

## **SMEs and standardisation in Europe**

**23 good practices to promote the participation  
of craft and SME enterprises in standardisation  
and the use of standards**

*EIM Business & Policy Research*



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### **Note**

At the time of writing, some references to EU websites became unfortunately obsolete as the URL of the European Commission was being changed into <http://ec.europa.eu/>

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Commission. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of the information contained herein.

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## Matrix of Contents Chapter 6

Twenty-three good practice examples have been included in Chapter 6. In this 'Matrix of contents' these good practice examples are grouped by type of organisation running the measure and by type of measure. The numbers in the matrix refer to the section number (and page number).

	<b>National Administrations</b>	<b>National standards bodies</b>	<b>Craft &amp; SME organisations</b>	<b>Others</b>	Total
Subsidy	6.18 Slovakia - Direct support (128)	6.4 Finland - Travel allowance (65) 6.12 Malta - Supply of standards at reduced rate (103) 6.21 Spain - Grants for attending European meetings (139) 6.22 Sweden - Travel allowance for Standardisation Meetings (143)			5
Workshops & Seminars	6.1 Croatia - Co-financing and certification services (52) 6.11 Luxembourg - Standards for information security (100)	6.10 Italy - Institutional conventions (95) 6.13 Netherlands - Project Awareness (106) 6.14 Norway - Network forums (112)	6.2 Czech Republic - Information points for entrepreneurs (58) 6.19 Slovenia - Seminar and workshop (131)	6.15 Poland - Training and Seminars 'Welding' (115)	8
Information & Publications		6.6 Germany - KAN-Reports on OHS-Standardisation (74)	6.23 UK - Meetings and Newsletters (146)		2
Website			6.9 Italy - Website (90)		1
Consultancy & Training		6.3 Denmark - Danish Standard University (61) 6.8 Hungary - Seminars; training for awareness (86)		6.16 Poland - Training Environmental Standards (120)	3
Others	6.5 France - Standardisation activities Ministry of SME (70)	6.17 Portugal - Face-to-face contacts (125)	6.7 Germany- Mechanical Engineering Standards Committee (NAM) (80) 6.20 Spain - Promotion of Working Groups (135)		4
Total	4	11	6	2	23



## Summary, conclusions and recommendations

### *The economic reality of Europe*

SMEs and craft enterprises are an important part of the enterprise sector in Europe: 99 % of all enterprises, about 70 % of all jobs and 50 % of value added<sup>1</sup> are in SME.

Standards play a number of important roles in the economy: they facilitate an ever increasing division of labour; strengthen the Single European Market by reducing technical barriers to trade within Europe and beyond; facilitate improvement of health and safety at work, etc., etc.

Still SME and craft enterprises feel, to a large extent, that standards are something for the large corporate sector and think they are not involved. Consequently the participation of such enterprises in standardisation is rather low: in terms of accessing relevant information; in terms of participation in Technical Committees where standards are actually developed and in terms of actually using standards in their own enterprises.

The European Charter for Small Enterprises (2000) and other policy documents stress the important role SMEs have to play in underpinning Europe's competitive position and the Commission and the Member States are called upon to '*strengthen the technological capacity of small enterprises*'.

### *Standardisation in Europe*

The post-war period was characterised by a development of the national standards bodies resulting in different standards in various European countries. These technical (non tariff) barriers to trade obviously hampered the completion of the Single Market. Therefore the EU decision makers resorted to a uniform European standardisation system<sup>2</sup>. There are two major objectives: to contribute to the internal market and to strengthen the competitiveness of the European economy world-wide.

The European Commission and other agents such as the European Parliament have recognised the need to get SMEs more involved in standardisation. One of the initiatives of the Commission in this area is to support the creation of NORMAPME: the European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Standardisation. It was created with the financial support of the Commission to improve the participation of SMEs in European standardisation, to increase the influence of small enterprises in standard writing and to help SMEs understand and implement standards. One of the important results of the NORMAPME operation is the establishment of greater visibility of small and medium-sized enterprises in the standardisation process.

Also the Euro Info Centres (EICs) Network plays a role in standardisation. The network - financially supported by the Commission and managed by DG Enterprise and Industry -

<sup>1</sup> SMEs are defined as all enterprises with less than 250 workers, including craft enterprises.

