

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

1st SME awareness raising seminar on standardisation, a success

Brussels, 27th June 2014 – Yesterday, SBS - the European association representing SMEs in the standard making process at European and international levels – jointly organised the French Seminar on awareness raising on standardisation with APCMA¹ and in collaboration with AFNOR². The 27 participants contributed to enabling stakeholders to exchange on both issues for SMEs and specific cases.

This first seminar particularly focused on fostering closer collaboration between organisations and SBS, increasing awareness of SBS activities towards SME organisations and broadening SMEs' use of standards as well as their access to the European standardisation system through various collaborations. Indeed, the 27 participants exchanged on SMEs issues as well as specific cases (windows, ISO 90001 and the ongoing work for the benefit of SMEs). SBS Vice-President Gérard Bobier stressed the importance of standards and recognised that many SMEs are aware that standards are a source of growth and development. *"However, standards must serve the actors and not the other way around."* And according to EU Head of Delegation in Paris Anne Houtman, *"SMEs are at the core of innovation and standards are a bridge between innovation and market access."*

The SME related issues raised included:

- SME representativeness in Technical Committees
- Access fee to Technical Committees which vary depending on the profile, i.e. group or individual participation
- Information level received by the organisations representing SMEs on standardisation work.

This seminar put forward the fact that in France the system is perfectible, but there are many advantages – such as the consultation forum for SMEs with AFNOR (CCNA³), the relationships between standardisation bodies and SME business organisations and the tools for benefit of SMEs.

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EDITORS' NOTES: Small Business Standards (SBS) is the association representing European SMEs in the standardisation process at European and International levels. SBS members are national and European sectorial and interprofessional associations representing SMEs all over Europe working in and out of the EU. The work conducted under SBS is mandated and financed by the European Commission.

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¹ APCMA: Chambres de métiers et de l'artisanat

² AFNOR: Association Française de normalisation

³ Comité de concertation normalisation et artisanat