

# SBS Newsletter

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## SBS' second National SME Seminar, Italy

On 10<sup>th</sup> October, [Accredia](#) and [Confartigianato](#) hosted SBS' second National Seminar on standardisation at the Service of SMEs in Milan (Italy). The aim of the event was to discuss standardisation developments and challenges as well as and the benefits standards can provide, through discussions and best practices.

This seminar was attended by 29 representatives of associations, members of [UNI](#) (Italian National Unification Agency) and [Accredia](#) (the Italian Accreditation Body), as well as some entrepreneurs. It particularly addressed the approach and critical participation of SMEs in the standardisation process and application of standards.

Points raised included the concern of SME representation in global discussions on competition, the European policy of standardisation and the role of SBS, the role of national legislative bodies, and a discussion on the technical aspects of standards.



### Vocabulary box

- \* [ESO](#):  
European Standardisation Organisation
- \* [NSO](#):  
National Standardisation Organisation
- \* [TC](#):  
Technical Committee
- \* [WG](#):  
Working Group
- \* [hEN](#):  
Harmonised European Norm (Standard)

*An update to the list of national standardisation bodies pursuant to Article 27 of Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European standardisation can be found [here](#)*

## **SBS Board Meeting focuses on 2015 Work Programme**

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SBS Board members met on 24<sup>th</sup> September to particularly work on the priorities and activities set out in the draft proposal for 2015. The proposal is based on an assessment of the 2014 activities as well as on further priorities set by SBS members. These priorities derive from the input from all SBS members collected during a two-month consultation period. The Board Members clearly stated that SBS will increase its position by increasing the number of experts participating in Technical Committees and by strengthening its strategic visibility towards ESOs, NSOs and other stakeholders. The draft version of the 2015 SBS proposal has been submitted to the European Commission.

## **SBS actively contributes to the CEN-CENELEC E-learning tool**

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For the first time, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, SBS participated in the meeting with the [CEN-CENELEC](#) project members to actively contribute in the E-learning project set up for SMEs. SBS had previously been invited to participate in the testing phase of the tool, composed of 6 modules. Standards eSME is an eLearning course intended for small and medium-size enterprises in particular. The tool aimed at spreading knowledge about standards and standardisation will be accessible in 23 languages as from January 2015. The course covers topics such as: why use standards? how can an SME find and apply for standards? and what are the benefits of participating in standardisation?

This meeting focused on the technicalities of such a tool for SMEs. All participants, including SBS, actively contributed in testing each module and provided comments on its accessibility. A marketing plan was also discussed. The marketing and promotion will be executed at national level (NSOs). This was a first step for SBS in its mission to identify best practices for SMEs and participate in the promotion of the tool.

## **Guide 17 on SME needs: put up for vote at ISO/IEC**

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The CEN-CENELEC [Guide 17](#), adopted in Europe in 2010, puts forward several strategies in order to address SME needs in the standards drafting process. The guide has recently been put up for vote at the international standards organisations [ISO](#) and [IEC](#). With this vote, the ISO/IEC communities will decide whether to adopt the European Guide and use it to improve the SME friendliness of their global standards.

Indeed, Guide 17 contains an analysis of the standardisation process from the preparation of a new work item to the standard adoption and gives useful advice on critical aspects for SMEs. In particular, the cost of compliance is an important element to be taken into account while standard-writers consider different technologies and testing methods. The guide also recommends that the language be plain and simple with use of examples and as few references to other standards as possible. The aim is that reading and understanding a standard becomes easier for smaller companies.

In the case of a positive vote by ISO/IEC, the European Guide will be adopted as such with only minor modifications which take into account the various definitions of SME in different countries. A positive result would be a significant milestone for SMEs in standardisation. Some elements of the guide, such as the cost principles, are a real revolution on the international standardisation scene, where so far only technical arguments can be discussed.

## EU Multi-Stakeholder Platform on ICT standardisation

The EU Multi-Stakeholder Platform on ICT standardisation (MSP) met on 2<sup>nd</sup> October in which SBS participated. The group is currently working on procedures for the identification of technical specifications developed by Fora and Consortia to be eligible for referencing in public procurement, according to the [Standardisation Regulation \(No 1025/2012\)](#). The final adoption of these procedures is to be expected in December of this year.

