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History of standards for iron and steel

Contact:

Dipl.-Ing. Eberhard Barthel

Stahl-Zentrum

Sohnstraße 65

40237 Düsseldorf

Tel.: +49 211 6707-433

E-Mail: eberhard.barthel@stahl-zentrum.de

The very beginning of the standardization of iron and steel products is closely related to the activities of the „Technical Society of Ferrous Metallurgy (TVEh)”, founded on 14 December 1860. Since that time there were negotiations on the so-called „classification efforts on iron and steel” between the „Technical Society of Ferrous Metallurgy (TVEh)” later called Association of German Ferrous Metallurgy (VDEh), the „Association of German Architects and Engineering (VDAl)” and the „German railway authorities”. In 1886 as a result of these negotiations, the „Normal conditions for the supply of iron structures of bridges and buildings” were published.

On 22 December 1917 the „Standards committee of the German Industry (NADI)” was founded as the predecessor of the „German Standards committee (DNA)” which was later called „German Standards Institute (DIN)”. The VDEh was member from the beginning and was represented at that time by Director General of the Dortmund Union AG mining and metallurgy, Mr. Vögeler, in the board of the NADI.

Up-to-the year 1946 the work on standardization of iron and steel was performed by the „Working committee of the steel processor industry” and later by the "Materials committee". Already in March 1946 the VDEh informed the German Standards committee (DNA) that the standards for iron and steel need revision and that they must adapted to the changed delivery requirements. Following this request the board of the VDEh decided in May 1947 to initiate the necessary steps for the foundation of the standards committee for iron and steel (FES). The preliminary board of the DNA agreed to the foundation of the FES in June 1947. The founding meeting of the FES was held on 24 September 1947 and Mr. Dr. Brühl was elected as first chairman.

The political development in Europe started with the founding of the „European coal and steel community (ECSC)” and the standardization followed this development. The ECSC gave the impetus for the intensification of the standardization on the European level.

The „High Authority” of the ECSC, who was entrusted with the administration of the ECSC, noted soon that for the uniform interpretation of the treaty on the „European coal and steel community (ECSC)” a unification of wording for various technical definitions was necessary. In addition they noted that article 60 of the treaty with the commitment of the steel producer to publish their price lists and selling conditions

had no meaning as long as the deliveries for which the prices were published were not comparable, means that they did not fit to the same technical delivery conditions. This led, two years after the treaty on the ECSC, to the foundation of the „Coordination Commission for the Nomenclature of Iron and Steel Products (COCOR)” at the „High Authority”.

Each member of the ECSC was entitled to send a delegation into the COCOR commission, which was composed of

- One representative of the national standards committee
- One representative of the steel producer
- One representative of the steel processors

At that time the COCOR-commission appointed technical committees for the development of EURONORM standards for the different steel and product groups. The national standardization committees sent their delegation to these technical committees. During the following 30 years COCOR developed with the help of the technical committees a European collection on steel standards ranging from standards on steel terminology over standards for testing, dimensional standards to standards for technical delivery conditions. However there was no obligation for the national standards committees to accept the EURONORMS per se, i. e. national standards with deviations existed in parallel.

In 1985 the commission of the EC developed a „new approach on the technical harmonization and standardization”. They decided for the harmonization of legislation, i. e. European directives and European regulation, to restrict the provisions to essential safety requirements. They transferred to the European standardization organizations the task to issue unified „European standards” which fulfil the essential safety requirements. As a result of this new approach the European commission (former high authority) handed the leadership on the European standardization for iron and steel over to the newly founded „European committee for iron and steel standardization (ECISS).