



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

ABOUT SBS

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

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

SBS speaks on behalf of 22,5 million European SMEs.

This publication only reflects the views of Small Business Standards. The European Union and the EFTA Member States are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the SBS annual report for 2022.

I would like to start by thanking the members of the Board for placing their trust and confidence in my abilities to assume the mandate of President of Small Business Standards for another four years.

As we reflect on the challenging year that has been 2022 for the EU economy, SBS' journey has been marked by a series of achievements and milestones in the pursuit of a European standardisation system that ensures the participation of all stakeholders, including SMEs.

The European standardisation package, a series of measures published by the European Commission in February, should be mentioned as one of the main highlights this year. The package aims to ensure global leadership of European standards, promoting the EU's values while building a resilient, green and digital single market. SBS has ensured to be involved in every step of the initiative by participating in different meetings, such as an EESC hearing and meetings with MEPs, and publishing its position on the EU Standardisation Strategy and the technical amendment to Regulation 1025/2012 and a joint Annex III organisations' recommendations to improve the ESOs' governance and inclusiveness. The improved reference to inclusion and the role of national stakeholders in the final text should be considered as an important achievement.

Moreover, SBS was invited to participate in the High-Level Forum on standardisation created in September. The Forum is an important step towards more inclusiveness and transparency and will be crucial in setting European standardisation priorities and developing and implementing standardisation work.

It is also noteworthy that SBS got involved in STAND4EU, a Horizon Europe-funded project that recognises the role of standards in bridging the gap between research and the market by increasing the probabilities of market uptake of technological innovations.

Regarding sector-specific activities, SBS has closely followed the developments about the Commission proposal for a new Construction Products Regulation and monitored the developments in artificial intelligence, the Data Act and digital standards in support of the EU's green and digital transition. Additionally, the SBS lift sector carried out a study to assess the feasibility of European standards on lift modifications. As for the SBS PPE and textile care sector, the

work revolved around the development of a first draft standard with eco-design requirements for PPE garments. Finally, SBS organised the ICT, lift and PPE and textile care fora and a webinar on smart textiles to raise awareness of the relevant policy and standardisation developments in these sectors.

To continue with awareness-raising activities, communication has been central to SBS' work of strengthening the SMEs' voice within the standardisation community. SBS organised a successful webinar on the Standardisation Strategy and another one on the Accessibility Act and contributed to high-profile events organised by the EU and US Trade Technology Council and the WTO reflecting on SMEs' participation in international trade. SBS further raised the voice of SMEs with its annual event held in June focusing on the Sustainable Product Initiative proposed by the European Commission in March.

In 2022, SBS not only delivered on the ambitious objectives of its work programme but also continued to expand its work to new activities. The year ahead holds the promise of new opportunities in which we will need to ensure that future standardisation developments reflect the European level of ambition and support the international competitiveness of our SMEs. Together with a strong network of experts, members and partners, we get on to the next chapter of the SBS journey driven by a vision of a resilient and sustainable future which, at the same time, guarantees SMEs' opportunity to innovate and grow.

Gunilla Almgren

Small Business Standards President

2022 IN NUMBERS



67 experts



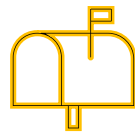
233 TCs and WGs



465 participants at SBS events



12 position papers



1260 newsletter recipients



1287 Twitter
1187 followers

HIGHLIGHTS

- **SME participation in technical standardisation work**

Meetings and training sessions for experts

This year, SBS appointed 67 experts to 233 Technical Committees and Working Groups of CEN, CENELEC, ETSI, ISO and IEC.

On 6 April, the SBS secretariat invited the SBS experts to an online training session providing them with an introduction to the work of SBS and an overview of SBS experts' activities and responsibilities. Experts met again in Brussels in May where their feedback was gathered to feed in SBS recommendations on how to improve ESO's Governance.



Further activities took place during the second part of the year. On 27 June, a webinar dedicated to experts was organised to explain the process for the development of standardisation requests and introduce SBS' new tool to monitor the track developments. In view of the call for new experts in September, SBS also organised a webinar in August to present the content of the call and SBS experts' mission to potential candidates. Lastly, SBS experts were invited to follow a [Training for newly appointed Technical Officers](#) organised by CEN and CENELEC on 12 December.

Standardisation monitoring

SBS monitors the creation of new areas of standardisation work at the European and international levels. This year, significant efforts have been carried out in the monitoring activities to ensure SBS members and experts are consulted on the proposals. SBS indeed developed a tool providing an overview of the status of developments of future

standardisation requests. The tool helps SBS experts and members to better anticipate and contribute to the consultations related to standardisation requests.

