



# NEWSLETTER

JULY 2016



## **General Assembly: Procedure for membership applications approved**

At the Board and General Assembly meetings on 30<sup>th</sup> June, SBS presented a first draft of the Work Programme 2017 to be further discussed before the final submission to the European Commission in October. The General Assembly approved a procedure for new membership applications, including a set of questions to be answered by applying organisations. Furthermore, the Secretariat gave an update on completed and upcoming activities for 2016.



# Training session: Single Market and standardisation tools

On the day prior to the Board and General Assembly meetings, SBS organised a training session for its members. The objective was to strengthen the members' knowledge on issues related to the Single Market. The Head of Unit in charge of [SOLVIT](#) (a European Commission funded tool helping citizens or businesses when their EU rights are breached by public authorities across EU countries) generated much interest from participants. Moreover, the participants exchanged views on the Joint Initiative on Standardisation with the European Commission and on instruments to support SMEs in standardisation with CEN-CENELEC. In an effort to strengthen the relations with EFTA, a representative was invited to speak about mutual recognition. Finally, there was a presentation on the IPR Helpdesk, a tool recently developed to help SMEs as regards Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

## SBS' participation in meetings with standardisation stakeholders

Since the publication of newsletter 4, SBS participated in a number of meetings with standardisation stakeholders:

- The first meeting of the Steering Group of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation allowed stakeholders to start the development of the Terms of Reference and designate who will participate and/or lead the fifteen different actions currently being detailed. SBS will take the lead on the initiative to improve the representation of the interest of European SMEs in the international standardisation process, and also participate in the actions relating to construction and inclusiveness.
- At the Committee on Standards, the European Commission, among other things, presented its standardisation package published on 1<sup>st</sup> June comprised of a communication on standards, a guidance on service standards, the Joint Initiative on European Standardisation, evaluation reports on the European Standardisation System as well as the Annual Union work programme for European standardisation. SBS [supports](#) these measures aimed at a better inclusion of SMEs in the standardisation process and at ensuring standards can be used by smaller companies.
- SBS participated in the CEN Strategic Advisory Group on Services (SAGS) which is developing a strategy on services to be adopted later this year. The draft strategy has been circulated among members to provide input.
- At the CEN-CENELEC General Assembly in Skopje, SBS met the national standardisation bodies and exchanged views on possible joint activities for 2017.



## CONSTRUCTION

# AVCP for balustrades and railings: safety first

Following its participation in the Advisory Group on Construction on 14<sup>th</sup> June, SBS reacted on two topics: (i) the regulation on classification of performance of construction products in relation to their emissions of dangerous substances into indoor air, and (ii) the decision on applicable systems to Assess and Verify Constancy of Performance (AVCP) of balustrade and railing kits to be used in construction works solely to prevent falls.

Several Member States proposed the application of AVCP system 2+ for balustrades and railings with no structural function in public spaces (e.g. schools, stadiums and train stations) and AVCP system 4 for balustrades and railings for private uses. As alternative, applying AVCP system 3 would avoid that responsibilities on the safety of balustrades and railings be entirely put onto the installers of these products (most of them being SMEs).

# CPR: preliminary findings of study on economic impact

The EC organised a round table to present and discuss the first findings of the study on the economic impacts of the Construction Products Regulation (CPR), carried out for DG GROW by Valdani Vicari & Associati (VVA), the Danish Technological Institute (DTI) and the Netherlands Organisation for applied scientific research (TNO). Several barriers in getting a comprehensive feedback from all the actors involved in the field of construction were highlighted during the discussion. However, the study underlines some of the issues (i.e. administrative burdens and direct substantive compliance costs) that construction SMEs are facing in applying the CPR to their business. Although the opinion is more positive among distributors, manufacturers claim that costs of the implementation are higher than benefits. Furthermore, the uptake of simplified procedures for micro-enterprises limits the impact on the reduction of costs.

# BIM discussed at EBC Annual Congress

This year's EBC Annual Congress focused on how to make sure SMEs can tap into the potential of Building Information Modelling (BIM). The panel debate was inspired by the [EBC position paper on the SME-friendly implementation of BIM in Europe](#) and mentioned that the definition of an EU standardised approach is the key to fully exploit the potential of BIM. In this context, the DG GROW Director for Industrial Transformation and Advanced Value Chains expressed satisfaction regarding the recent developments of standardisation activities on BIM at European level as well as with the involvement of SMEs in this emerging sector.

## TECHNICAL NEWS

### **Thermal insulation: action needed now**

SBS has supported the expert in the field who has repeatedly insisted on the urgency of giving new momentum to the work of CEN TC 88 WG 21 (Thermal insulation materials and products). The risk being that Work Items may be dissolved due to missed deadlines. The WG only has nine months to deal with the 240 comments emerging from the CEN Enquiry and time is running out. In the emails and letters, the SBS expert has warned CEN that waiting until September or October is not reasonable since inaction in this sector would negatively impact SMEs.

### **ISO and CEN could work together on BIM standard**

At the last plenary meeting of CEN TC 442 (BIM), the convenor of ISO TC dealing with the same topic (ISO TC 59 SC 13 WG 13) presented the work done at international level on the draft standard ISO 19650-1 (Organisation of information about construction works) and invited CEN to contribute to the elaboration process. CEN members will vote on this in the upcoming months. The issue is that being that the ISO standards directly affects construction SMEs as it defines the interactions and exchange of information among all different actors involved in the construction of a given building. The SBS expert observed that the current version of this standard certainly reflects the complexity of BIM processes, but its structure cannot be easily followed by all standard users (mostly SMEs). To overcome this issue, dividing the standard into several parts might be considered in order to let all stakeholders benefit from more targeted information and guidelines.

### **Upcoming events**

- 22.09 - [National seminar \(Madrid\)](#)
- 26.09 - [National seminar \(Rome\)](#)
- 04.10 - [Twinning exercise \(Berlin\)](#)
- 18.10 - 2<sup>nd</sup> experts meeting (European Parliament, Brussels)
- 19.10 - [Annual conference \(Brussels\)](#)
- 24.11 - National seminar (London)



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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