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NEWSLETTER

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SBS reinforces cooperation with all actors in the standardisation community

On 19th October, SBS organised its 2016 Annual Conference on “Smart standardisation for SMEs”. This second edition, as part of a series of annual conferences on the standardisation process, its impact on SMEs and its benefits, focussed on “Reinforcing the cooperation within the standardisation community”. With SMEs at the centre of discussions, the speakers addressed the importance of standards in boosting competitiveness for SMEs, the value of being involved in the standardisation process, and the shift from European to international standardisation.

The discussions covered the importance of standards in boosting innovation and competitiveness of SMEs and their internationalisation, as well as an assessment of the standards regulation and the voluntary nature of standards.

President Gunilla Almgren confirmed that SBS will keep insisting on the need for mandatory standards to be accessible and less costly for SMEs. Standards are increasingly developed at

operating at local level. It is therefore crucial for smaller companies to get involved, or to be represented, at all levels (national, European or international level) to ensure that the developed standards are SME-friendly.

[View the pictures of the event](#)



Experts discuss the Joint Initiative on Standardisation and the international dimension

The second annual experts meeting was held on 18th October and focussed on two important topics: the Joint Initiative on Standardisation (JIS) and the international dimension of standardisation. The JIS and the actions in which SBS will be directly involved were discussed with a DG GROW representative (European Commission), whereas the international dimension was discussed with representatives from ISO and IEC. SBS experts at ISO/IEC level shared their experiences and pointed out the difficulties in achieving SME-friendly standards at international level.

In a meeting at the European Parliament with MEP Nicola Danti, the experts raised the biggest challenges for SMEs in standardisation, namely SME participation in the process and the costs of standards. This was a second step in SBS' efforts to inform the Parliament and debate the difficulties SMEs face in their daily business when developing and using standards.



Best practices put forward at twinning exercise in

On 4th October, SBS organised its first twinning exercise in Berlin in collaboration with the German and Czech National Standardisation Organisations (NSOs), namely DIN (German Institute for Standardisation) and ÚNMZ (Czech office for standards, metrology and testing). The objective was to raise awareness among NSOs about the value of further involving SMEs in standardisation, and to share experiences on SME initiatives. Both DIN and ÚNMZ shared and identified good practices with the participants.

One of the key points was the necessity to involve SMEs at national level for the development of national positions to then be raised at European and international level. Carrying out broad consultations at national level was considered a suitable solution to avoid issuing standards with unfit market relevance regarding the needs of the majority of stakeholders, including SMEs. Moreover, the role of mirror committees in monitoring the activities of CEN Technical Committees (TC) was highlighted as well as the registration of national formal votes, including the ones coming from NSOs that do not actively and/or physically take part in TC meetings.

CEN Technical Board puts a standard on hold just before its publication

At the last CEN Technical Board (BT) meeting, the standard EN 16708 “Beauty salon services - Requirements and recommendations for the provision of service” was discussed. This standard was about to be published when the secretary of CEN TC 409 received a letter outlining the arguments for a “claim of defective standard” by an organisation for the aesthetic medical industry. The letter, followed by many others, asked for withdrawal and/or amendment of the standard by referring to the standard text allowing non-medical personnel (beauticians) to carry out medical procedures, hence posing a safety risk for users of such services. The treatments concerned are chemical peels; laser/IPL treatment, radiofrequency and micro-needling.

SBS stressed that the standard also poses problems from an SME perspective, such as additional costs. CEN BT decided not to proceed with the ratification of the document and has requested a meeting with the relevant representatives to consider comments expressed in order to resolve the remaining issues.

Other meetings

- SBS was invited by CEN-CENELEC to present its activities and role to a delegation from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).
- At the European Commission's Working Group “Standardisation”, with the Standardisation Administration of China, SBS shared its experience on the involvement of SMEs in the standardisation process following the adoption of the Regulation 1025/2012.

the representation of the interests of SMEs at international level.

CONSTRUCTION

The European Commission's technical platforms address construction standardisation issues

Following the release of the [European Commission report to the European Parliament on the implementation of Regulation \(EU\) 305/2011](#), the EC decided to engage in further dialogue with relevant stakeholders via technical platforms. On 12th October, the first technical platform meeting debated: (i) the scope of CPR-based harmonisation, (ii) the voluntary or mandatory nature of harmonised standards (hENs), and (iii) the exhaustiveness of hENs.