- **Engagement with standardisation bodies**

In the context of the Standardisation Strategy and the call on the ESOs to make proposals to improve their inclusiveness, the Annex III organisations, including SBS, published recommendations to improve CEN and CENELEC's and ETSI's governance.

Participation in CEN and CENELEC activities

SBS participated in the CEN and CENELEC Technical Board meetings and the CEN/BT Technical Committee Management Group (BT/TCMG) meetings. An important discussion point raised in the Technical Board meetings was the participation of liaison and partner organisations in CEN-CENELEC Joint Technical Committees. SBS welcomes the modification of the decision which clarifies that Annex III organisations can participate in any TC and their WGs without restriction.

SBS also attended the CEN-CENELEC Joint Policy Group meetings which discussed the implementation of the CEN-CENELEC Strategy 2030, the Standardisation Strategy and the work done under the EC-ESOs Task Force on the timely European standards.

Furthermore, SBS contributed to the compilation of a best practices database for SME involvement in standardisation in the CEN-CENELEC SME Working Group meeting and to the discussions about the Digital Product Passport in the meetings of the CEN-CENELEC/BT WG 16 'Strategic Advisory Body on Environment (SABE)' Task Group on Circular Economy.

Representing the SME voice in ETSI

SBS had the opportunity to present the SBS SME Compatibility Test and Guide 17 during ISO's and IEC's technical committees' meetings. On 31 March, SBS also met the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to discuss possible collaboration and the possible future participation of SBS and European SMEs in the ITU standardisation activities.

SBS participated in the ETSI Board and General Assembly meetings. In November, Massimo Vanetti, SBS candidate for the position of Vice-Chair of the ETSI General Assembly, was re-elected for another two years.

SBS was also part of the ETSI 3SI group, composed of the Annex III organisations, the 3SI Advocate, representatives from ETSI management and the European Commission, which aims to tackle inclusiveness issues.

Reaching out to ISO, IEC and ITU

On 30 March, SBS Secretary General Maitane Olabarria and the representatives of the European societal stakeholders in standardisation ANEC (consumers), ECOS (environmental NGOs) and ETUC (trade unions), met ISO Secretary-General Sergio Mujica and IEC Secretary-General Philippe Metzger in Geneva. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future cooperation to improve inclusivity and diversity within the ISO and IEC system, including the ISO and IEC strategies and regional engagement policies and their implementation.

Reaching out to national standards bodies

Throughout the year, SBS engages with several national standardisation stakeholders. This year, SBS met the Spanish Standardisation Body UNE (Asociación Española de Normalización) in Madrid, the Institute for Standardisation of Montenegro (ISME), the Austrian Standards International in Brussels and representatives from the Serbian Institute for Standardization (ISS) and the Serbian Accreditation Body (ATS).

- **Contribution to European policies and regulations**

The Standardisation Strategy, an opportunity for a more inclusive European standardisation

At the beginning of the year, the European Commission published the [Standardisation Strategy](#) accompanied by a package of measures, including the Commission's 2022 Annual Union Work Programme for Standardisation, an implementation report and an amendment to Regulation 1025/2012 on European standardisation, which tackles the governance model for ETSI. SBS played an active role in the discussions about the strategy's implementation. It took part in a hearing on the strategy organised by the European Economic and Social Committee on 18 March,

submitted its response to the Commission consultation on the proposed technical amendment to Regulation 1025/2012 and elaborated proposals to improve the governance of the ESOs.

SBS reply to the Commission consultation on the New Legislative Framework

The New Legislative Framework (NLF), originally adopted in 2008, sets out a series of measures aiming at improving market surveillance, improving the quality of conformity assessment, clarifying the use of the CE marking and establishing a common legal framework for European product legislation. In March, SBS responded to the Commission consultation providing feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of the NLF and other relevant aspects such as CE marking. Later, SBS conducted an interview with the consultant in charge of drafting the study on the evaluation of the NLF, in which SBS expressed its views on a wide range of issues.

Committee on Standards and EC Working and Expert groups

SBS maintained an active role in representing SMEs' interests in the Committee on Standards (CoS) meetings and submitted its comments to DG GROW concerning the draft standardisation request on lifts and to DG CNECT on the draft standardisation request on artificial intelligence.

