The EU and its standards: anatomy of a misunderstanding

Yves Bertoncini
European Affairs Consultant, Senior Advisor to Kreab, Lecturer at ESCP Business School and Corps des Mines

The standards produced by the European Union (EU) fuel an often critical public debate, the negative tone of which recently led the Von der Leyen II Commission to propose “omnibus legislation” aimed at simplifying and reducing the scope of many of them.

The scale of the debate and the planned “streamlining” is primarily circumstantial: many of the standards targeted by economic actors, and now by the Commission, stem from the very fast implementation of the “European Green Deal” within a political timetable further reduced by the time devoted to managing the pandemic shock and then the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Planned since 2019, these standards are coming into force at a time when Donald Trump is significantly deregulating the economy of one of the EU's main partners and competitors. Last but not least, the proposed or enacted regulatory rollbacks reflect the rise of the right and far right in recent European and national elections – reminding us that EU directives and regulations do not fall from the sky but are adopted and amended by political actors who confront their positions in Brussels and Strasbourg.

To a certain extent, the regulatory relief recently proposed by the Commission is reminiscent of other measures, such as those announced by the “Delors II Commission” in December 1992 at the Edinburgh European Council. The aim then was to separate the wheat from the chaff in the enormous amount of legislation generated by the establishment of the “Single Market” (including nearly 300 directives) – under the auspices of British authorities who were in favour of liberalising the continent, but also keen to preserve the competitiveness of businesses.

On the long run, the recurring alternation between moments of European legislative pushes and moments of delay, or even retreat, also points to more structural foundations, which the adoption and questioning of the "European Green Deal" both highlight, as elements that perpetuate the persistent misunderstanding that EU standards are traditionally the subject of, or even the victims of.

1. Standards reflecting the founding principles of the EU: I regulate, therefore I am

The development and application of many European standards refer first and foremost to the founding principles of European integration, which are of political, economic and societal nature – the launch of the "European Green Deal" in December 2019 only served to highlight this.