Furthermore, the ICT Standardisation Rolling plan was discussed. A working group is in charge of updating and reviewing the document. Updates – including new factual evidence such as new technical committees or new standardisation projects – are then published in the form of an addendum. The actual review of the plan, which includes new policy areas and priorities, will rather occur through a new publication that has to be formally adopted by the EC. The review process is ongoing and the MSP will present its work on the subject in December 2014 for the EC to finally adopt in January 2015. So far the new policy areas are: active ageing, advanced manufacturing, Public Sector Information, big data, and broadband infrastructure.

Another main issue broached at the meeting is the fact that the EC is considering the issue of a standardisation mandate for standards in cyber security. A new group was created in order to analyse the current situation and needs in terms of standards and propose solutions. Indeed, different stakeholders called for standards to address the issue of cyber security and requested the EC to coordinate efforts in doing so.

## SMEs consulted on the Vademecum on European Standardisation

In 2014, the European Commission undertook a revision process of the [Vademecum](#) in which SBS was invited to take part. The Vademecum addresses the general role, preparation and adoption process of the standardisation requests (mandates), as well as the common requirements for drafting harmonised standards. It serves as a guide for Commission officials, Member States and standardisation stakeholders, providing a clear picture of both the Commission policies and processes in this field. However, this Vademecum does not have a binding status.

In its reply to the consultation, based on feedback from member organisations, SBS pointed out the crucial importance of Market relevance's principle in proposing draft standardisation requests (mandates). Indeed, these should take into account concrete demands of the economy. This will ensure the consistency of standardisation with what society really needs and will put SMEs at the core of the debate. SBS also asked for clarification of the procedures and precise scopes of the standardisation requests.

SBS therefore requested that SMEs be regularly consulted on draft standardisation requests before official adoption. This consultation of SMEs should be carried on in a systematic way and SBS hence asks for a minimum of 30 days to participate in an EC consultation on the drafting of standardisation requests.

Last but not least, SBS also took part in the Working Group of the Vademecum on European standardisation on 14<sup>th</sup> October. All Members and observers from the Committee of Standards were invited to actively contribute to the discussion, initiated by the European Commission. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the text of the current drafts of the Vademecum in detail. SBS hence used the opportunity to promote the points here above.

*As of Regulation 1025/2012, the EC “mandates” of draft standards were renamed “standardisation requests”.*

*All documents related to EU draft mandates may be found [here](#)*

## **SME priorities in European Standardisation for 2015**

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The European Commission adopted the 2015 Annual Union Work Programme for Standardisation end of July. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Coordination Meeting between ESOs and Annex III Organisations with the EC and EFTA, it was agreed that a written procedure would be initiated on the draft "Policy Letter 2015" which would become the EC's "Guidance Note on European Standardisation 2015" accompanying the Annual Union Work Programme for Standardisation. SBS – alongside the other three Annex III organisations ([ECOS](#), [ETUI](#), [ANEC](#)) – had put forward a joint document as a contribution to the EC's "Guidance Note".

The joint document presented provided a common position on political expectations for 2015 in view of the adoption of the Annual Union Work Programme for European standardisation. Annex III organisations therefore obtained the integration of SME priorities in the adopted Note.

The four priorities Annex III organisations requested to be taken into consideration are:

- i) the need for a balanced and effective participation,
- ii) raising awareness on the role and rights of the Annex III organisations,
- iii) alignment of working methods and governing rules of the three European Standardisation Organisations ([CEN](#), [CENELEC](#) and [ETSI](#)), and
- iv) a higher level of democracy and transparency in the membership, management and functioning of Technical Committees, Working Groups and Sector Fora.

## **CEN CENELEC SME Working Group meets in Brussels**

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On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, SBS participated in the [CEN-CENELEC](#) SME Working Group (WG). The WG is composed of representatives of National Standardisation Organisations (NSOs), Business organisations and the European Commission. During the meeting, the participants were updated on the activities of the two Task Forces "Communication towards SMEs" and "Trade associations support to SMEs".

The SME WG also approved SBS as the new chair of Task Force 2 "Trade Associations support to SMEs". This is a crucial task force for small businesses as trade associations play an important role in helping SMEs benefit from standards and standardisation.

On communication, SBS asked about the status of the CEN-CENELEC Guide 17 in [ISO](#) considering the guide seems to be more of an informative document rather than an official guide published by ISO. SBS therefore suggested that CEN-CENELEC members should try to advocate, at ISO TMB (Technical Management Board), to upgrade the status of Guide 17 to an official ISO Guide.

