



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019





## Small Business Standards in brief

Small Business Standards (SBS) is a European non-profit association (aisbl), co-financed by the European Commission and the EFTA Member States.

Our goal is to represent the interests of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the standardisation process at European and international levels. In addition, SBS aims to raise awareness among SMEs of the benefits brought by the use of standards and to encourage them to get involved in the standardisation process.

SBS was set up to fulfil the European Union's commitment to make the standardisation system as inclusive, transparent and open as possible, as laid out in the EU Regulation 1025/2012 on the European Standardisation System. Acknowledging shortcomings and challenges in the system, this piece of legislation also recognises the vital role that public authorities play in supporting SMEs in the standards-making process.

Our association represents the interests of over 10 million SMEs through 21 SME organisations:





## Message from the President

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The 2019 Work Programme was ambitious, but in general SBS delivered on all its aims in good time. We are particularly proud of the adaptability we displayed this year.

SBS devoted substantial efforts to further improve SME participation in standardisation. We need only look at our experts' successes. The fact that several of their comments have been taken up in some sectors showcases our experts' technical expertise as well as the trust they gained in those groups. We also would like to give credit to one of our experts who managed to successfully obtain the removal of problematic wording in standards contravening CEN rules in the construction sector.

But not only were we active in the committees and working groups, the year 2019 also brought some incremental improvements to our collaboration with ETSI. At the end of the year, a mechanism was adopted allowing SBS to comment on the final stable draft of standards which is a major step forward. However, the denial of SBS's request for the right of opinion at CEN and CENELEC level leads us to feel that further improvement can be attained in our cooperation with standardisation bodies.

SBS and the other Annex III organisations have also agreed to continue working together on the international level despite the end of the Joint Initiative on Standardisation. A constructive meeting gathering the Annex III organisations and ISO and IEC was held at the end of 2019 showing that the dialogue must be pursued with the international bodies to find ways to ensure that the SME, consumer, environmental and social interests are taken into consideration in the international standardisation system.

On the topic of awareness-raising, 2019 was highly successful. I am thinking particularly of the training course organised with European Digital SME Alliance and the World Intellectual Property Organization on Alternative Dispute Resolution, the SBS Lift Forum and our national seminars in Bucharest and Paris. All these events broke previous records in terms of participant

numbers. And it should also be noted that the Romanian seminar was exceptionally well received by the national press.

SBS was also strong on the communication and visibility side. Communication was indeed proven to be even more crucial with the special year we had. For example, SBS received much praise for launching its corporate video which has been widely shown at various events and gatherings since its release in June. In these special times, such opportunities for sharing knowledge bring a more than necessary support to SMEs.

Finally, I believe it is more than worth mentioning the implementation of a standard within SBS's own structure! The Secretariat, to be consistent, has decided to prepare for the implementation of standard ISO 9001 and is currently designing procedures available in written format to facilitate and improve efficiency in SBS's internal work.

To conclude, I would like to thank our partners, members, experts and staff for all the work done and the results achieved in 2019. Let us wish for fruitful collaborations and SME-friendly standards for the years to come.



Gunilla ALMGREN  
Small Business Standards President



## Representing the interests of SMEs

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SBS represents the SME perspective on standardisation at both political and technical levels. Technical representation is provided by experts appointed each year. These experts are appointed to represent SBS on the basis of their technical expertise and awareness of SME issues in a particular field. Experts thus constitute one of the core elements of SBS as they



provide representation for SMEs in the actual development process for standards in Technical Committees (TC) and Working Groups (WG) in CEN, CENELEC, ETSI, ISO and IEC.

In 2020, the General Assembly appointed 68 experts to represent the interests of SMEs concerning standardisation, of whom 17 were new. These experts covered new sectors such as cultural heritage, pedal cycles, glass in buildings, the acoustic properties of building elements and buildings, and cookware. Because some experts sit as paid experts on one TC and as non-funded experts on others (some at both European and international level), it is more accurate to say that 59 individuals received 75 nominations, which amounts to participation in roughly 200 different TCs/SCs or WGs.

Two expert meetings were held this year as an opportunity for experts to meet, to establish links with other SBS experts working both in the same field and others, and to learn from each other by sharing experiences. The first meeting of the year was held on 6-7 February, providing an opportunity for an exchange of views between experienced colleagues and to discuss open issues with the SBS secretariat. The second expert meeting was held on 23 October. The main topic, alongside the important exchanges of experience among the experts, was clarification and discussion of the Harmonised Standard (HAS) consultation process.



