

# A practical guide for SMEs

Navigating contradictory standards for Construction:  
Guidance and Solutions for your business





Small Business Standards (SBS) is the association representing and defending Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) interests in the standardisation system at the European and international levels. Its 22 members are national and European sectoral and inter-professional associations representing around 20 million SMEs in Europe.

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## 1. What is the CPR?

The **Construction Products Regulation (CPR)** is a regulation that sets out the rules for the placement of construction products in the European market.



## 2. Why is the CPR important?

The CPR provides a common technical language to assess the performance of construction products. All construction products under the scope of the CPR and covered by a harmonised standard must be CE-marked in order to circulate freely and be marketed in Europe. It ensures that reliable information about the products is made available to professionals, public authorities, and consumers to allow a comparison of the performance of products from different manufacturers in different countries.

## 3. What are harmonised standards?



Harmonised standards are a special category of European standards developed in response to standardisation requests (mandates) from the European Commission and published (cited) in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

Standards become harmonised only when they are cited in the OJEU. Manufacturers need to adhere to the procedures set out in the harmonised standards in order to affix the CE marking to their products.

→ Some standards are published but not cited in the OJEU. These are called European standards (EN).



## 4. What are the current issues with the citation of standards?

Inconsistencies appeared between published standards and standardisation requests, resulting in the refusal of their citation by the European Commission. The citation of standards in the construction sector is currently blocked because:

- old mandates (standardisation requests) are incomplete and do not include several essential characteristics;
- there are no clear rules yet on how to address transversal topics such as sustainability and eco-design requirements in construction standards;
- the introduction of classes and thresholds in standards faces legal issues.

Therefore, sometimes the most up-to-date standards are not cited, and coexist with their older, cited versions.

→ Only cited standards can be used to claim compliance with the CPR, thus the CE mark can be affixed.



## 5. What should you do?

SBS provides some practical considerations for SME manufacturers and designers to ensure compliance:

### **a. How to handle non-harmonised European standards?**

You are not allowed to CE-mark your products according to them, so do not use them for CE-marking! However, these standards can be used as a reference for Eurocodes and in tenders.

### **b. How to handle harmonised European standards?**

You must CE-mark your product according to them and you need to update your CE-marking if the harmonised standard is revised.

### **c. How to handle a revision of a harmonised European standard that is not cited in the OJEU?**

The non-cited revision is not harmonised; thus, you are not allowed to CE-mark your products according to this version. You must CE-mark your product according to the oldest version of the standard, which is harmonised.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION SMES:



**STAY INFORMED** about any updates or changes related to CPR, including changes to harmonised standards or any new directives or regulations that may impact your business.




**SEEK SUPPORT** from SME representative organisations such as SBS which will help you navigate the complexities of CPR compliance and standardisation in the construction sector.



**INFORM YOUR CUSTOMERS** about any issues related to CPR and the impact this may have on your business. To do this, you may use the guidance provided by SBS to explain the situation in simple words.



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