A key point was the discussion on the possible impacts of an increase/decrease in the number of standardisation requests (mandates) in support to European policies and legislation.

SBS commented on the necessity to carry out preliminary and comprehensive analyses of market requirements before proceeding with issuing new mandates. When standardisation provides support to European policies through the issue of new mandates, the preparation of these mandates must involve all economic actors at an early stage as the objective is not only to remove trade barriers but to serve the needs of standard users.

Construction Products Regulation and fire related matters

The European Commission informed the Standing Committee on Construction of several issues related to the implementation of the Construction Product Regulation. The first being the developments on the publication of delegated acts, and the second being the number of standards where publication in the Official Journal of the European Union is currently hindered by formal objections from Member States. The last issue regards fire related matters, including the request from the industry to develop delegated acts on Classification Without Testing (CWT) related to fire performance of construction products.

Moreover, the EC put forward the launch of a call for tenders for the development of a European assessment method to evaluate the fire performance of facades. The selected assessment method, which includes the possibility to adopt both large-scale and small-scale methods, will not impose additional burdens to manufacturers who only intend that their products be used in countries that regulate on the basis of small-scale tests.

Necessary revision of a standard put on hold (CEN TC 165 WG 4 - Gully and manhole tops)

Some positive developments were registered regarding composite/polymer products, which are largely manufactured and installed by SMEs. Across two of the WG 4 project teams (i.e. the ones focusing on standards EN 1433 “Gully tops & manhole tops for vehicular & pedestrian areas” and EN 124-7 “Drainage channels for vehicular & pedestrian areas”) there is a move towards talking about performance of products rather than trying to define permitted materials (e.g. steel, concrete, composites, etc.) based on very tight material specifications.

However, the lack of a formal response from the EC on how to modify EN 124 and its failure to offer representation or participation in a meeting of CEN TC 165 WG 4 is seriously inhibiting progress within this group. The Secretariat of CEN TC 165 WG 4 is unwilling to embark on a revision of EN 124:2015 without a specific mandate or at least a written response from the EC. A revision of the standard is also necessary to tackle disproportionate burdens for SMEs related to test regimes and frequency of inspection visits from notified bodies.

Standard vs CE marking (CEN/TC 193/SC1/WG 6 – Adhesives for glued-in rods)

At the last CEN TC 193 SC 1 meeting, clarification was made regarding glued-in rods being out of the scope of mandate M127 (construction adhesives). Therefore, any standard on adhesives for glued-in rods in glued laminated timber will not be harmonised under the CPR and will consequently allow for the CE marking of the product. Thus, manufacturers willing to CE mark their glued-in anchors/wood connectors must currently apply for a European Technical Assessment. This situation is not ideal for SMEs as the only Technical Assessment Bodies (TABs) entitled to cover the certification for in glued-in products are in Germany.

This means that, for the time being, SMEs may not only face high costs (due to lack of competition for TABs) but also have to deal with the language barrier.

SBS writes to request upcoming standards avoid added burdens (ISO TC 228 – Tourism and related services)

SBS recently addressed two letters to ISO TC 228 concerning two proposals currently discussed in the TC: a draft standard on “Accessible Tourism for All”, and a proposal to draft a standard on “Guest Houses”. Concerning the latter, SBS stated its support to start assessing the market relevance of such a standard. SBS believes that a common standard, agreed by Guest Houses, could enhance fair competition in the market. Indeed, at the moment, there is a discrepancy between the regulation SMEs in tourism are subject to and the absence of a set of rules applying to guest houses.

Regarding the draft standard on “Tourism for All”, SBS has requested to firstly map the current situation on accessibility and consequently only focus on the eventual deficits. SMEs already having invested a lot to ensure accessibility for everyone are the vulnerable player in the debate.

FUTURE EVENTS

30/11 – Training on standardisation (open to all)

1/12 – Board and General Assembly

6/12 – [National seminar in Dublin](#)

9/12 – [SBS Forum on ICT](#)



Small Business Standards (SBS) is a European non-profit association established in 2013 with the support of the European Commission devoted to representing and defending Small and Medium-sized Enterprises' (SMEs) interests in the standardisation system at European and international levels. Its 22 members are national and European sectoral and inter-professional associations representing SMEs in 32 European countries.

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