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National identity as core concept for the European standardization procedure

Stoica Elena^{a*}

^a*Dambului St, Bucharest, Romania*

Abstract

It is known that the numerical expansion of the population and the diversity within the European Union (EU) change the complexity of the standardisation process. A socio-demographic analysis revealed the items frequently mentioned among the most important sources of European and National identities that has to be considered when standardize services. Another issue of the study is the fact that both the standardization process and the balance between National and European identities are in fact dynamic, changing over time. Starting with this paper, we can later explain how the globalization of economies influences the notion of National identity.

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1. Reasons behind slow standardization

Services sectors comprise a wide range of economic activities, from banking, education, IT and transport, to childcare, cleaning and hospitality. The freedom of services movement is one of the foundations of the single market - replacing national and often conflicting standards - along with the freedoms of movement of persons, goods and capital. In one of these areas, respectively goods, the European standardization system has already made an important contribution, principally by means of the “New Approach” to legislation, designed to prevent the creation of technical barriers to trade.

* Stoica Elena. Tel.:+4-345-543-3242.

E-mail address: elesto.elesto@gmail.com

The European Council of 4 February 2011 confirmed that standardization is a crucial framework condition to boost private investment in innovative services and that standardization processes should be accelerated, simplified and modernized. For that, the ESOs should reduce the average time to develop European standardization deliverables requested by the Commission (50%) until 2020. In addition, the Regulation will streamline and shorten the procedure for objections to a harmonized standard.

Despite the increasing growth of the standardization provision role, standardization activity has been controlled towards local development, with the vast majority of service standards developed at national, rather than European level. In this situation we raise the question relating to the slow standardization process and the reason behind that. To offer pertinent answers, we decided to investigate also the impact of diverse national identity and the integrated migration process studies at the EU level.

2. Understanding the diversity

2.1. Standardization provision challenges a top to bottom concept

The role of services standards is to support the development of the single market for services as the Project 2020[†] states and has been increasingly promoted and formally recognized by the European Commission in 2006, through its Directive on Services, as well as in other important legislation[‡]. The revision of the European legislation on standardization has been elected as one of the 12 priority actions of the Single Market Act[§]. In order to avoid fragmentation of the market by proliferating national service standards and to facilitate the cross-border provision of services, standardisation should be developed at European level, taking full account of market needs^{**}. So, in 2013, to ensure that Europe's standardisation system can meet business' challenges, the Commission proposed a reform package^{††} including a new Regulation on European standardisation which took effect from 1 January 2013. This reform aimed at increasing the system's inclusiveness, speed, responsiveness, transparency, flexibility and scope. Starting with this study, we can later explain how the globalization of economies influences the notion of National identity.

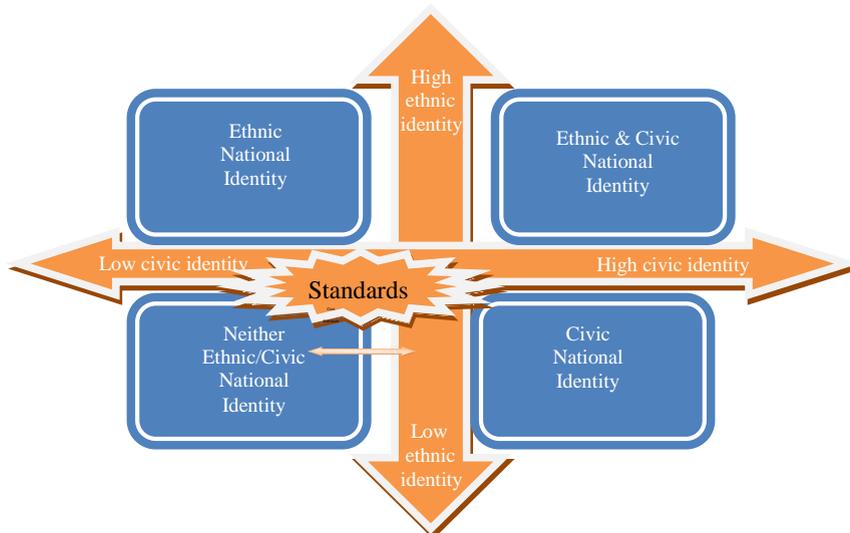


Fig. 1. The two dimensions of national identity (Cohen,1994) and the standardization policy

[†] A strategic vision for European standards: Moving forward to enhance and accelerate the sustainable growth of the European economy by 2020

[‡] COM (2011) 0206: Single Market Act, Proposal for a regulation on European standardization

[§] COM/2011/0206: Single Market Act, Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence "Working together to create new growth", Point 2.5.

^{**} Regulation 1025/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European standardisation OJ L 316/12

^{††} COM(2014) 500: „The annual Union work programme for European standardisation for 2015”

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