Among other subject matters discussed was the outcome of the Ad Hoc Group on project proposals for future SME activities and the [British Standards Institute \(BSI\)](#) representative presented the preliminary outcomes of their research on the SME landscape and standards in the United

## **SBS contributes to EMU General Assembly**

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SBS was invited to the European Metal Union ([EMU](#)) General Assembly in order to thoroughly present SBS and deliver an overview of ongoing activities to all their members. EMU has been an SBS member organisation since SBS' first General Assembly in December 2013. The union is an active sectoral member with a nominated expert in standardisation technical committees in the welding sector (TC 121 Welding and Allied Processes and TC 121 SC 04 Quality Management in the Field of Welding).

## SBS submits candidacies for ETSI Board and GA

Ahead of next year's mandates, [ETSI](#) issued a formal "Call for Nominations" for representation in the Board and General Assembly (GA). SBS therefore sent out the call to all member associations so as to nominate candidates in the ETSI decision making bodies. SBS Board elected to put forward two candidates to ETSI: Sebastiano Toffaletti for the Board and Peter Statev for the General Assembly.

The ETSI Board is to be comprised of 28 elected members with one additional member from the "USER membership category" and one additional member meeting the SME membership conditions (as long as they are not already part of the initial 28). Hence, the ETSI GA will elect between 28 (minimum) and 30 (maximum) Board members in November. The elected Board members act in an individual capacity rather than as a direct representative of an ETSI member. Board members act in the interests of the Institute and the membership and shall use their best professional judgement in the execution of the Board tasks.

## Technical news

### ◆ TC 250 SC5 - Eurocodes

Standards related to Eurocodes and to connectors are currently under revision. SBS expert (Mr Kuhlenkamp) was invited to provide additional information to the TC in order to contribute to the drafting phase. According to Mr Kuhlenkamp, the second generation of Eurocodes should consist of a compact summary of which 80% of day to day tasks can be completed. They should therefore allow for an easy use by civil engineers active in field. For specific construction issues, extra, exact proofs should be found in a set of normative annexes. A "European Standards guidebook" should demonstrate how different construction materials are used (masonry, concrete, steel, timber

The aim of having a compact summary with additional annexes is for the concept to correspond to the way a civil engineer works. Indeed, to calculate the measurements of a construction it is important to have simple calculation formulas. A 'conservative measurement' allows for unforeseen circumstances in large scale constructions. The civil engineer can identify a position where he can potentially reduce the cross section or the number of fasteners used. He can hence do this by using a more exact and specific proof.

### ◆ BT WG 102 - CEN-EC Task Force on Construction

The BT WG 102 is a joint [CEN](#) & European Commission task force set up to discuss the relevant issues and establish a roadmap to fulfil the requirements of the Construction Products Regulation (CPR).

SBS attended the meeting on 11th September which aimed at taking stock of comments and finalising the draft CEN template for all future harmonised standards under the [CPR](#). The WG will continue to circulate the final draft template which will then undergo approval by CEN. The discussion during the meeting enabled SBS to highlight the need for standards to be understandable and usable by SMEs, most of all by integrating simple measures and principles collected in the CEN Guide 17.

For example, on Testing Methods, SBS proposed to quote Clause 5.4.4 of Guide 17 in the template: this clause calls on limiting costly testing procedures and choosing the less onerous. In the same way, concerning Factory Production Control, SBS asked to introduce a clause on the need to take into account the production levels and types in setting the sampling values.



### ◆ EOTA Stakeholders Advisory Group

During the [EOTA Stakeholders Advisory Group](#) on 17<sup>th</sup> September, [EOTA](#) (European Organisation for Technical Assessment) president explained in an opening presentation that – according to CPR – the organisation may receive co-finance from the European Commission and has three staff members coordinating the work of several Technical Assessment Bodies (TABs) all over the EU. The services offered by EOTA members are European Technical Assessments (ETAs), i.e. written deliverables constituting an alternative voluntary route to CE Marking for non-standardised construction products.