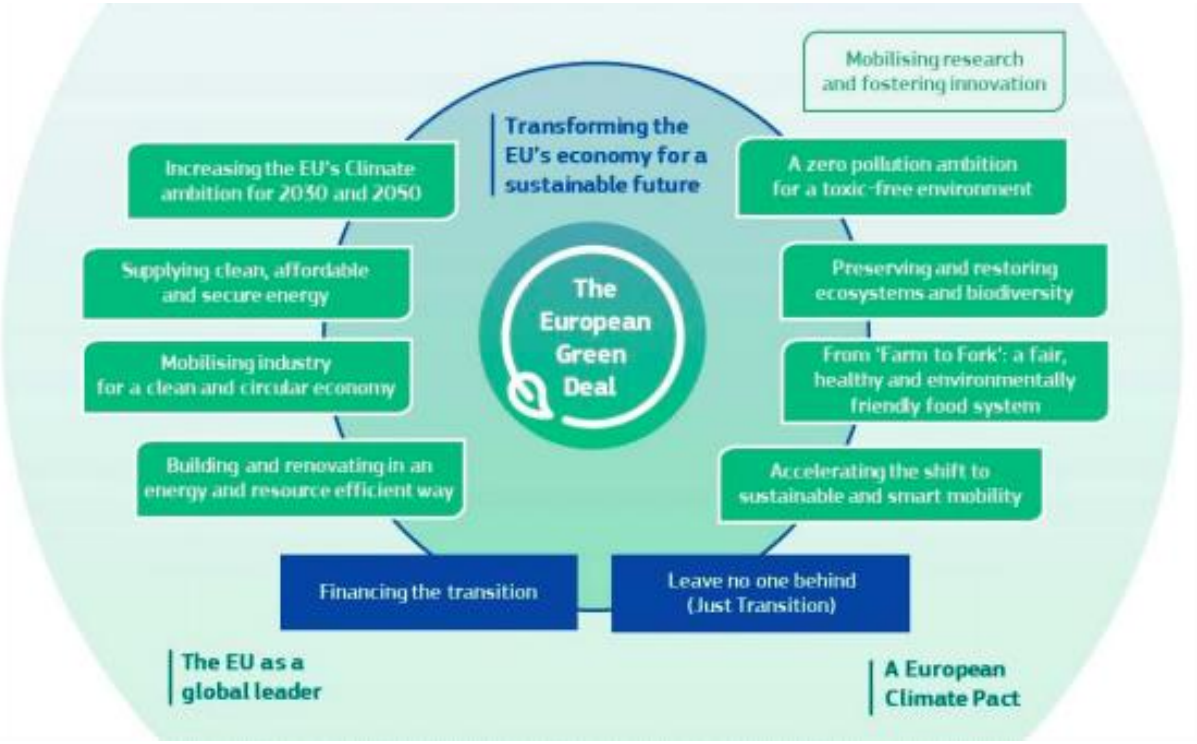
1.1 EU standards: political foundations

Firstly, the political foundations: European integration gave rise to "Communities" and a "Union" authorised to produce legal acts, allowing leaders to negotiate and adopt general standards rather than *ad hoc* decisions, except in cases of emergency or crisis. If European decision-makers had more discretionary powers, such as those of a federal government, they would be able to improvise and adapt more easily – as the ECB does in monetary matters. If they had a larger and more manageable annual budget, they could use it for financial interventions commensurate with the challenges they face – the Draghi Report urges them to do so, while lamenting the EU's limited room for manoeuvre. As long as they are forced to agree first and foremost on the adoption of acts of "primary law" (treaties, charters, etc.) and "secondary law" (mainly regulations and directives), they will fuel a veritable "standardisation and regulation machine", for better or for worse.

This normative tendency was clearly evident at the launch of the "European Green Deal", which aims to combat climate change and biodiversity loss by combining a series of sectoral priorities (see Figure 1) and providing for the adoption of 75 additional texts over a few years. In contrast, it is striking to note that European financial support for the ecological transition driven by the "Green Deal" was much more limited, despite the presence of the "Just Transition Fund" and the mobilisation of the "Horizon programme" for R&D projects. But also that the original Green Deal did not include an explicit industrial dimension, given the traditional reluctance of many Member States to make joint

commitments in this area – the more recent launch of the "Clean Industry Deal" is intended to fill this gap.

Figure 1
The "European Green Deal" proposed by the Commission in 2019



Source: European Commission

1.2 EU standards: economic foundations

The EU's intense regulatory output also has economic foundations. European integration has taken a market-oriented path (common market, then single market, common agricultural policy, customs union and trade policy, competition policy, economic and monetary union, etc.), rather than a diplomatic or security-oriented one. It is therefore logical that its decision-makers should adopt standards that establish, deepen and regulate the economic areas thus created, in all their dimensions – including going into detail on the regulation of products and processes, particularly in the areas of sanitary and phytosanitary norms.

The proclamation of the principle of "mutual recognition" by the European Court of Justice in 1979 also gave rise to a multitude of regulatory initiatives aimed at "harmonising" national legislation through Community institutions or dedicated bodies (European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC),

European Telecommunications Standards Institute, etc.). This often highly precise and technical standardisation process is all the more encouraged as the adoption of an EU standard has, in theory, simplifying virtues: it is in fact intended to replace 27 national standards, while improving the regulatory environment for the economic actors concerned.

Enrico Letta usefully reaffirms this normative credo in his Report on the Single Market and its deepening in spring 2024[1] He emphasises in particular that it is primarily the persistence and entanglement of multiple national standards that hinder the development of many economic activities. He stresses that only the adoption of European rules in complementary sectors such as energy, telecommunications, finance and defence will enable the potential of the Single Market to be exploited and the EU's overall competitiveness to be strengthened.

EU standards have also often made it possible to distinguish and protect its economic actors from their external competitors, from the requirement for catalytic converters to the ban on hormone-treated beef. The EU is in fact a “great normative power” that more or less clearly assumes the non-tariff barriers it imposes on international trade, including so as not to upset its “partners” – this is just one of the sources of the “after-sales service deficit” suffered by EU standards (see §-3).

1.3 EU standards: societal foundations

The EU's normative output ultimately has societal foundations.

It is clear that it is developed under the scrutiny and influence of all kinds of interest groups (businesses, NGOs, scientific actors, etc.), but it is equally important to add that it takes place under the increasingly watchful eye of public opinion and citizens – so that it largely reflects them. The “Green Deal”, for example, was conceived and launched at a time when younger generations were mobilising strongly under the leadership of Greta Thunberg; but it is now being revised and amended after farmers and other economic sectors voiced their reservations and objections, some more loudly than others. Finding the right political and regulatory balance between these two contradictory movements will be one of the key challenges for the EU in the coming quarters.

