



SIMPLIFICATION OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION STANDARD IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Burkhard Schulze is the Head Delegate for Standardisation of the German Association of Electrical Contractors (ZVEH), which represents 76.000 small contractors for electrical and IT technology and 1 600 electrical machinery builders. These Members must use in their daily work a range of European Standards, both from CENELEC and from CEN. Mr. Schulze illustrated in his lecture in the CEN annual meeting in Lisbon how the newly issued Norm Guide together with a targeted Information Support can help them.

The German Association Members represent a major business turnover at around € 50.000 Million. Their customer base is equally impressive: 60% are in the business and public sector, 40% are private clients. Norms are quite important both for safety reasons and to guarantee proper installation.

Good use of norms is for the Craft enterprises a way to defend their position in an ever more competitive environment with new rules and regulations regularly impacting their business. These may be technical rules but the Craft Enterprises also cannot underestimate the impact of the legal aspects.

The active participation by ZVEH members in Standardisation illustrates the importance of such work. Around 50 experts represent the German electrical contractors in different national and international committees. Their contribution is given at their own expense. Still ZVEH has to motivate their members to keep this active role and make good use of the norms issued, explaining the advantages to do so. Like explaining that misuse of the relevant norms or pretending not to know them is no protection against the sometimes considerable legal and costs. These can be in substituting or repair costs or compensation for damages.

ZVEH has organised an Information Service on Norms and Standards which is very helpful to electrical contractors. The following information is available through this Service Centre:

- Information reports on standards and on recent modifications and amendments,
- Information on request via the internet,
- Information on a specific problem via the hotline of a call centre (phone, fax, and E-mail).

In order to comply with legal requirements and to be conform to the CE Marking the standard DIN EN 60439-1 (VDE 0660 – 500) "Low-voltage switchgear assemblies" also named "Distribution boards" shall be used. This standard published in August 2000 consists of 80 pages. The planning, mounting and verification of a distribution board shall be all fully in compliance with this standard. In addition a written documentation is required. All this is very cumbersome to use for the Craft Enterprise.

In good cooperation and with financial help of large industrial companies like ABB or Siemens ZVEH developed a Guide on how to use this DIN EN 60439 standard. The Guide reduces all this information from 80 to 11 pages. It is first published in November 2002. The Guide simplifies a lot the contractor's work while still respecting all the requirements laid down in different standards involved. It gives a logic order of planning and mounting of a distribution board and refers to the relevant clauses in the standard at each individual step of the erection work. Some pages of this guide are so designed that copies of them are directly usable for the actual work, so really very practical for the installer.

This Guide is very useful to the ZVEH Micro-enterprises as it gives them the means and support in using of the relevant standards, both in the form of a simple, easy-to-use Guide with check lists and backed up by the Information Service. This is of great value as it balances their knowledge level in an area where generally the big contractor companies are leading. It removes a great competitive disadvantage for them.