

Towards a Single EU Weighing Instrument Regulation (WIR)

CECIP supports further harmonization and simplification of EU product legislation for weighing instruments and, in principle, welcomes the consolidation of the Measuring Instruments Directive (MID) and the Non-Automatic Weighing Instruments Directive (NAWID) into a single Weighing Instrument Regulation (WIR). A Regulation applied uniformly across all Member States has the potential to reduce fragmentation, eliminate gold-plating, and strengthen the Single Market.

1. Rationale: A sector-specific need for consolidation

The proposal for a Weighing Instrument Regulation (WIR) should not be seen as a general shift towards sector-specific Regulations or as a precedent for other product areas. It is a targeted response to the specific structural and historical situation of the weighing sector.

Unlike other instrument categories under the MID, weighing instruments are governed by two separate legal acts – NAWID and MID – which are based on different regulatory concepts and levels of harmonization. This reflects a distinct historical evolution: NAWID was developed as a specialized and mature framework for a highly standardized sector, while the MID was designed as a broader and more flexible instrument covering diverse measuring technologies. The coexistence of these frameworks has resulted in inconsistencies in scope, differing conformity assessment approaches and divergent national interpretations. In particular, the combination of optionality and differing concepts of intended use creates regulatory uncertainty and risks fragmenting the Single Market. This structural issue cannot be effectively addressed within the current Directive-based system. The combination of a sector-specific legislative framework for weighing instruments (1) and the use of a Regulation, rather than a Directive (2), would provide the weighing sector with greater legal certainty, regulatory clarity and a more consistent framework across the Single Market.

A WIR would replace existing legislation and establish a single, coherent framework. At the same time, it must preserve the strengths of the current system, notably the mandatory regulation of critical applications, while addressing the existing gaps in legal certainty resulting from differing concepts and interpretations under the MID and NAWID frameworks. CECIP therefore supports a WIR as a proportionate and sector-specific solution that enhances harmonization while maintaining a stable and effective regulatory environment.

2. Scope: Regulated purposes instead of optionality

The NAWID framework is based on the concept of intended use, ensuring that weighing instruments are regulated when used for clearly defined applications. This has proven effective in delivering legal certainty and consistent enforcement across the Union. By contrast, the MID allows for optionality, enabling Member States to determine whether certain applications are subject to regulatory control. This flexibility has led to inconsistencies across the Single Market, with identical instruments treated differently depending on the Member State.

A WIR should replace this approach with a single, harmonized concept of regulated purposes at EU level. The scope of the Regulation should be clearly defined, without leaving discretion to Member States. Eliminating optionality is essential to ensure uniform application, preserve legal certainty, and prevent fragmentation.

3. Technical, operational and regulatory benefits

Beyond addressing structural inconsistencies, a WIR would deliver significant technical, operational and regulatory benefits.

First, it would streamline conformity assessment. The current dual framework often requires manufacturers to undergo parallel procedures under MID and NAWID, resulting in duplicated testing, documentation and certification costs. A single regulatory framework would allow conformity assessment to be conducted through a more coherent approach for comparable product platforms, supported by one technical file and one EU Declaration of Conformity where appropriate. This would reduce administrative burden while maintaining a high level of compliance.

Second, a WIR would enable a “one design for all” approach. Today, manufacturers frequently develop separate versions of similar instruments to meet different regulatory requirements for automatic and non-automatic use. For example, an instrument used for manual check weighing in a warehouse may need to be developed and certified separately from a functionally similar system used for automated weighing on a conveyor line. A harmonized framework with aligned basic safety and performance requirements would allow the development of more unified and modular product platforms that cover multiple use cases within a single architecture, without requiring manufacturers to navigate two distinct regulatory regimes. This would significantly reduce development effort, shorten time-to-market, and facilitate innovation.

The existence of separate regulatory frameworks for automatic and non-automatic weighing instruments leads to technical overlaps and regulatory grey areas. In modern industrial environments, this distinction is increasingly blurred, particularly in systems that combine automated processes with manual functionalities. For example, instruments may perform measurements automatically during operation but switch to manual modes for verification, calibration or error handling. Under the existing framework, such hybrid configurations can create uncertainty regarding the applicable legal regime, often leading to complex discussions with notified bodies and authorities. In some cases, this may result in parallel or partially duplicative conformity assessment processes for functionally similar systems. A WIR would address these demarcation issues by establishing a single, coherent regulatory framework for all weighing instruments, regardless of whether they operate in automatic, non-automatic or hybrid configurations. This would provide legal certainty for manufacturers, notified bodies and authorities throughout the product lifecycle, and support a more consistent and predictable regulatory approach.

Digitalization further illustrates the limitations of the current system. Software updates, including security patches and functional improvements, are subject to different requirements under MID and NAWID, which can slow down innovation and create uncertainty. These differences reflect a broader lack of alignment in essential requirements, particularly in areas such as software, where divergent interpretations are often addressed through non-binding guidance. A harmonized WIR would establish clear and consistent rules for managing software updates and system integration, supporting modern approaches such as over-the-air updates, cloud connectivity and advanced data processing, while maintaining control over legally relevant functions. By aligning essential requirements at legislative level, it would reduce reliance on guidance and ensure consistent application across Member States, allowing manufacturers to design compliant software architectures according to a single set of rules.

From an operational perspective, consolidation would also simplify supply chains and product management. The current system often requires multiple product variants, separate certification pathways and different labelling approaches. A WIR would enable manufacturers to manage products more flexibly, reduce the need for multiple regulatory variants, and allow configurable solutions within a consistent compliance framework. In particular, a single framework would support more consistent labelling and reduce complexity associated with regulatory identification, while enabling products to be configured for different use cases—such as automatic or non-automatic operation—without requiring entirely separate certification pathways for functionally

equivalent systems. This would improve efficiency across production, inventory management, logistics and after-sales processes.

Finally, the benefits of consolidation extend to market surveillance and enforcement. Authorities currently apply two separate legal frameworks when addressing non-compliant or tampered instruments, despite relying on the same enforcement mechanisms. A single Regulation would provide a clear and consistent legal basis for action, improving coordination between authorities, strengthening consumer protection, and ensuring fair competition across the Single Market. In addition, by establishing a uniform and directly applicable framework, a WIR would reduce the scope for divergent national interpretations and limit the risk of gold-plating, thereby supporting an improved level playing field across Member States.

Conclusion

A single Weighing Instrument Regulation represents a logical and proportionate evolution of the current framework. Consolidating two overlapping legal regimes into a single, coherent system would eliminate structural fragmentation, enhance legal certainty and reduce unnecessary complexity. At the same time, it would create the conditions for greater efficiency, innovation and effective enforcement, benefiting industry, public authorities and ultimately consumers across the European Union. It would strengthen the functioning of the Single Market while preserving the high standards and reliability that are essential for weighing instruments.

CECIP therefore supports the development of a WIR as a targeted, sector-specific solution that delivers harmonization, reduces fragmentation and improves regulatory clarity, without increasing regulatory burden.