CEN and CENELEC Technical Body Officers Event

Navigating Conflict and Building Consensus

Content

▶European Standardization landscape

▶Role of Technical Body Officers

▶How soft skills can help progressing the debates

▶Code of Conduct

▶A word on CCMC

System

Role

Reality

Skills Behaviour

Support

European Standardization landscape

What is a standard?

Technical documents designed to be used as a guideline or definition, which are:

- Produced by all interested parties in a transparent, open and consensus-based process
- intended for a common and repeated use
- voluntary in use
- approved by a recognized body
- possible tools to underpin legislation

CEN-CENELEC System

Interacting with national and international levels

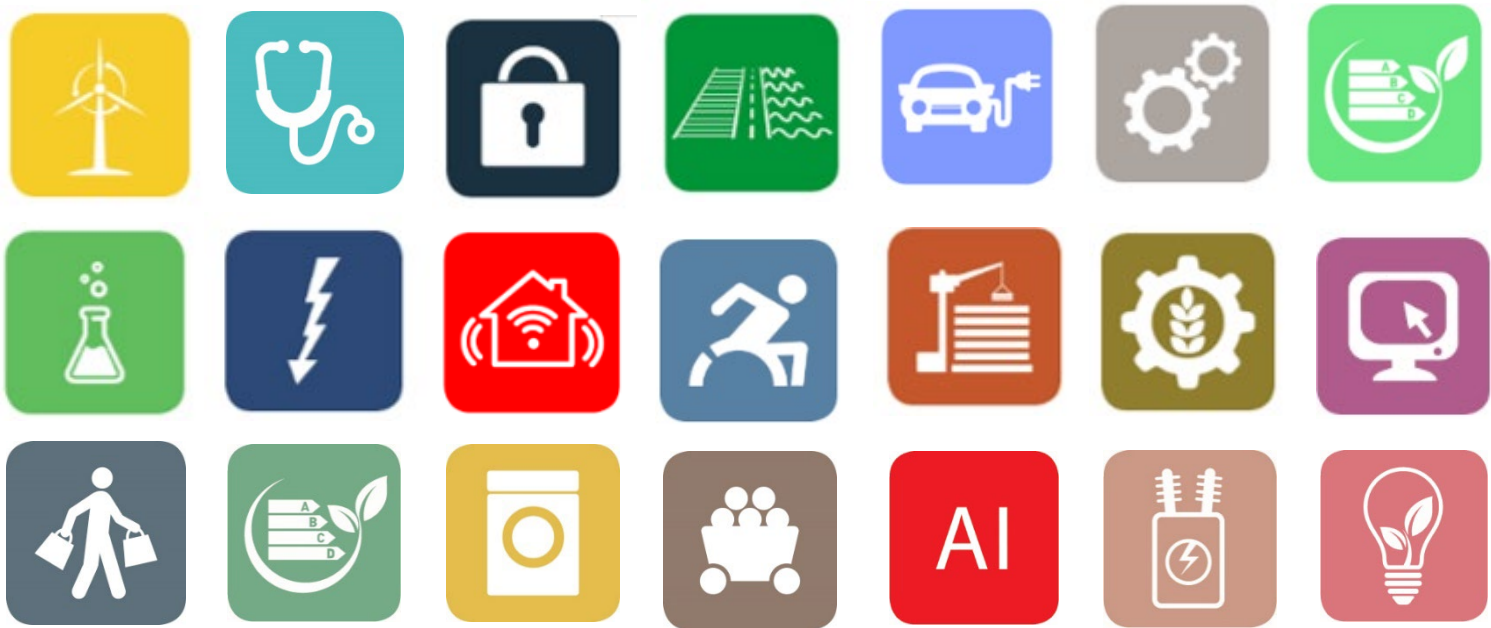34 national Member countries

International

European

National

Cooperation Agreements

National delegation principle

National implementations

CEN and CENELEC
Technical Body
Officers Event

CEN & CENELEC at a glance

460
Technical Committees

1.900
Working Groups

90.000
Experts

~24.000
Standards

>700
Technical Specifications

~900
Technical Reports

500
CWAs

Stakeholders

Formally involved

▶ National Standardization Bodies

▶ Recognized European stakeholder organizations (consumers, SMEs, environment, workers)

▶ Public authorities (European Commission)

Broader ecosystem

▶ Industry and market actors

▶ Experts

▶ Research organizations

▶ SMEs and innovators

▶ End users and society at large

▶ ISO and IEC

▶ Etc.

