



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 11 October 2017

SBS 2017 annual conference calls European standardisation regulation a ‘door opener’

Brussels, 11 October 2017 – Small Business Standards (SBS), the European association representing SMEs in standardisation, yesterday brought together around 100 participants to celebrate and debate the EU Regulation 1025/2012 on European standardisation, adopted exactly five years ago. It emerged that most SMEs believe this legislation has been a ‘door opener’ – improving their ability to participate in standardisation. Yet they don’t feel fully involved in this process and face challenges linked to fast-evolving fields such as digitisation.

Featuring key speakers from the public and private sectors, the half-day event – SBS’ third annual conference – focused on the impact so far of this regulation on SMEs. Participants from the European standardisation community presented and exchanged their views on the initiatives that have been put in place, or are being envisaged, at national and European levels, to ensure a level playing field between the standards-makers and users’ needs.

“We all seem to agree on the value of standards and that these need to be driven by the market or demand,” said SBS President, Gunilla Almgren, in her concluding remarks. “However, to ensure that all businesses benefit from standards, we need a system where stakeholders compete on an equal footing.”

The conference highlighted a range of major challenges for the European standardisation community, linked to bridging the gap between SMEs and standardisation. Digitisation may prove to be the biggest challenge, due to the speed with which standards are evolving.

Burdensome rules, that fail to take into account the specific characteristics of SMEs, also need to be reduced wherever possible. Conference participants noted that trade associations at national and European level play a key role in addressing this issue.

Looking on the bright side, Mrs Almgren said that SMEs – thanks to their ingenuity, flexibility and innovative spirit – are ideally placed to turn the challenges of tomorrow into new business opportunities. She called for the introduction of ‘SME-compatibility checks’ in the standardisation system, so as to further narrow the gap between standardisation and SMEs.

After welcoming the positive atmosphere and fruitful debate throughout the conference, Gunilla Almgren told the audience that SBS will continue to ensure that SMEs’ voice is heard across all the relevant regulatory and standardisation areas. She invited everyone to start preparing for a follow-up conference in 2022, for the 10th anniversary of EU Regulation 1025/2012.

Held on 10 October 2017 in the Solvay Library in Brussels, the SBS 2017 annual conference lined up several high-level speakers and stakeholders from the European standardisation community. Among them were European and national institutions with responsibility for standardisation, a European policy think-tank, and four representatives from the business sector.

[Annual conference pictures](#)

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EDITORS' NOTES: Small Business Standards (SBS) is the association representing European SMEs in the standardisation process. SBS is co-financed by the European Commission and EFTA. Further information: Christel Davidson, Director, +32 (0)2 285 07 15, c.davidson@sbs-sme.eu
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Small Business Standards (SBS) is the European association representing and supporting small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in the standardisation process, both at European and international levels.

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