*The SBS experts' meetings were held in Brussels on 7 February and 23 October*



## SBS sector by sector focus

Since 2016, SBS undertakes its sectoral approach by reinforcing cooperation with construction, ICT, lift and PPE and textile care organisations.

Several successes were achieved through this approach. In construction, efforts to reach out and engage with other stakeholders brought tangible results, such as three joint position papers. SBS succeeded in putting the aspect of circular economy in PPE and textile care on the agenda for the European Commission and Standardisation organisations. Thanks to SBS's work and the political emphasis on the green deal, this topic is now gathering momentum.

SBS also succeeded in strengthening its collaboration with other industry associations in the construction and PPE and textile care sectors, leading to its work gaining importance and visibility.

For the ICT sector SBS successfully tackled the topic of cybersecurity through its forum and a position paper. SBS also played a key role in the overall success of the ETSI Technology Awareness Roadshow for SMEs. We should also highlight the good results achieved by SBS at ETSI through cooperation between its experts in ICT and lifts and the respective sectoral approaches. This cooperation has led to the forthcoming publication of a Technical Report (TR 103 546) on IoT applications in lifts.



## An annual forum for each sector

On 22 October, SBS organised its fifth Construction Forum on recent developments concerning the Construction Products Regulation (CPR) and the implementation of the CPR Basic Requirement for Construction Works (BRCW) 7 "Sustainable use of natural resources".

The SBS ICT Forum on 22 October discussed the role of standards in ensuring that SMEs all along the supply chain achieve the right level of cybersecurity. The key take-away of the Forum was the Cybersecurity Act and the resulting cybersecurity certification schemes ensuring a far safer, cyber-secure behaviour among SMEs.

The SBS Forum on Personal Protective Equipment, held on 24 October, provided a platform for an exchange of ideas on how standards can be used to promote circular business models for PPE and textile services. The main inputs and outcomes fed into the position paper on 'European legislation and standardisation to support sustainable business models for the PPE

and textile care industry'. The SBS PPE and textile sector also organised a seminar on the PPE Regulation on 19 February 2020 in Frankfurt. More than 90 participants discussed the framework of the PPE Regulation (EU) 2016/425 focusing on the sustainability aspects of textiles and protective clothing.

The lift sector organised their forum on 23 May and a SBS lift seminar on 17 October. Both events allowed lift sector SMEs to meet and discuss the latest news on digitalisation and cybersecurity as applied to the lift sector.



## Visibility and information

SBS' ability to achieve its objectives—to represent the interests of SMEs in the standardisation process at European level, to raise SMEs' awareness of standardisation and to encourage SMEs involvement in the standardisation process—is directly related to its ability to communicate effectively and engage with its various audiences.

The objective this year was to implement the measures set out in the 2018 communications strategy and maximise the impact of its defined messages.

One of the main communications achievements this year is the SBS corporate video, a tool designed with a talented London-based agency to explain the association's role and work as well as the importance of standardisation for SMEs to external audiences. The video has been shown on various occasions, yielding very positive feedback each time.



SBS corporate video  
on [YouTube](#)

This year also marked the launch of the SBS internal newsletter, “SBS e-news”, to publicise information that is relevant and useful for SBS members and experts, and to gather feedback on issues raised.

To reinforce and consolidate its position within the standardisation community, SBS would like to extend its network throughout Europe. To achieve this objective, SBS developed a two-page leaflet presenting its membership benefits to potential new members.

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT SBS AND STANDARDS**

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SMEs can benefit from participating in the development of standards. By taking part in working groups, they can gain awareness about industry trends, cultivate expertise, express their views, and defend the interests of their company and profession. Moreover, complying with standards allows SMEs to access difficult markets.

**MICHELLE DETALLE**  
CEO, COOPHO  
14 employees  
Luxembourg

**SME**

As a small company in a field dominated by large companies, Nord'Imprim faced many challenges. Using standards put us on an equal footing with larger companies. Standards promote a real business dynamic. They were a unifying tool within the company and helped Nord'Imprim gain its competitive edge. Today, our company is recognised as the most sustainable printer in the north of Paris.

**Vanessa MERLIN**  
Quality, Security & Environment Chief Officer  
Nord'Imprim, 48 employees  
France

**SME**

Standards help to improve service quality in tattoo studios, resulting in increased consumer trust. However, it is very difficult for an individual company to find its way and to be heard in the standardisation process. Therefore, it is essential for smaller companies to have an organisation such as SBS to represent them. Otherwise, there is a risk that the standards developed will not be fit for small companies.