Technical Committee composition

CEN or CENELEC Technical Committee

CEN-CENELEC Guide 25

'The concept of Partnership with European organisations and other stakeholders'

CENELEC
Members
Max. 3 delegates -
Vote

European Partners (including Annex III)
Observer – No vote

ISO representative
(CEN only)
Observer – No vote

Affiliates Partner St. Bodies
Observer – No vote

European Commission/EFTA
Observer – No vote

Liaison officers from other TCs
Observer – No vote

CEN and CENELEC
Technical Body
Officers Event

Role of Technical Body Officers

Chairpersons and secretaries, your role is critical!

To drive the work in the TC
Make things happen
Build bridges to consensus
Connect the dots

Maintaining strict impartiality
Divesting from any (national) point of view
No voting right

Chairpersons and secretaries, your role is critical!

Neutral facilitator

Guardian of procedures and fairness

Enabler of constructive dialogue

Ensuring all voices are heard and recorded

TC Chairperson

▶ Conducts meetings in an impartial manner guiding the meeting → ensuring that all points of view are heard

▶ Secures consensus, when unanimity is not obtainable

▶ Ensures that all TC decisions are clearly formulated

▶ Ensures coordination between TC and WGs: monitors implementation of decisions and application of procedures

▶ With the agreement of the CEN/BT Chairperson, represents CEN at meetings of other organizations to give technical advice on subjects within the scope of the TC

▶ Always acts impartially

TC Secretary

▶ Ensures that TC works efficiently and agreed timetables are kept

▶ Prepares and distributes documents (agenda, documents for discussion, reports, decisions, etc)

▶ Manages documents distribution via SD Docs platform or Collaboration Tool

▶ Is aware of CEN or CLC BT decisions related to technical work and reacts on any question raised by BT or other competent body in relation to his/her assigned TC

▶ Ensures coordination with other TCs

▶ Liaises with CCMC

▶ In case of Standardization Requests, he/she is responsible for providing inputs to work programme and preparing annual reports
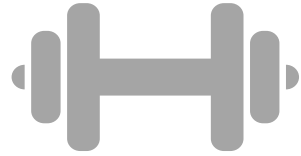
How soft skills can help

SCOPE

QUALITY

RESOURCES

SCHEDULE

Hard skills vs. soft skills?

Soft skills vs. hard skills?

Hard skills: Specific, teachable, and verifiable competencies, including sector-specific technical expertise and knowledge of standardization rules, procedures, and tools

Soft skills: Abilities such as communication, facilitation, negotiation, and cultural awareness that enable consensus and trust

Why both matter in European standardization?

Both are equally important

Leading a Technical Body requires technical credibility to guide the work and strong soft skills to balance interests, manage conflict, and build consensus across countries and stakeholders

Standards are built on expertise but delivered through people

CEN and CENELEC Technical Body Officers Event

Why soft skills really matter?

- ▶ Technical committees are multi-stakeholder environments

- ▶ Conflicting interests and technical debates are intrinsic to standardization work

- ▶ Consensus is the goal

- ▶ Chairpersons and secretaries are key enablers of inclusive decision-making

- ▶ Success depends on people, not just content
- ▶ Soft skills enable influence without authority

Core soft skills for TBO

▶ **Active listening** → fully understanding technical and non-technical viewpoints

▶ **Clear and neutral communication** → expressing positions precisely, factually, and without bias

▶ **Patience and resilience** → staying constructive during long discussions and slow consensus-building

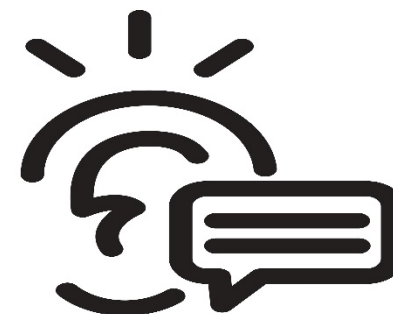▶ **Confidence in process management** → guiding discussions in line with agreed rules, timelines, and procedures

