



## **Europe and the global relevance of standards**

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Standards are powerful tools that benefit trade, the structuring of markets, the clarification of transactions and the support of public policies.

After a period of advance powered by Europe under the impulsion of the New Approach, the trend towards internationalisation of standards can now be expected to increase, in spite of the difficulties associated with different relations between legislation and standards in Europe and the rest of the world.

The Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) makes international standards one of privileged tools for the facilitation of world trade.

The global relevance of standards is a policy which ISO has recently adopted and integrated into its strategy.

In sectors where a strong link exists between legislation and standardization, such as the occupational health and safety sector, Europe's challenge in connection with the global relevance is to maintain the current safety level during the transition to ISO standards and in face of emerging private regulations.