**Andy SCHMIDT**  
CEO, Body Electric Tattoo Studio  
1 employees  
Germany

**SME**

I have been active in the development of standards since 2016. As an SBS expert, I rely on a network of SMEs. Together, we develop the position of SBS on "Safety of children's clothing" (CEN TC 248/WG 20) and on "Risks in the sleeping environment" (CEN TC 248/WG 24). This allows me to speak on behalf of European SMEs affected by the standard.

**Andrés BOSCH**  
Standardisation Expert, Children's Fashion  
Spain

**WSPER**

The work of SBS for the lift sector is tangible and essential for the future of our SMEs. SBS does not just inform us about new standards and their implementation; it also supports us on the political and technical fronts, against provisions that could hamper our businesses.

**Massimo REZZI**  
EFESA President and ICM CEO  
Italy

**MEMBER**

**JOIN SBS TO IMPROVE STANDARDS FOR SMES**

Contact the Secretariat: [info@sbs-sme.eu](mailto:info@sbs-sme.eu)

**SBS**

**Small Business Standards**

*The SBS membership leaflet*

Events were another key element of the activities targeting visibility. The fifth edition of Small Business Standards’ annual conference on 23 May at the BIP’s “House of the Capital Region”, was a real success. This year’s event focused on a very hot topic: sustainable development. The topic of this year’s event was how SMEs could contribute to two of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The high-profile theme of the event enabled SBS to break its attendance record with more than 130 participants.

As in previous years, real-world case studies were presented. While the first panel focused on ‘Standards and SMEs for sustainable cities and communities’, the subject of SDG 11, the second panel addressed the role of standards and SMEs in responsible consumption and production, relating to SDG 12.





*SBS annual conference "Standards for Europe's sustainable growth"*

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that on 10 April, SBS was the special invitee of CEN and CENELEC's 10-10 Webinar which was wholly dedicated to presenting the work of SBS.



## Raising SME awareness

A core mission of SBS is to raise awareness about standardisation amongst SMEs. This activity aims to inform and train SMEs, either directly or through their trade associations, about the standardisation system and about the benefits SMEs can gain by using standards.

The national seminars are organised in conjunction with a trade association at national level and the national standardisation organisations (NSOs) of the country. This activity is thus one of the most important ways of engaging with both types of stakeholder.



## National seminars

This year, SBS organised two national seminars. The aim of the seminars is to raise awareness about standards and to inform and train SMEs about the benefits of standards, as well as to foster an exchange of views between European and national representatives and stakeholders of the standardisation system.

The first national seminar of the year took place in Bucharest on 10 July. It was co-organised with the CNIPMMR, the Romanian council for SMEs, to inform and train Romanian SMEs about the advantages of using standards, as well as to enable representatives and stakeholders of the Romanian standardisation system to exchange views. The seminar was very successful and with 40 people in attendance.



SBS Financial Officer Sorina Mogojan introducing SBS at the Romanian seminar

The second seminar was organised in Paris on 27 November with SBS member CMA France, the French assembly of crafts chambers. Between presentations by French standardisation stakeholders, participants discussed standards in the context of craft and micro enterprises, AFNOR's strategic orientation of committees and ISO/TC324 on the sharing economy.



SBS national seminar in Paris



### “Alternative Dispute Resolution: a potential tool for SMEs for standards related disputes”

The primary purpose of SBS’s training sessions is to inform SMEs and their representatives about standards and their development, as well as encouraging them to get involved in standardisation.

On 22 January, SBS co-organised a seminar with the DIGITAL SME Alliance and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) entitled “Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): a potential tool for SMEs for standards-related disputes”.

The seminar aimed at presenting the potential benefits of mediation and arbitration tools, reasons for their low take-up, and showcasing some practical examples of the application of ADR mechanisms for SMEs.



Seminar “Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): a potential tool for SMEs for standards-related disputes”



## Twinning seminar

SBS has been organising twinning seminars since 2016. The idea is for two NSBs (one “strong” and another one less so) to share their experience of reaching out to, engaging with and encouraging SMEs to get involved in the standardisation process.

The seminar was organised with the support of SMEUnited and took place in Brussels on 21 February 2020. At the seminar it was agreed that further cooperation between NSBs and federations of SMEs is necessary in order to raise SMEs’ awareness of the benefits of standards and get them involved in the process. In the Benelux countries, only very few standards are translated into the national languages. It was agreed that SME organisations could help NSBs to identify those standards that should be translated as a priority. The NSBs presented a number of interesting initiatives taken in their countries to involve SMEs (e.g., standardisation platforms in the Netherlands).



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Small Business Standards is co-financed by the European Commission and the EFTA Member States



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