Conflict is often structural rather than personal

▶ Differing national, industry, or stakeholder interests

▶ Technical vs. commercial priorities

▶ Uneven participation or perceived dominance

▶ Ambiguity in scope, mandate, or procedures

▶ Time pressure and workload constraints

Active listening in practice

▶Listen to understand, not to respond

▶Paraphrase to confirm understanding

▶Acknowledge concerns without taking sides

▶Distinguish facts, assumptions and underlying concerns

▶Ensure that all contributions are heard - Create space for quieter participants

Communicating neutrally

Use factual, non-judgmental language

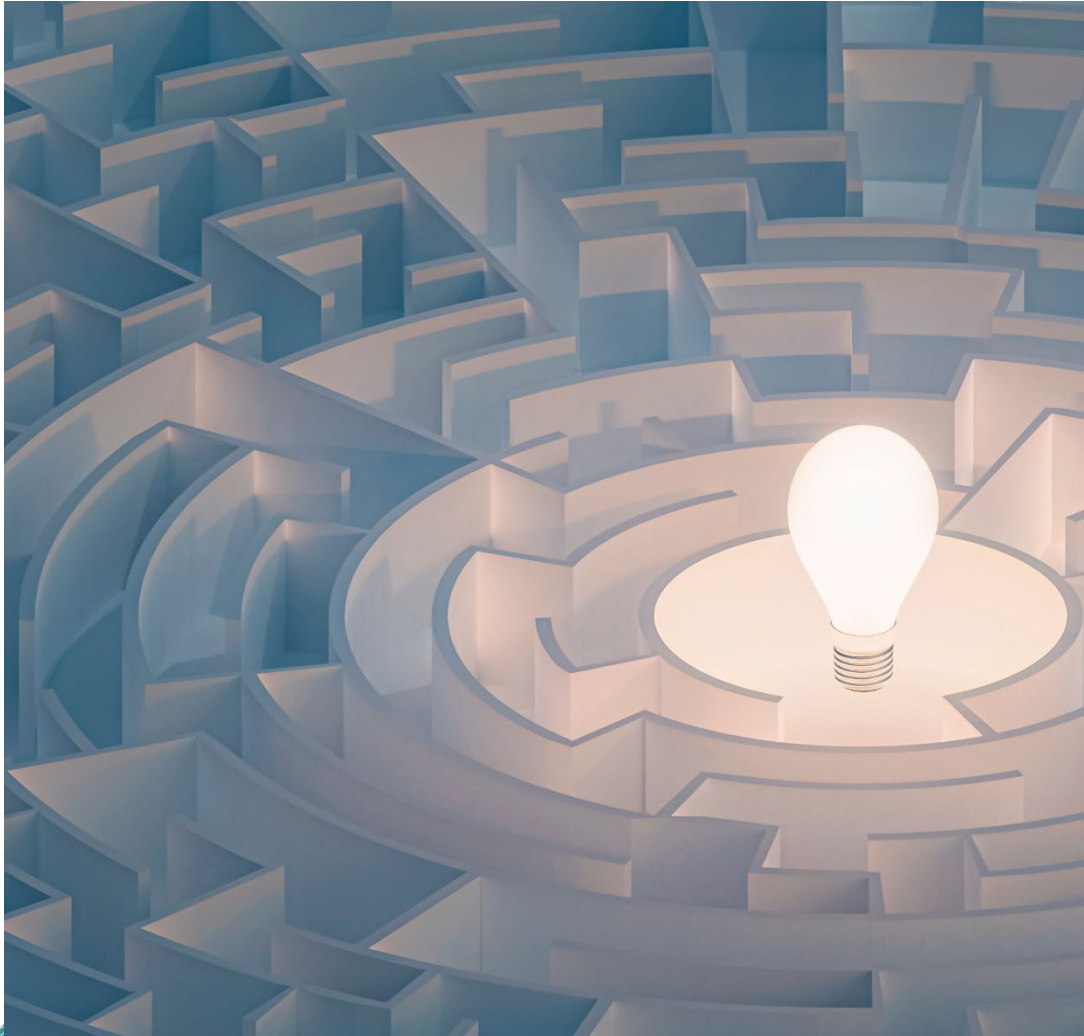Use factual, neutral language - Avoid emotional terms

Refer to procedures and agreed rules

Summarize discussions objectively

Frame disagreements as shared problems

Patience and resilience

Sustaining constructive dialogue over time

▶ Maintain calm and focus during lengthy or challenging discussions

▶ Embrace iterative progress and gradual consensus-building

▶ Manage frustration with a solution-oriented mindset

▶ Foster continued engagement even when progress is slow

Confidence in process

Leading with authority, consistency, and credibility

▶ Guide discussions in line with rules (CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations and Guides), procedures, and timelines

