with the Commission and to work together to set global standards in Europe.