



*"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"*

## **Standards are crucial for market access for SMEs**

*UEAPME highlights importance of standards ahead of World Standards Day*

Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Standards are everywhere! They affect our daily life whether we realise it or not. Every year on 14<sup>th</sup> October, the World Standards Day celebrates the creation of the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO). This celebration is a signal of the importance of standardisation for business and many other aspects of society. This day is also an opportunity for UEAPME to highlight the situation as regards SMEs. Indeed, standards are crucial for SMEs for trade and access to markets, and that is why UEAPME advocates for SME-friendly standards. In 2013, UEAPME, and other partners representing SMEs, created the association SBS (Small Business Standards) to represent the interests of SMEs in the European and international standardisation process through experts in different standardisation committees and working groups.

There are approximately 50,000 to 100,000 standards in the world, and there are more than 24,000 standards and harmonised documents just in Europe. Many studies show the economic benefit of using standards, especially to facilitate trade and access new markets. SMEs therefore need to use and apply these standards for their daily business. However, the standardisation process can be a challenge for SMEs, the costs of applying standards for SMEs are proportionally higher than for larger enterprises, and they generally lack dedicated staff for the adequate application of the standards. This is why it is crucial for standards to be SME-friendly and to be an opportunity rather than additional administrative burdens.

UEAPME and SBS actively engage in the standardisation process to raise awareness, make the standards SME friendly, avoid unnecessary standards and ensure that standards do not lead to additional burden for SMEs. As part of this work, SBS launched its [annual call for experts](#) that are appointed in various standardisation committees and working groups. SBS also develops tools to facilitate the process for SMEs, one of the instruments developed with CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) is [An online tool for SMEs to learn about standardisation](#).

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**EDITORS' NOTES:** UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing Crafts and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 64 member organisations covering about 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information please visit <http://www.ueapme.com/> or follow [@UEAPME](#) on Twitter.

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