Participation in the High-Level Forum on European Standardisation

SBS was invited to participate in the meetings of [High-Level Forum on European Standardisation](#) which was created in the framework of the EU Standardisation Strategy to discuss how to improve the European standardisation system. The forum brings together up to 60 stakeholders from EU/EEA countries representing European standardisation organisations, the industry, civil society and academia.

Position papers

This year, 12 [position papers](#) were published, namely on the Commission standardisation package and the [technical amendment to Regulation 1025/2012](#). On horizontal topics, SBS also released papers on the [Commission proposal for a Regulation on eco-design requirements for sustainable products](#), the [Standardisation Strategy](#) and the [Annex III organisations proposal](#) regarding CEN and CENELEC's governance review in support of inclusiveness.

In addition, SBS also regularly issued sector-specific positions mentioned in the section below, including a paper on [amendments provided by IMCO on the Machinery Regulation proposal](#).

Europe Horizon 2020 project STAND4EU

[STAND4EU](#), the new Horizon Europe project in which SBS got involved, aims to strengthen the links between research, innovation and standardisation. The project aims to map and identify key stakeholders and actors involved in standardisation activities at the national, regional and international levels to properly identify obstacles hampering standardisation efforts.

- **Sectoral activities**



Construction

Activities in the SBS construction sector revolved around the revision of the Construction Products Regulation (CPR), an ongoing topic since 2016. Six construction working group meetings took place during the year with the Commission proposal on the CPR and the CPR acquis process as main topics.

SBS represented the SME position in the CEN Sector Forum on Construction and the meetings of the CEN/CENELEC/BT/WG 9 'Strategy for the construction sector'. It also participated in the Commission CPR Acquis Steering group, the CPR Acquis Sub-group 2 on structural metallic products, the Sub-group 4 on doors, windows and shutters and the Horizontal group on environmental sustainability, a meeting of the Fire Information Exchange Platform and in the Advisory Group on Construction Products.



SBS published a position paper on [Inconsistencies between Eurocodes and EOTA Technical Reports](#) and replied to the consultations regarding the [Commission revision proposal of the CPR](#) and on the [derogation to the exclusion criteria of propiconazole](#).



Information and communication technologies (ICT)

An important focus in the ICT sector was the monitoring of standards in support of the twin transition. This included the SBS contribution to the Task Force Rolling Plan workshop on standardisation needs for the Circular Economy and meetings of the CEN-CENELEC SABC Task Group Circular Economy. Furthermore, SBS participated in the three Multi-Stakeholder Platform Group meetings to discuss the need to increase SME involvement in international standardisation to reflect Europe's core values. Lastly, it also got involved in the Commission Expert Group on the Radio Equipment Directive (RED), worked on interoperability issues related to European Data Spaces and the monitoring of AI-related standardisation activities.

The ICT sector organised an SBS Forum on 29 September focusing on "[Digital Sovereignty – Towards a vibrant SME ecosystem](#)". It brought together policymakers, standardisation experts and SMEs to discuss how SMEs can thrive under Europe's plans for digital sovereignty.



A position paper in the ICT sector was published on the [Data Act](#).



Lifts

The lifts' interest this year mainly revolved around the Cybersecurity Resilience Act and the new proposed Machinery Regulation, a highly important topic for lift SMEs working with lifting platforms.

The [study](#) "Mapping of national initiatives on existing lifts modifications" was carried out to assess the feasibility of a European standard on lift modifications. The conclusion of the study could provide a common basis for the development of a European standard in this area.

The 2022 edition of the [SBS Lift Forum](#) took place on 23 November in Brussels to raise awareness about the issue of the availability of instructions and special tools in lift installations.

SBS also organised a session on standardisation in the framework of the conference entitled '[Eliminar barreras](#)' on 17 November in Tenerife (Spain), which was organised by the [FEPYMA](#). The discussions centred on the role of standardisation and European policies in removing barriers.

The SMEs' position was ensured by SBS in the meeting of the EC Expert Group on Lifts and on Machinery. SBS attended the horizontal plenary meetings of the Notified Bodies, the preparatory meetings of the Ad-hoc Group 'Lift Directive' under the EC Coordination group of Notified Bodies for Lifts (NBLs) and the meetings of the subgroup 'Tools & instructions' of the Ad Hoc Group 'Lift Directive'.



The lift sector published its [response](#) regarding the IMCO Compromise Amendments on the proposal for a regulation on Machinery Products.



Personal protective equipment (PPE) and textile care

Under PPE and textile care, the focus was the development of the requirements for an eco-design standard for PPE garments.