▶ Apply processes consistently and transparently

▶ Intervene when needed to keep discussions focused and fair

▶ Ensure outcomes reflect both consensus and procedural integrity

What to do

Managing Difficult Behaviours
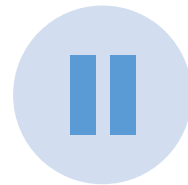
Dominating speakers → enforce time limits

Repetitive arguments → summarise and redirect

Personal attacks → refocus on technical issues

Silence or disengagement → invite input

Escalation → propose a pause or offline discussion

CEN and CENELEC Technical Body Officers Event

De-escalation techniques

Slow down the discussion → pause the debate, summarize what has been said or suggest a short break
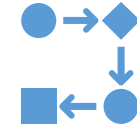
Acknowledge emotions without amplifying them → recognize concerns in a neutral way

Reframe statements in neutral terms → translate strong or positional language into objective, focused wording

Suggest factual clarification or evidence → Redirect the discussion to data, requirements or previous decisions rather than opinions or assumptions

Move from 'who is right' to 'what works' → Shift the focus toward solutions that meet the agreed objectives, scope, and constraints of the standard
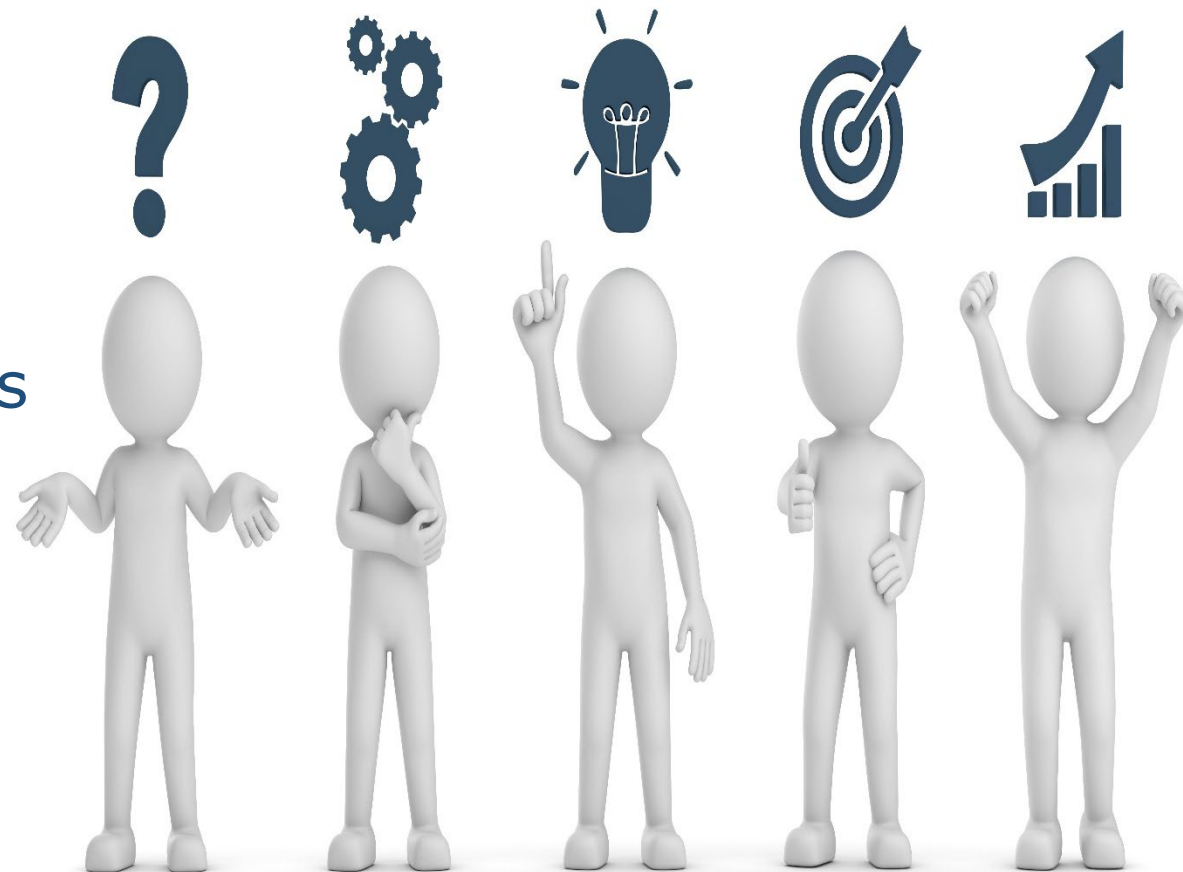
When consensus is hard to reach