<sup>2</sup> CEN, the European Committee for Standardisation, was founded in 1961 by the national standards bodies in the European Economic Community and EFTA countries and CENELEC, the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation, was created in 1973 following the merger of two predecessors, and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) was established in 1988.



was originally set up to disseminate EU information to SMEs but developed into a more general provider of (international) information to enterprises. EICs - of which there are nearly 300 - have developed information products and seminars to raise awareness of and knowledge on standardisation with enterprises. In addition there is a working group on standardisation within the EIC Network that developed for example fact sheets on New Approach directives and a step-by-step guide to CE marking.

#### *Policy support for SMEs in standardisation*

Not only policy makers at European level, but also other types of stakeholder have taken many initiatives to foster the participation of SME and craft enterprises in standardisation: (i) national administrations; (ii) national standards bodies and (iii) SME and craft organisations.

Asking about 1 200 staff members of these three types of stakeholder in 32 European countries about the measures that are actually in place to inform, support and persuade SME and craft enterprises to participate in standardisation results in about 400 measures.

Measures range from very broad and general initiatives on raising awareness - 'Standardisation also matters for your enterprise!' - to very specific guidance on narrow subjects such as food and safety standards or technical standards for welding equipment.

The instruments chosen also vary: publications, workshops and seminars, training, provision of standards at reduced rates, subsidies to participate in Technical Committees, etc. Often several instruments are offered as a package.

Measures are identified in nearly all 32 countries considered, ranging from countries with no measure identified<sup>1</sup> (i.e. Belgium, Estonia, Greece and Liechtenstein); only a very small number of measures identified; i.e. Cyprus (2), Malta (2), Iceland (3) and Lithuania (5) to countries with more than 20 different measures identified such as Finland (46), France (42), Italy (28), Germany (25), Norway (25) and Hungary (25).

When only relatively good measures are singled out (selection mainly based on information provided by the organisations concerned; these measures are called '*potential good practices*' in this report), we arrive at 118 measures with several from Italy (12), Finland (9), Germany (9), Romania (9), France (8), Bulgaria (6), Hungary (6), the Netherlands (6) and Poland (6).

Most of these 118 measures focus on information provision: workshops and seminars (41), publications and websites (17) in addition some measures concern consultancy (5). Another category of measure is of a financial nature, for example providing standards at lower price or subsidising travel and subsistence costs for small enterprise representatives visiting standardisation meetings at home or abroad (total subsidies 19).

#### *The measures finally presented as good practices*

The final selection of good practices as published in this report amount to 23 cases. This final selection is not only based on better information on the merits of the measures (e.g. additional information was collected from the target groups), care was also taken

<sup>1</sup> See Table 4 in report.

to arrive at a reasonable varied package: by country, type of stakeholder involved and type of support instrument.

Most of the 23 good practice examples finally selected are run by national standards bodies (11), craft and SME organisations (6) and national administrations (4). Most of the 23 good practice examples finally selected refer to workshops and seminars in various forms mainly aimed at raising awareness. Five measures are subsidies of which 3 provide grants to cover travel and accommodation costs to visit standardisation meetings abroad. Three measures are classified as consultancy and training.

*What do we know about effects of the measures?*

Unfortunately very little objective information is available. People involved - both those responsible for the measures and representatives of the target group - feel that the measures are catering for an actual need and making a real contribution. But it is rather embarrassing that hardly any decent evaluation studies could be identified that clearly present information on the net additional effect of the instruments used (See the text box on evaluation studies presented in Section 5.2).

It is interesting to note that when the issue of deadweight loss of a travel grant was discussed with the Swedish Electrotechnical Commission, SEK (i.e. enterprises receiving the travel grant to participate in standardisation meetings would also have participated without the grant) acknowledged that this might be the case but noted that one of the conditions to receive the grant was submitting a report on the meeting. These reports are surely additional gains from the subsidy as they are used to inform a much wider group of enterprises. This is believed to be very useful especially because enterprises are better 'reached' by such reports that are written from an enterprise perspective and in their own language.

Such specific (side-) effects are listed in the table below. What are the specific characteristics or strong points of the good practice cases selected?