Concretely, when a manufacturer makes a request for a technical assessment of a construction product with the aim to CE mark it, the contacted TAB examines if the product is not or not fully covered by an hEN. In cases where a harmonised standard is not available, assessment methods are developed in EOTA and are documented in a so-called EAD (European Assessment Document). There are more than 450 assessment methods agreed upon in EOTA under the CPD (Construction Products Directive), a further 200 plus are currently in the development phase under the CPR. In that sense, EOTA is a pre-standardisation organisation, and thus a complimentary partner in the EU harmonisation process. The organisation coordinates best practice exchange of bodies in order to achieve EU harmonised knowledge, acceptance of technical assessments of construction products.

The Stakeholders Advisory Group within EOTA convenes all relevant stakeholders of construction, including SBS. The last meeting focussed on the assessment of the CPR implementation (as far as the ETA route is concerned) and it was the first one organised by EOTA under CPR with the whole construction value-chain. SBS welcomed this consultation exercise as a new way to involve SMEs in the EOTA process and hopes it will be regularly updated by EOTA.

During an open exchange, SBS mentioned the need to work out the differences with the EC in order to unblock certain delays hurting the SME manufacturers. Indeed, this leads to the risk of different forms of EAD depending on the agreement between manufacturers and TAB.

### ◆ Advisory Group for construction

The [Advisory group](#) for Construction was constituted by the Commission and replaces the previous Preparatory Group of the Standing Committee on Construction (SCC). The group is composed of experts and is not a Committee gathering Member States representatives. The aim is to assist the Commission in issues related to the implementation of the [CPR](#), including the preparation of Delegated Acts. SBS sits in the SCC and was thus also invited to the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

During the meeting an interesting discussion took place on the concept of “construction products” and “construction works” within the CPR and in relation to other directives supported by harmonised standards. The Commission clarifies that the CPR is a legal instrument stating that if there is a standard which refers to products that are clearly defined by the criteria, then the standard applies to those products and the CE marking is mandatory.

Specific technical examples of balustrades, turbines and anchors were also discussed in relation to the intended use of these elements that fall under the CPR or different European directives, such as the machinery directive or the directive on personal protective equipment. Last but not least, the Commission informed the participants that there is a new publication of harmonised standards in the Official Journal of the EU, published on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

### ◆ CEN TC 124 - Draft EN 14732 Timber structures

The draft standard EN 14732 specifies requirements for the manufacture of timber elements and applies to glued ceiling and roof elements. Rules and procedures for the assessment and verification of constancy of performance of the elements are included in the standard. EN 14732 is currently approved in an EAP-method. A particular disadvantage in an UAP process is that differentiated statements will no longer be allowed.

In the present version of such small prefabricated wood elements, they are assigned to the AVCP level 2 +, which falls under the responsibility of the external monitoring by an accredited body. The prefabrication of such one-sided clad, mechanically fastened wood panel elements is a widespread practice in timber for many individual timber construction projects in Europe. Currently there is no similar requirement (AVCP 2 +) in any European country for these construction products which have a low proportion of prefabrication.

In view of the increase in costs for small and medium-sized enterprises, SBS expert (Mr Steinmaurer) stressed that this fact does not correspond to the current practice in Europe and no additional security requirement is fulfilled. The philosophy of the Construction Products Regulation is thus contradicted in several points. The CPR specifies that the evaluation of the performance cost of manufacturers should decrease. Moreover, the regulation states that the Commission shall choose the least expensive system consistent with the fulfilment of all basic requirements for construction works. Finally, prefabricated elements mechanically fastened with a unilateral coating are mainly construction products, which are manufactured individually and with high performance and quality at the site. The few prefabricated elements of these products can always be checked by engineers or agents of the owner on site.

For this reason, this draft standard in an EAP method that allows no substantive opinion/ position is unacceptable to be taken over as a European standard.

### Upcoming events

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|----------|----------------------------------|
| 26.11.14 | SBS Board Meeting                |
| 02.12.14 | SBS National SME Event - Germany |
| 04.12.14 | SBS Experts Seminar              |
| 11.12.14 | SBS General Assembly             |



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Small Business Standards (SBS) is a European non-profit association established in 2013 with the support of the European Commission. SBS is exclusively devoted to representing and defending SME interests in the standardisation system at European and international levels.

Its 21 members are national and European sectoral and inter-professional associations representing SMEs all over Europe. The membership is thus open to all associations matching these criteria.

SBS was created to meet the European Union's aspiration to make the standardisation system as inclusive, transparent and open as possible, by strengthening the participation of "weak" stakeholders such as SMEs.



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