Moreover, the recent ripple effect generated by the spectacular deregulation promoted by the Trump administration is undeniable, given its presumed favourable impact in terms of economic competitiveness, for example in the energy and chemical sectors. However, the time will soon come to assess its concrete – and potentially harmful – impart on the environment, society and health – and to recall the catastrophic consequences

of financial deregulation, which led to the subprime crisis, and then to a global financial one.

It will then undoubtedly become clear that the "collective preferences" of Europeans are hardly in line with the minimal public regulation of business favoured in the USA. It is this transatlantic gap that explains the relative abundance of standards on our continent, at both Community and national level – an abundance that could only be reduced in the event of a societal shift, beyond the occasional crises of regulatory allergy that grip us. It could also become apparent that it may be logical to impose restrictions on certain agricultural practices in order to avoid direct damage to the environment (e.g. in the use of pesticides), while the countries supplying Europeans do not do so, at the risk of polluting their own populations – even if only minor residues are detected in imported products... Over the long term, it appears in any case that the EU's normative production most often reflects a real demand for regulation and protection of the peoples of the "old continent", who are probably more cautious, or even enlightened, than others when it comes to health, environmental and financial risks.

2. The "Green Deal", an ideal target for the case against EU standards

As European integration is based on political, economic and societal foundations that are conducive to regulatory production, it is natural that this production should be the subject of criticism questioning its excessive weight – and that the "Green Deal" has not failed to fuel this criticism. Given its cross-sectoral and intrusive ambition, this "Deal" has also reignited the debate on the cost-benefit ratio of EU standards, as well as the relative uncertainty surrounding their socio-economic impact. This debate should serve as a reminder that the need for "better regulation", which has been proclaimed for decades, remains both a categorical imperative and an insurmountable challenge for Europeans...

2.1 Too many EU standards?

The myth of 80% national laws of European origin somehow persists, despite a series of studies showing figures closer to 20%[2], which vary according to the countries analysed (see Table 1). These studies also and above all emphasise that the Europeanisation of laws is significant in some economic sectors (agriculture, fisheries, financial services, environment, etc.), but very limited in others (education, social protection, taxation,

housing, security, etc.) – hence, for example, criticism pointing to strong fiscal and social competition within the EU...

Table 1
Proportion of laws of European origin in seven EU countries (in %)

COUNTRY	PERIOD	% OF LAWS OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN (EU)
Spain	1986-2007	35
Luxembourg	1986-2006	28,8
Germany	1986-2005	28,7
Austria	1992-2007	26
France	1986-2007	18,75
Netherlands	1981-2009	12,3
Finland	1995-2009	11,8

Source: Data from Sylvain Brouard, Olivier Costa and Thomas König – Yves Bertoncini, Jacques Delors Institute, 2014

It is therefore hardly surprising that the launch of the Green Deal, all aspects of which mobilise the core regulatory powers of the EU, may have created a sense of overload for the economic actors concerned, particularly given the tight schedule for debating and adopting the 75 proposed texts. This accumulation of environmental regulatory initiatives was all the more difficult to comprehend and digest as it coincided with initiatives launched by the EU in response to the pandemic crisis, and then to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The new obligations imposed on businesses by European regulations have been analysed, highlighting their scope and impact between 2017 and 2022[3]: it indicated that French companies have had 850 new obligations imposed on them by the European legislator during this period, contained in 36 directives and 80 regulations – even though many elements of the “Green Deal” were still under discussion...

This perception of excessive European regulation may be further exacerbated by “over-transposition” by Member States, and particularly by the French authorities – a recent Senate report highlighted not only its scale, but also its negative impact on business competitiveness[4]. This overlay of national regulations is not limited to the transposition of EU directives, but also includes the maintenance or addition of French regulatory provisions, which are often called into question when they create

unfair competition within the single market. The EU is not responsible for such practices, which Prime Minister Michel Barnier himself has pointed out as problematic, and which require regulatory relief at the national level much more than in Brussels or Strasbourg.

2.2 Are EU standards too costly?

EU standards are also frequently targeted because of their uncertain cost-benefit ratio.