<i>Section in report</i>	<i>Name of measure</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
6.1	Croatia - Co-financing & certification services	For over six years, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship (MELE) has had a programme of grants for business system certification. The main objectives aimed at are increasing the use of standards in SMEs and crafts and increasing the total number of enterprises that are using total management system. The measures seem to have contributed to a significant increase in the number of certified enterprises.
6.2	Czech Republic - Information points for entrepreneurs	Information on standardisation is made available using a network of information points to assure that the information can be assessed in the vicinity of the enterprise.
6.3	Denmark - Danish Standard University	The national standards body of Denmark, Dansk Standards, seems to succeed in bringing together representatives of SMEs in this set-up that are eager to learn from the experts on standardisation, which creates a productive learning environment.
6.4	Finland- Travel allowance	This concerns a grant to cover travel costs that is administered by SESKO since 1990. The grant is believed to stimulate SMEs to participate in Technical Committees. There is an easy application procedure using the website of SESKO.
6.5	France - Standardisation activities Ministry of SME	A package of measures initiated by the Ministry of SMEs and implemented in co-operation with AFNOR, the national standards body of France. One measure aims for example to adapt standards to the needs of SMEs and to promote their use in practice.

<i>Section in report</i>	<i>Name of measure</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
6.6	Germany - KAN-Reports on OHS-Standardisation	KAN reports are a renowned source for information on occupational health and safety aspects in standardisation. This German committee publishes and disseminates KAN reports in several languages.
6.7	Germany- Mechanical Engineering Standards Committee (NAM)	As usual the mechanical engineering standards committee (NAM) is functioning under the auspices of the German national standards body (DIN). However NAM is managed and staffed by the Federation of German Machine and Plant Building Industry (VDMA). The role of VDMA - representing some 2 500 SMEs - assures that a large number of SMEs are reached and that the needs of SMEs are taken into account in developing the standards.
6.8	Hungary - Seminars; training for awareness	In Hungary, standardisation seems to be rather well integrated in the education system. A close co-operation does exist between the national standards body (MSZT) and the vocational educational and training system.
6.9	Italy - Website	SNO, the National Union of Orthodontists, looks after the interest of the SMEs and craft enterprises in the sector. Their website provides access to information and helps these enterprises to overcome technical problems through experts' opinion and the exchange of experiences between members. The website is instrumental in discussing and explaining newly established standards.
6.10	Italy - Institutional conventions	The Convention is a knowledge and competence pool on standardisation topics, made up by experts linked to firms, SMEs and craft associations in selected industries. The Institutional Convention is free of charge, published material is affordable for SMEs and in addition technical expertise is available.
6.11	Luxembourg - Standards for information security	This is an example of a measure focussed on a narrowly defined area: standards for information security. As SMEs are integrated nowadays more and more into information networks, security of information is an important issue for them. In the framework of this activity efforts are made to down-size a series of ISO norms (27000-27009) to lower the barriers for implementing these standards in SMEs.
6.12	Malta - Supply of standards at reduced rate	This measure was initiated in 2001 to encourage craft and SME enterprises to adopt international standards as it was felt that the high price of standards was a prohibitive factor.
6.13	Netherlands - Project Awareness	This concerns a fairly large initiative with a budget of EUR 3 million for two years. Following an analysis of bottlenecks faced by SMEs in participating in standardisation, a series of ten sub-projects was defined to tackle these problems. The project was jointly financed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (60 %) and the national standards body (NEN) and some other parties.
6.14	Norway - Network forums	Eforum I Standard Norge is a network of competence related to the national standards body. The network forum has led to the start up of new standardisation processes, as well as increased knowledge of SMEs on existing standards. The measure is believed to score high in terms of visibility, content and delivery to target groups.
6.15	Poland - Training and Seminars 'Welding'	Instytut Spawalnictwa (Institute of Welding) is active for craft and SMEs in the field of standards in the welding industry as well as in research and providing information on materials and specialist welding devices. Success of the measure is attributed to the leading position of this central information centre on welding and high competences of the staff in providing training and seminars.
6.16	Poland - Training Environmental Standards	Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego (ZRP, Polish Craft Association) is a national professional association for craft enterprises and small entrepreneurs. The training projects provided by ZRP are seen as a significant step towards promotion and popularisation of European environmental standards among Polish craft enterprises. This supports Polish integration within the European Union.

