

Smart Standardisation for Construction SMEs



SME in construction



of the European
construction
sector



workers per
enterprises



of the
construction
industry output



of the output
produced by small
enterprises



3 million
enterprise



1 600
billion



13 million
people



of the
EU GDP

For what concern standardisation, the construction industry in Europe is facing a significant change due to the entry into force, from 1 July 2013, of the Construction Products Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 (the CPR).

This Regulation is a game-changer to which millions of craft companies and SMEs – both manufacturing and using construction products – still have to adapt, in addition to national public authorities. Indeed, with the CPR it became mandatory for manufacturers to apply CE marking to any of their products which are covered by a harmonised European standard (hEN) or European Technical Assessment (ETA).

CE marking of construction products enables a product to be placed legally on the market in any Member State and indicates that a product is consistent with its Declaration of Performance (DoP) as made by the manufacturer. The declaration varies according to the particular harmonised technical specification covering the product. All hENs under the CPR include an Informative Annex (termed Annex ZA) that lists the regulated requirements and the clauses in the standard in which they are addressed, some of which may in turn refer to separate supporting documents. In this way, Annex ZA in the hEN becomes a checklist for CE marking from which the manufacturer can see all the mandatory requirements for their product and how they can be met.

BENEFITS OF THE CPR

- free circulation of construction products in the EU's Single Market
- national authorities can set performance requirements using the harmonised European standard or European Assessment Document
- users of construction products can better define their performance demands
 - market surveillance can rely on one common information structure
 - methods less onerous than testing for assessing the performance of the construction products are encouraged to be laid down in harmonised standards
- further decrease of costs for micro-enterprises to place construction products are defined by specific simplified procedures
- derogations from drawing up a DoP and other simplified procedures are foreseen for specific construction products



MAKING STANDARDISATION ACCESSIBLE AND SUITABLE FOR SMES

Standardisation is unavoidable for all companies who want to access the Internal Market with the CE marking. Nevertheless, the whole standardisation process is not easily accessible due to linguistic barriers, technical and financial difficulties that make SMEs' participation very complicated. Therefore, SMEs also in the construction sector need to be given a voice to defend their interests in the creation of and access to standards.

How to achieve this goal:

- Carrying out an impact assessment of the Construction Products Regulation to evaluate the effects of the simplified procedures for micro-enterprises
- Taking into consideration the market demand and the needs of all the parties involved when creating standards. Standards should not be imposed by public administration and should not be used as quasi-legislative tools



INVOLVING SMES IN THE STANDARDISATION PROCESS

Standards are never neutral. On the contrary, they reflect the strengths and innovations of those who develop them. Therefore, non-participation in standardisation hands decision making over to the competition.

In its report «The future of European Standardisation», the European Parliament stressed that SMEs, although they represent an essential part of the European market, are not adequately involved in the standardisation system and cannot, therefore, exploit entirely the benefits derived from standardisation.

Small Business Standards (SBS) is a response to the desire of the EU to make the standardisation system as inclusive, transparent and open as possible, enhancing the participation of “weaker” actors such as SMEs. SBS aims to defend the position of SMEs in the European standardisation process.

SME in EUROPE



> 20 million SMEs



66.5% of all jobs



99.8% of all businesses



57.6% of the gross value added



86.8 million people employed



More than 1000 European standards adopted every year

SBS SECTORAL APPROACH ON CONSTRUCTION

Sectoral expertise of SBS members and experts is a key asset for SBS. Thus, SBS created a 'Sector Group' on construction which committed to work together to meet the specific needs of SMEs operating in a this sector. Cooperation with related sectoral associations, members of SBS, ensure continuous consultation, support and communication.

This approach aims at acting as a multiplier effect through experts' involvement, seminars, communication and finally providing specific support related to European policy to create stronger sectoral positions and involvement in the standardisation community.

In 2015, SBS has appointed 42 paid experts at European and international levels, working in Technical Committees (TC), and supported 9 experts working on a voluntary basis in other TC or Working Groups (WG). Among them, 22 experts work on issues related to standardisation in the construction sector, covering 19 CEN TCs and more than 50 WGs.

RESULTS

Bringing forward proposals on product standards and test methods in different TCs

Engaging the SME community into discussions to stimulate feedback and elaborate consensus based positions on SME relevant issues relevant to sectoral standardisation in construction

Contributing to the RPA's implementation report on the CPR to develop conclusions on the necessity to take further actions to ensure the consolidation of the Internal Market for construction products

Contributing to the draft of the new template for Annex ZA, calling for the addition of reference to specific provisions foreseen by the CPR in favour of micro-enterprises;

Participating to the Advisory Group on Construction and Standing Committee on Construction organised, the major standardisation fora set up by the European Commission on standardisation of construction products

Organising the 1st SBS Construction Forum

Participating in the EOTA Advisory Group, Construction Sector Network Core Group and other relevant European technical groups

Informing and raising awareness of the needs of construction SMEs in standardisation

SBS Construction Forum

- 1st meeting in 2015
- Gathered SBS expertise in the construction sector
- Opened the participation to the EC and other relevant representatives in this sector
- Discussed policy and technical issues related to construction-related issues in standardisation
- Will continue to exchange electronically on the SBS extranet.

Facts and figures

3

Position Paper in 2015

22

SBS experts working in construction

19

Technical Committees covered by SBS experts

50+

Working Groups in which SBS experts participate

100+

CEN Technical Committees working on construction

600

EU harmonised standards under the CPR

1500

CPR-related supporting standards for test methods

22

SBS Members

9

Construction related SBS Members

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