It is noteworthy that the Commission's difficulty in finding a double parliamentary and diplomatic majority – and even a "qualified" majority in the Council, if not unanimity – can lead the EU to ambiguous, even sub-optimal compromises optimal. Concluded through option rights and "trilogues", these compromises do not improve the quality and clarity of Community standards, which the targeted actors must then strive to decipher. Thus, more than 1,000 indicators were ultimately retained following negotiations on the draft Directive on the disclosure of sustainability information by companies (known as the "CSRD" Directive): while companies are not necessarily required to report on all of these indicators, they must still invest the time and resources necessary to find out, even before providing the required information...

The compliance costs arising from new standards can naturally be justified in view of the benefits they generate for society, but also for the economic actors concerned, particularly in terms of improving their ability to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the single market (import-export, investment, access to labour, etc.). However, these players must develop such activities at European level, otherwise the required compliance will only result in adjustment costs for them, without any tangible benefits – or even worse, if the European standards in question facilitate the business of their EU competitors on their domestic market.

In this already ambivalent context, the "Green Deal" has logically led to a deterioration in the debate on the cost-benefit ratio of European standards: not only does it include a large number of "performative" standards with global scope, the application of which will "only" change the environment of economic actors – such as the symbolic ban on the sale of combustion engine vehicles from 2035. But it also includes a series of "intrusive" standards, imposing substantial administrative and financial burdens in terms of "reporting" on economic actors (see Table 2). It was inevitable that this accumulation of additional administrative burdens would provoke an outcry from many of the companies concerned, and that it would be all the more

difficult to contain given the poor assessment of their economic impact (see §-2.3) and the weakness of their political and institutional back up (see §-3). Florent Ménégaux, CEO of Michelin, summed up the ambivalent situation regarding EU standards – and those of its Member States – as follows: "Regulation can therefore be a double-edged sword, depending on whether it harmonises or burdens"[5].

Table 2
Green Deal standards increasing reporting burdens on EU companies

Texts	Main information requested
CSRD Directive	Indicators relating to companies' social, environmental and governance practices
CS3D Directive	Indicators relating to the social, environmental and governance practices of subcontractors
Carbon border adjustment mechanism	Data on the carbon price of imports (steel, aluminium, iron, cement, fertilisers, electricity, hydrogen)
Anti-deforestation regulation	Data on the production conditions of imports with regard to forests (cocoa, soy, palm oil, coffee, beef, rubber, etc.)
Financial Taxonomy Regulation	Indicators on the environmental impact of investments and operating expenditure (climate, aquatic and marine resources, circular economy, pollution, biodiversity and ecosystems)

Source: Yves Bertoncini, 2025

2.3 Standards whose impact is poorly assessed

For nearly a quarter of a century, "impact assessments" have been considered the cornerstone of the European strategy for "better regulation" – a strategy that has been repeatedly reaffirmed since then, including through a formal agreement between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament[6]. The Commission therefore systematically commissions such analyses, either from its own Directorates-General and services, or from universities, think tanks or specialised bodies, which are invited to assess and quantify the economic, social, environmental and territorial impacts of EU legislative proposals[7]. This is a useful way of professionalising the European decision-making process, even if EU legislation is most often assessed as regards its political impact… (see §-3).

These impact assessments face obvious technical difficulties, as they cover a Union of 27 countries, nearly 450 million citizens and more than 32 million businesses – and even more if those in the European Economic Area are included. Furthermore, these analyses most often focus on the EU in general, which is neither a state nor a country, which can only reinforce their abstract nature, which can only reinforce their abstract nature, since the national roots of economic actors and political decision-makers remain decisive in assessing the consequences of the proposed projects...

With regard to the draft CSRD Directive, the European Commission's impact assessment estimated the total cost of its implementation at €4.8 billion for all EU companies[8], based on global and macroeconomic assessment criteria. Based on a more microeconomic approach, i.e. direct consultation with the companies concerned, an impact study by the French "Movement of Medium-Sized Enterprises"/METI estimated the average cost of joining the "CSRD" at €400,000 for an industrial mid-sized company (in terms of employee time spent, changes to monitoring software, payment of external consultants, etc.), i.e. nearly €2 billion per year for French mid-sized companies alone – even if this sum was reduced the following years[9]... It is logical that the economic actors concerned were able to use this huge discrepancy in assessment to put forward their arguments in the regulatory debate, leading to the easing of the so-called "CSRD". The Commission has therefore proposed postponing the date of entry into force of the disclosure requirements by two years, reducing the amount of information required, and significantly raising the thresholds above which companies will be required to apply the "CSRD"[10].