The [SBS PPE and Textile Care Forum](#) was held on 19 October and discussed the concept of dual use and how adhering to several standards and conformity assessment procedures (e.g., regarding digital and safety requirements/aspects covered by different regulations) can affect SMEs' competitiveness. SBS also organised a webinar on smart textile standardisation on 21 November to explain the evolution and integration of ICT technologies within textiles and concluding that input from SMEs of this sector is strongly needed for the development of standards.

SBS was granted observer status in the Commission's PPE Expert Group, participated in the Medical Devices Coordination Group's (MDCG) Stakeholder meeting in May and the meetings of the Subgroup on Standards (WG 2). It participated in the CEN-CENELEC PPE Sector Forum, contributed to the CEN-CENELEC workshop on PPE – Medical Devices (MD) and dual-use products in October and attended the CEN-CLC Advisory Board for Healthcare Standards (ABHS) meetings.



A [position paper](#) was published on the measures to reduce microplastic pollution in the PPE and textile services sector.

- **Awareness-raising, visibility and communication**

“EU Standardisation Strategy - Reinforcing Europe’s role in global standards-setting”

On 19 April SBS organised the online event “EU Standardisation Strategy - Reinforcing Europe’s role in global standards-setting”. The event tackled some of the main issues raised by the standardisation strategy, focusing particularly on the inclusiveness of the European standardisation system and the ambition, outlined in the strategy, for Europe to become a global standards-setter.



SBS webinar on European Accessibility Act and Standards

SBS organised a webinar on the accessibility of products and services in view of the associated standardisation requests issued by the European Commission and the review of other already existing standards. The purpose of the webinar was to raise awareness of SMEs and SME organisations about accessibility standards and the potential impact these might have on SMEs.

Annual conference on sustainable products

Under the theme “SMEs setting the standard for sustainable products – Drivers and challenges”, the 2022 edition of SBS’ annual event, held online on 15 June, discussed opportunities and challenges of the European Commission package of initiatives to ensure that all products placed on the EU market become more sustainable.





World Standards Day

This year again, the celebrations revolved around the benefits of standards in achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs). SBS published the [videos](#) of SBS' Secretary General and Standardisation Officers who explained the important role of SBS in developing standards contributing to the UN goals.



Practical guide for SMEs on conformity assessment

“Conformity assessment is the name given to the processes used to demonstrate that products, processes, services, persons, systems or bodies meet specific requirements.” With this newly developed [practical guide](#), SBS intends to inform SMEs and SME representatives about conformity assessment and standards and the importance of the related processes and concepts for European smaller businesses.

SME Guide on Blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology

SBS published this guide with the aim to raise SMEs' awareness of the technology and its role in supporting the EU goal of leading the way for the digital transformation and green transition. The guide targets SMEs' management to provide a basic introduction to blockchain technology, its characteristics, and areas where blockchain can help with their daily operations.



MEMBERS

CMA France | French Assembly of Craft Chambers www.cma-france.fr

CAPEB | French Confederation of Construction Craft and Small Enterprises www.capeb.fr

CNA | Italian Confederation of the Craft Sector and Small and Medium Enterprises www.cna.it

COIFFURE EU | European association of national employers' organisations in hairdressing www.coiffure.eu

CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE | Italian Confederation of the Craft Sector and Small and Medium Enterprises www.confartigianato.it

CPME | French Small and Medium-sized Employers' Organisation www.cpme.fr

DTV | German Textile Care Association www.dtv-bonn.de

EBC | European Builders Confederation www.ebc-construction.eu

ECAP | European Consortium of Anchors Producers www.ecap-sme.org

EFESME | European Federation for Elevator Small and Medium-sized Enterprises www.efesme.org

EMM | European Insulation Material (multifoil) Manufacturers

EMU | European Metal Union www.emu-sme.eu

European Digital SME Alliance | European Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in ICT www.digitalsme.eu

IFD | International Federation for the Roofing Trade www.ifd-roof.com

SME Safety | European association of small and medium-sized enterprises that manufacture safety products www.sme-safety.eu

Timber Construction Europe | European Timber Construction Association www.timber-construction.eu

Tischler Schreiner | German Association of Wood Joiners www.tischler-schreiner.de

SMEUnited | European Association of Crafts and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises www.smeunited.eu

UEG | Union of European Scaffolding Companies www.ueg-eu.org

WKÖ | Austrian Economic Chamber www.wko.at

ZDH | German Association of Skilled Crafts www.zdh.de

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