



“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”



The Voice of Construction Crafts and SMEs in Europe

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Small Business Standards SBS: making standards better for SMEs

Brussels, 13th December 2013 – Small Business Standards (SBS), the newly-established association representing European SMEs in the standardisation process at European and International levels, celebrated its founding General Assembly today. The standardisation world is a challenging one for SMEs; SBS therefore aims at representing SMEs in the decision making process and hence making standards better for SMEs. During the meeting, the founding members of the association welcomed new members – these associations are both national and European sectoral and interprofessional and represent SMEs all over Europe working in and out of the EU.

“SME entrepreneurs find it extremely difficult to participate in the development and use of standards. Not only do they very rarely get involved in the drafting of standards, but they also very often underestimate the benefits of standards for their businesses. This world therefore risks being mostly restricted to the big market players who have the financial, technical and human resources to follow and influence the standards-development process,” commented UEAPME and SBS President **Gunilla Almgren**.

“From now on, SBS will represent SMEs in the standardisation system where they will develop their knowledge of standards and where their needs will be taken into consideration and brought to the attention of the standards writers and the decision-makers,” continued Ms Almgren.

The European Commission thoroughly acknowledges the gap in SME representation in European standardisation activities; DG Enterprise therefore launched a call for proposal this year to provide financial support for the existence and functioning of an association representing SMEs in the standardisation world. During the General Assembly, 12 experts were appointed to represent European SMEs and to carry out the necessary work in the different technical committees. Through their participation in Technical Committees within the European and international standards organisations, SBS experts will also defend the creation of standards fully compliant with the CEN-CENELEC Guide 17, which contains recommendations for drafting more SME-friendly standards.

Commenting this, European Commission Vice President **Antonio Tajani**, responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship said: *“I am very grateful that as of today, SMEs can make their important voice heard in the EU Standardisation Process with the launch of the organisation Small Business Standards, supported with EU funding. We have to make sure that Acting at Large with standardisation starts with Thinking Small First. The Commission will continue to live up to its obligations of supporting various stakeholder groups in the EU Standards making process”*.

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Notes to the editors:

Small Business Standards SBS is an international non-profit association founded in 2013 with the support of the European Commission. SBS is exclusively devoted to representing the interests of Small and Medium sized Enterprises in the European and international standardisation systems.

SBS currently counts 17 members of national and European sectoral and interprofessional SME associations across Europe.

UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 80 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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European Builders Confederation EBC – is a European professional organisation representing national associations of Craftsmen and SMEs working in the construction sector. Through its national members, EBC represents 2 million micro, small and medium sized enterprises from the construction sector.

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