The ongoing revision of the proposed "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism", which targets steel and aluminium imports in particular, offers another textbook example of the very approximate assessment of the impact of European regulatory projects. This is so true that the new version now supported by the Commission continues to cover 99% of the CO2 emissions concerned, while exempting from any administrative formalities 90% of the actors targeted by its initial version – i.e. SMEs and mid-cap companies importing less than 50 tonnes per year. It is surprising and regrettable, to say the least, that such targeting, which preserves the ecological added value of the mechanism while drastically reducing its administrative impact, was not favoured from the outset by the European Commission…

Ultimately, all the controversy surrounding the implementation of the "Green Deal" may have had one merit: that of confirming the need to apply EU standards in a more proportionate manner. The European Commission has decided to go beyond the existing

distinction between large companies and SMEs, which allows for a reduction in administrative burdens for the latter, by proposing to create a category dedicated to "small mid-cap" companies, i.e. companies with fewer than 750 employees and an annual turnover not exceeding €150 million or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €129 million[11]. While large companies, often listed on the stock exchange, have long devoted significant resources to their financial and non-financial reporting, the same cannot be said for SMEs and mid-sized companies, which are facing new and significant burdens under the Green Deal. While the 6,000 largest companies in the EU would have the means to meet the CSRD indicators and the vigilance criteria set out in the CS3D Directive, particularly with regard to the social, environmental and human practices of their direct and indirect subcontractors, mid-sized companies and SMEs must be subject to regulatory and administrative burdens that are better suited to their size and resources, so that they can comply effectively, if not happily.

3. The institutional foundations of the European regulatory misunderstanding: manufacturers conspicuous by their absence?

While EU standards are far from perfect, the criticism they attract is all the more intense because these standards are co-produced by actors who struggle to publicly claim ownership and content in an audible manner – the implementation of the "Green Deal" only confirms this[12]. A quick look at the political conditions under which EU standards are developed and adopted is enough to identify the major source of the political misunderstandings they generate. This is also due to a huge deficit in 'after-sales service' to their intended beneficiaries – the Commission, Council and European Parliament, which in this respect resemble a veritable inter-institutional "Bermuda Triangle"...

3.1 The European Parliament, a useful but partial echo chamber

The involvement of MEPs in the adoption of numerous EU standards has the great merit of channelling the debate they fuel, while highlighting the issues at stake and the diversity of political interests and sensibilities involved. Unlike the actors involved in the Commission and the Council, MEPs constantly communicate about their involvement and the results they achieve, which helps to make the democratic foundations of the EU and its standards more tangible.

Of course, there may be cases where these parliamentarians do not stand by the decisions they have taken in Strasbourg or Brussels, as the newspaper Le Parisien recently reminded us[13] : if the French members of the European Parliament voted by a very large majority in favour of an EU directive tightening the rules on access to bank overdrafts, many of them indeed preferred to blame "Europe", or the government, for making poor choices when transposing it into French law in November 2025...

Some recent votes by the European Parliament on the "Green Deal" have attracted more attention from observers, particularly the adoption of a new target for reducing CO2 emissions by 2040 as part of the "climate law" (see Chart 2), but also the approval of the "Omnibus 1" legislation, aimed at reducing the administrative impact of the "CSRD" and "CS3D" directives (see Chart 3).

Chart 2
Voting record on the new climate law targets
in the European Parliament (November 2025)

Source: European Parliament

These contrasting votes in the European Parliament reflect the new partisan dynamics at work since the June 2024 elections, which led to both a shift to the right in the Strasbourg Assembly and the rise of nationalist parties – the same is true in the Council. They therefore elicit perfectly legitimate reactions of approval or rejection, but above all reflect the political and democratic anchoring of EU standards.

Graph 3
Voting record for Omnibus Package 1 (CSRD & CSRD)
in the European Parliament (November 2025)

Source: European Parliament

It should be remembered, however, that much of the EU's legislative activity is beyond the control of MEPs due to its technical and "regulatory" nature. While it is the "legislative" directives and regulations adopted by the European Parliament – and the Council of Ministers – that determine the essential guidelines, it is the "implementing acts" drawn up on this basis by the Commission that give them more concrete and operational content (as implementing decrees and other orders do at national level). It so happens that these "infra-legislative" standards are particularly numerous at European level (see Table 3) and also cover a whole range of politically sensitive issues (pollution measures, the spread of GMOs, agricultural market management, etc.), over which the European Parliament has only indirect oversight. This results in a huge "civic deficit" in terms of the clarity and transparency of the EU's standard-setting processes, which is also one of the major sources of the misunderstandings that they frequently generate.

