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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

SME friendly dispute resolution in standardisation at risk

Brussels, 04 May 2016 – At the General Assembly of ETSI, the European Telecommunication Standards Institute, SMEs stood firm against the proposal to delete an article of ETSI Rules of Procedure that concerns dispute resolution between its members, which would be particularly detrimental to them.

A group of multinational IT companies had proposed to delete a rule that requests ETSI members to revert to internal conciliation to solve disputes. The rule also sets that French law should be followed in case of legal escalation. Gunilla Almgren, President of SBS commented: “This proposal is unacceptable. Article 18.1 of ETSI’s Rules of Procedures is vital for all ETSI members, but especially for smaller companies. Internal dispute resolution is a faster means of solving disputes, as well as a less costly one. It puts all members on an equal footing and therefore protects smaller members from financially stronger ones. Furthermore, it can prove useful and avoid against unnecessary or premature court cases.”

Ahead of the ETSI meeting, Small Business Standards (SBS), the European association representing SMEs in the standard making process at European and international levels, called on the members of the General Assembly to oppose the deletion of article 18.1. The European Commission followed suit and issued a written position stressing that Article 18.1 encourages the participation of SMEs.

A large coalition on national delegations followed the recommendations of SBS and the European Commission and opposed the deletion of article 18.1. Thus, the ETSI General Assembly decided to maintain the article and requested a smaller group of members to prepare a proposal to better formulate the article. “We are satisfied with the outcome and will participate in the working group to ensure a proposal which is acceptable to all, large and small” concluded Gunilla Almgren.

Read the full story in the background article at <http://www.digitalsme.eu/sme-friendly-dispute-resolution-in-standardisation-at-risk/>

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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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