Three questions to UNI

Interview with Ruggero Lensi, UNI Director General

What steps will be taken to ensure that standards developed in BioReCer for certifying biological resources are harmonised across the EU and applicable on a global scale?

The very definition of 'standard' makes this clear: standards, in fact, represent the state of the art of a product or service, the best possible solution, based on the sharing of the best knowledge, skills and experience in the market. Indeed, the standardisation system requires that the technical requirements of standards be defined by all industry stakeholders through a sharing process aimed at achieving consensus within the Technical Bodies. Large groups, small businesses, startups, professionals, associations, government agencies, local governments, research centres, schools and universities, labour representatives, third sector and nongovernmental organisations, citizens, and the legislature itself can participate in the drafting and approval of standards. The role of the legislature is therefore particularly important in harmonising the requirements of products subject to regulation. Standards provide certain and shared references for regulating new areas or simplifying existing regulation.

How do you address the challenges of aligning these standards with diverse regulatory frameworks and market needs in the EU and worldwide?

There is a principle of coherence and alignment between technical standards and legislation that allows standards to be a preferred tool to support legislation. This co-regulatory approach derives from the New Approach Directives of 1985 and ensures that products and services conform to the quality, safety and sustainability requirements identified by the legislature and ensured by the verification system in the context of the Quality Infrastructure. This system involves collaboration between the Standards Bodies (which study, publish and disseminate technical documents of voluntary application that take a snapshot of the 'state of the art'), Conformity Assessment Bodies (which are responsible for demonstrating that specified requirements related to a product, process, system or person, are met) and Accreditation Bodies (which ensure independence and impartiality of Conformity Assessment Bodies). EU Regulation No.1025/2012 and the international mutual recognition agreements EA MLA (thus complying with Regulation (EC) No. 765/2008) or IAF MLA with regard to certifications ensure that products, services and organisations can circulate in the European and non-European markets and be recognised globally through the same reference standards and conformity assessment (certification) mechanisms.

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Can you provide specific examples of standards that should be updated or developed to align with sustainability goals and support bio-based circular systems?

In general, the standards published after 2016, i.e., after the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are already all consistent with these principles and the sustainability requirements demanded by the legislature. In addition, CEN and ISO policies provide for an alignment of all standards that will be updated in the near future. Further details can be found at the following pages:

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - CEN-CENELEC
- ISO - Sustainable Development Goals