Table 3
Regulations and directives adopted by the EU
between 2015 and 2024 (excluding corrective acts)

Author / Type of act	European Commission	Council of ministers (CM)	European Parliament & CM	Total 2015-2024	Average/ Year
Regulations	-	137	357	494	49,4
Directives	-	11	97	108	10,8
Total Regulations & Directives	-	148	454	602	60,2

Delegated Regulations	621	-	-	621	62,1
Delegated Directives	3	-	-	3	0,3
Total Delegated Acts	624			624	62,4
Implementing Regulations	4 189	24*	-	4 213	421,3
Implementing Directives	8	-	-	8	0,8
Total Implementing Acts **	4 197	24		4 221	422,1
Total 2015-2024	4 821	172	454	5 447	544,7
Average per Year	482,1	17,2	45,4	544,7	
Average par Year (%)	88,5%	3,2%	8,3%	-	

Source : data www.eur-lex.europa.eu, Calculations Yves Bertoncini - 2025

* The implementing regulations adopted by the Council cover issues related to common foreign and security policy (sanctions) or to taxation

** A significant proportion of the implementing acts adopted by the Commission are said “ephemeral” acts, as they are renewed annually (such as the numerous acts regulating agricultural markets)

3.2. The key and ambivalent role of the European Commission

Because it is responsible for embodying the general European interest, the Commission has a monopoly on EU legislative initiatives, which it proposes for amendment and approval to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, and then monitors to ensure they are properly implemented. The fact that it is also the “guardian of the treaties” has sometimes led it to adopt a somewhat rigid stance towards existing legislation, which reinforces the “*acquis communautaire*”, scrupulously protected against economic, social and political challenges. Against this background, the “Von der Leyen II Commission” seems to be showing considerable flexibility with regard to the initiatives put forward by the “Von der Leyen I Commission”, whose “Green Deal” was the top priority: this flexibility can be seen both as a sign of opportunistic adjustment to the new political and partisan balance of power, but also as evidence of a good ability to adapt to the features of the new international economic and geopolitical context. What remains certain is that the College of Commissioners and its services have relatively little public and media clout to explain and justify their regulatory output and its

adjustments – especially in view of the mobilisation of their opponents, whether economic, social or political.
This lack of political impact is even greater when it comes to explaining the objectives and content of the "implementing measures" negotiated under the "comitology" procedures launched and led by the Commission, which account for more than three-quarters of the standards adopted by the EU each year (see Table 3). These committees bring together senior officials from Brussels and their counterparts from the 27 Member States in a manner that is both customary and problematic in terms of transparency: it is therefore virtually impossible to know who participates in the meetings of the nearly 300 committees concerned, what the content of their discussions is, and what positions the representatives of the Member States take – even when consulting the public register set up[14]. The Juncker Commission had recognised this political problem, particularly when faced with the lack of a clear majority in the positions expressed by the Member States: it had proposed a reform of the "comitology" procedures to increase their transparency and include, in particular, the direct participation of Commissioners and Ministers in the handling of sensitive issues – a reform that has remained unimplemented...

However, it is by strengthening public transparency and political support for these "comitology" procedures that we could better avoid their nitpicking and bureaucratic excesses, the sometimes excessive influence of interest groups, and the total lack of "after-sales service" from ministers and parliaments towards the actors concerned and public opinion.

This lack of transparency and political support for the EU standard-setting process has undoubtedly been exacerbated by the creation of "delegated acts" under the Treaty of Lisbon. This supposedly "functional" innovation allows the European Commission to amend "non-essential elements of a legislative act" without submitting the amendment to the European Parliament and the Council for approval, which would inevitably cause delays, and without necessarily resorting to the "committees" dedicated to implementing acts. The lively and contentious discussions surrounding the adoption of the delegated act on the EU's "financial taxonomy", and in particular the status it accords to nuclear and fossil fuels, were enough to confirm that the line between "essential" and "non-essential" is eminently subjective and political. It also demonstrated the lack of democratic and civic legitimacy of such "delegated acts", which are nevertheless substantial in number (see Table 3), while calling on the Commission to use them with caution and parsimony in the future.