▶Check if the disagreement is technical or strategic

▶Explore alternative wording or options

▶Use ad-hoc groups or drafting teams

▶Allow time between meetings

▶Clearly record unresolved objections

→ **Consensus is often built step by step, through structure, patience, and transparency rather than immediate agreement.**

Building consensus step by step

- ▶ Clarify the objective and scope

- ▶ Identify common ground early

- ▶ Break complex issues into smaller parts

- ▶ Test emerging agreements informally

- ▶ Document partial consensus and open points

Setting the Right Conditions

Clarify objectives and desired outcomes

Identify stakeholders and sensitivities

Prepare a realistic agenda with priorities

Anticipate points of disagreement

Supporting the Chair

Brief	Brief the Chair on emerging tensions
Suggest	Suggest procedural options discreetly
Help	Help manage speaking order and time
Provide	Provide neutral summaries for decision points
Reinforce	Reinforce the Chair's role and authority

Closing the meeting effectively - Tips

Restate	Clearly restate decisions and next steps
Assign	Assign responsibilities and deadlines
Check	Check alignment before closing
Follow up	Follow up promptly with clear minutes

Time for exchange

Do you wish to share any experience to share with us and colleagues?

Code of Conduct for experts participating in CEN & CENELEC (technical) work

Code of conduct

Experts are aware of the CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations and Guides especially:

▶ **CEN-CLC Guide 8** 'CEN-CENELEC Guidelines for Implementation of the Common Policy on Patents (and other statutory intellectual property rights based on inventions)'

▶ **CEN-CLC Guide 10** 'Policy on dissemination, sales and copyright of CEN-CENELEC Publications'

▶ **CEN-CLC Guide 31** 'Competition law for participants in CEN-CENELEC activities'

→ **Link to Code of Conduct**

Code of conduct

All participants shall recognize the following principles and behave in accordance

- ▶ Work for the benefit of the European Community
- ▶ Uphold consensus and governance
- ▶ Agree to a clear purpose and scope
- ▶ Participate actively and manage effective representation
- ▶ Escalate and resolve dispute
- ▶ Behave ethically
- ▶ Respect other in meetings

Code of Conduct

If undue behavior observed

▶ TBO to remind expert about Code of Conduct

▶ If behavior persists → TBO to inform the CEN and/or CENELEC Member or Partner/Liaison Organization appointing the expert/delegate of the situation

A word about CCMC

CCMC

DO

✓Provide tools and platforms

✓Support governing bodies (e.g. BTs, etc.)

✓Guide TCs on CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations, rules, and standardization procedures, e.g. advise on the correct project pathway (EN, TS, TR, CWA, etc.)

✓Production related work (e.g. editing)

✓Interface with stakeholders (e.g. European Commission)

✓Trainings on new processes, tools, etc.

✓Perform quality check of draft Harmonized Standards

✓Ensures SRAHG secretariat

✓Promote the European standards model

CCMC

DON'T

❌ Don't manage TC work programme

❌ Don't write or decide technical content of standards

❌ Don't influence or arbitrate technical solutions → but help and facilitate

❌ Don't replace the role of the TC Chairperson or Secretary

❌ Don't take decisions on behalf of the TC

❌ Don't engage with national stakeholders or coordinate national input

Key take-aways

- Soft skills are just as essential as technical expertise

- Technical Body Officers must act as neutral facilitators who guide discussions, ensure fairness, and uphold procedures

- Conflicts in technical committees are often structural, and effective communication, active listening, and de-escalation techniques are key

- Consensus is built progressively through clarity of scope, structured dialogue, and transparent documentation of agreements and open points

- Ethical behavior, respect, and adherence to the Code of Conduct are fundamental expectations for all participants in CEN and CENELEC work

Thank you

Catherine Vigneron
cvigneron@cencenelec.eu