

KNU

Coordinating unit for environmental organisations' work on standardisation

KNU¹, the coordinating unit for environmental organisations' work on standardisation,

is a joint project by the German League for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection², the German association of environmental protection action groups³ and the German branch of Friends of the Earth (BUND)⁴. Organisationally the unit is attached to the BUND.

The coordinating unit has been working since 1996 to increase environmental organisations' influence on standardisation and to see that better consideration is given to environmental aspects. By coordinating collaboration between environmental organisations the latter should become more politically integrated in standardisation.

Representatives from environmental protection organisations are active in various committees of the DIN⁵ German standards institute and the DKE⁶, the German organisation responsible for the elaboration of standards in electrical engineering and electronics. The representatives concentrate on standards bodies of relevance for the environment (e.g. standards for thermal insulation, sustainable construction, environmental management, solid recovered fuels and nanotechnology).

ecological optimisation of standards
ecological control of standards
democratic principles for standards

¹ Koordinierungsbüro Normungsarbeit der Umweltverbände

² Deutscher Naturschutzring (DNR)

³ Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz (BBU)

⁴ Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland

⁵ Deutsches Institut für Normung

Tasks of the coordinating unit

The KNU unit promotes experts from environmental organisations participating in standardisation by

researching which bodies are currently working on or intending to work on standardisation plans. The KNU arranges contact between the expert and the standards committee and supports organisations sending experts to the body concerned.

The KNU supports link-up between experts by

establishing contacts between experts and organisations' working parties (e.g. on protection against air pollution). Experience gained in the working party is then passed on to the organisation concerned; and

annually organising meetings at which delegates discuss and reach agreement on specialist issues. Other interested parties are also invited to attend.

The KNU represents the interests of environmental organisations by

reporting on their experience at congresses and other events. In doing so the unit calls for environmental protection organisations to be more greatly involved in standardisation; and

commenting on draft standards and standardisation issues dealt with in EU Commission documents.

⁶ Deutsche Elektrotechnische Kommission

Transfer of information by the KNU

“New” parties interested in standards work are advised personally by the KNU.

The KNU produces a monthly letter which is sent to all interested parties. It contains information on:

- documents and standards procedures;
- the standards policy of the German government and DIN standards institute;
- political developments and discussions on standards at European level;
- developments in environmental protection organisations in other EU countries; and
- environmental labelling activities.

The KNU supports collaboration with European environmental protection organisations

For environmental organisations to be able to exert an effective influence on standardisation at European level the KNU works closely with the European Environmental Citizens Organisation for Standardisation (ECOS) and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB).

Looking to the future

Standardisation is an important instrument for environmental protection. To make better use of this instrument, environmental protection organisations ought to be more intensely involved in standardisation in future. The KNU is committed to seeing environmental protection concerns more strongly incorporated in standardisation.

In order to achieve this the KNU strives

- to send even more representatives from environmental organisations to even more standards committees;
- to acquire specialist experts who participate in hearings and make precise statements on standardisation procedures and drafts on norms; and
- to inform the authorities responsible, including those in the European parliament and German Bundestag, on problems in the standardisation process, and to make efforts to see these problems are removed.

The KNU furthermore sees a need for

- optimally improving standards ecologically by calling for environmental protection requirements which apply to all standards;
- ecological control of standards through scrutiny of statements about norms which may be environmentally harmful; and
- applying democratic principles to standards by having transparent, public standardisation procedures.

If you are interested in supporting these goals, please contact the KNU.

The KNU can be contacted through Natalie Eckelt at the BUND

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