3.3 Member State representatives often absent

The European Council occasionally takes up the process of adopting EU standards, calling for them to be accelerated or reoriented, which gives them unprecedented publicity compared to that which they receive in the dedicated forums of the Council of Ministers.

Article 16.8 of the Treaty on European Union now stipulates that the Council “shall meet in public when deliberating and voting on a draft legislative act”. However, its meetings attract very limited media interest, while their online broadcasts[15] confirm the highly formal nature of the discussions – which lead to most compromises being reached during breaks in the session, i.e. in private. Like the minutes of Council meetings, these broadcasts also show that many decisions are adopted as “A items”, i.e. without debate among ministers, once they have been agreed in advance in the discreet and studious setting of the meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee and the Council's working groups. It is therefore hardly surprising that ministers are conspicuous by their absence when it comes to taking responsibility for the content and promotion of standards that they have often merely endorsed formally – when they do not simply shirk their responsibilities in adopting standards that they have indeed validated, at the cost of double talk, which also does a great disservice to the EU and its standards.

The final aggravating factor is that, given their length, European decision-making processes may ultimately be affected by changes in the ministerial officials concerned, which also reduces their capacity for political involvement, including in terms of the after-sales service for the standards thus adopted. As an example, eight Ministers for Ecological Transition have succeeded one another in France since 2017, including six since the launch of the main measures of the “Green Deal” at the end of 2019... As for the French Ministers or Secretaries of State for European Affairs, who are supposed to be more involved in explaining the decisions and standards adopted by the EU, the fact that there have been seven of them since 2017 does not help matters from a political point of view either...

While the production of EU standards appears to be based on solid political, economic and societal foundations, it is desirable to consolidate and democratise its institutional foundations, beyond the sometimes necessary but short-lived “stop and go” exercises.

In any case, EU standards should not be used as a convenient scapegoat at a time when the continent's competitiveness is

presented as a strategic priority, when it is in fact the result of much broader factors, including energy prices, the level of public and private investment available, the intensity of R&D, the improvement of human resources and the depth of markets.

By deciphering and mitigating the terms of the misunderstanding surrounding EU standards, it will be possible to distinguish more clearly between what is currently a sometimes desirable simplification and what would constitute a more damaging deregulation for the implementation of the "European Green Deal", as well as other regulatory challenges that Europeans are called upon to address in an adverse and unstable environment.

Footnotes

[1] See "Much more than a market », Enrico Letta, Report, April 2024.
[2] For a summary of the available figures on the Europeanisation of laws, see in particular "The EU and its norms: prison for peoples or chicken coops? » Yves Bertoncini, Jacques Delors Institute, May 2014.
[3] See "New obligations imposed on businesses by European regulations between 2017 and 2022 » Study by Confrontations Europe for MEDEF, March 2023.
[4] See "The over-transposition of European law into French law: a brake on business competitiveness », Information Report No. 614 (2017-2018), submitted on 28 June 2018 by Senator René Danesi.
[5] See 'Towards European regulation compatible with growth', Florent Ménégaux, Schuman Papers No. 813, December 2025.
[6] See Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Better Law-Making, May 2016.
[7] The Commission's impact assessments are available on this website: https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/impact-assessments_fr.
[8] See "Impact Assessment of the CSRD », Commission Staff Working Document, SWD (2021) 150 final, April 2021.
[9] On this subject, see the data provided by METI in December 2024: "France must officially support the postponement of the CSRD ».
[10] The Von der Leyen II Commission proposed that the CSRD Directive should apply to companies with at least 1,000 employees (instead of 250) and generating at least €450 million in turnover or with a balance sheet total of more than €25 million.
[11] The position expressed by the Council in September 2025 led to these thresholds being raised to include companies with fewer than 1,000 employees and annual turnover not exceeding €200 million or annual balance sheet total not exceeding €172 million. It is now up to the European Parliament to decide in first reading.
[12] For recommendations on improving the European regulatory process, see "What future for the "European Green Deal" and its citizens », Economic, Social and Environmental Committee, Lucien Chabason and Didier King, May 2024.
[13] See "LFI, LR, RN... They are outraged by the regulation of bank overdrafts, even though they voted "for" it in the European Parliament » , Benjamin Boisset, Le Parisien, 3 November 2025.
[14] See European Commission, Comitology Register.
[15] See Council Live: https://video.consilium.europa.eu/home/en.