



PRESS RELEASE

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“All is well with European standardisation, but things can still improve” announces the European Commission

Brussels, Thursday 22 November 2018 – Today, the European Commission published a Communication on harmonised standards, alongside two others (Communications respectively covering the Single Market, and a better investment environment in Europe). In its standards Communication, the European Commission highlights the success of standardisation in developing the Single Market. Moreover, it proposes to further improve the legal certainty of all actors, including SMEs, involved in the development of harmonised standards, i.e. European standards adopted on the basis of a request by the Commission for the application of EU legislation.

SBS, as the European organisation representing the interests of SMEs in the standardisation process, very much welcomes today’s publication on harmonised standards. It also acknowledges the success of standardisation achieved to date on the continent. SMEs absolutely depend on standards, particularly harmonised standards, because they provide companies’ products with a presumption of conformity with EU legislation.

One of the Commission’s new proposals is to prepare a guidance document. This will further clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different actors, during all stages of the harmonised standards development.

SBS Director Christel Davidson said: “SBS welcomes this initiative, and requests that due account is taken of the legitimate interests of all stakeholders in the process. It is important to remember that standards are first and foremost a tool developed by industry for industry. While legal texts cannot be easily changed, standards are flexible tools which can be rapidly and efficiently adjusted as needs arise.”

Moreover, SBS welcomes the new Communication’s many references to SMEs. This includes SMEs’ role in the standardisation process, the need to ensure their increased participation in standards-writing, and their importance to the EU economy in general.

“Given the recognised importance of harmonised standards, SBS calls on the European Commission to consider the possibility of proposing a ‘European Year’ focusing on European standardisation,” added Ms Davidson.

END

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
Press contact: Tessa Delville +32 (0)2 285 07 04, pressoffice@sbs-sme.eu

www.sbs-sme.eu