<i>Section in report</i>	<i>Name of measure</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
6.17	Portugal - Face-to-face contacts	Many of the events discussed here still require the SME or craft enterprise to take the initiative to participate in a workshop or order a booklet. As awareness on standardisation is not yet there, this might not happen. In this Portuguese programme that is already running for 10 years, entrepreneurs are contacted by the Standardisation Department of the Portuguese Institute for Quality (IPQ) on their initiative; the staff members of IPQ perform a kind of 'missionary selling of standardisation'.
6.18	Slovakia - Direct support	Direct support refers to a 'de minimis' grant scheme that is targeted at SMEs in industry and services sectors. These activities may be in the area of R&D support, quality management, or introduction of technical standards in production and services. Enterprises may receive a grant from the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic for their project that covers 65 % of the costs related to standardisation.
6.19	Slovenia - Seminar and workshop	OZS, the Chamber of Craft of Slovenia, organises seminars and workshops for SME and craft enterprises to provide information on existing national and European standards that have to be met and how these standards may be implemented. The benefits relate to the increase in awareness on standardisation and in the use of standards.
6.20	Spain - Promotion of Working Groups	The Spanish Association of Electronic and Communication Enterprises (Asimelec), supports the creation of working groups from the sector in order to disseminate information on standardisation.  The main cause for the success of this measure may be related to the fact that enterprises that work in narrowly defined markets such as 'Digital printing technologies', 'Recording devices' or 'Batteries and accumulators' are brought together to discuss standardisation issues that are directly relevant to them.
6.21	Spain - Grants for attending European meetings	Also the Spanish Organisation for Standardisation and Certification (AENOR) issue grants for attending international meetings in Europe and beyond to increase the participation of Spanish enterprises in the development of European standards. Due to increased exposure, also the general awareness of enterprises on the importance of standardisation and the use of standards are believed to be positively affected.
6.22	Sweden -Travel allowance for Standardisation Meetings	Another example of a travel grant implemented by the Swedish Electrotechnical Commission (national standards body in the field of electricity). Interesting is that one of the conditions to receive the grant to cover travel costs is submitting a report on the meeting visited. These reports are important additional gains from the subsidy as they are used to inform a much wider group of enterprises. This is believed to be very useful especially because enterprises are better 'reached' by these reports that are written from an enterprise perspective and in their own language.
6.23	UK - Meetings and Newsletters	Gambica is the Trade Association for Instrumentation, Control, Automation and Laboratory Technology in the UK. Since 1982, Gambica is organising meetings and publishing newsletters to support participation in standardisation and to increase the awareness about standardisation issues.

### *Recommendations*

This project was mainly aimed at making an inventory of support measures in 32 countries and selecting good practices from among these support measures. This was not a study aimed at arriving at analytical findings; still a number of recommendations can be made, based on the work done.

Instruments are implemented with good intentions, but they are rarely evaluated to see whether the instruments applied actually bring about the objectives set. Better evaluation studies should be stimulated, not only looking at the efficiency of the implementation process or the satisfaction of the participants but looking at what really matters: the net additional effect obtained with the measure (considering proper formulation of objectives in advance).

The majority of measures found at the national level are aimed at raising awareness and providing information. Relatively little is done to:

- Support the participation of SME and craft enterprises in standardisation.
- Defend the interest of SME and craft enterprises in standardisation.

After studying the actual support needs of small enterprises, and given the ambition to improve Europe's competitive position a.o. by '*strengthening the technological capacity of small enterprises*', more should be done in this direction.

The technical aspects of standards are very similar for SME, craft enterprises and large enterprises, but more attention should be paid to simplicity in form and wording. The project showed that presently parties feel the need to 'translate' or 'downsize' existing standards in order to make them more easy to digest for smaller enterprises.

Three actions seem to be feasible:

- Increase the participation of SMEs themselves in Technical Committees.
- Provide training for stakeholders in the standardisation process - such as staff of standards bodies - on the characteristics and needs of smaller firms.
- Have Technical Committees managed by people that are 'closer' to the business community. See the example of the mechanical engineering standards committee in Germany (NAM)<sup>1</sup> that is functioning under the auspices of the German national standards body (DIN), but is managed and staffed by the Federation of German Machine and Plant Building Industry (VDMA). This ensures that a large number of SMEs are reached and that the needs of SMEs are taken into account in developing the standards.

<sup>1</sup> See Section 6.7.

# 1 Introduction

Every year, more than 1 000 European standards are adopted by the three European standards organisations: CEN, CENELEC and ETSI. Although the standardisation process formally allows for participation and input from all interested stakeholders via the national standards bodies (NSB) or via direct participation, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and craft enterprises are often not aware of what is going on in standardisation and of its importance.

This factor and the specific constraints of SMEs in terms of human resources and finance, lead to a relatively low active participation of SMEs in the standardisation process. The specific interests of SMEs therefore risk not being properly taken into account in the resulting standards, which SMEs only learn about after publication as national standards in their own language.

For several years, the European Commission has undertaken activities to promote SMEs' participation in the standardisation process. This study<sup>1</sup> aims at collecting information on services provided in European countries for improving the innovative capacity and thus competitiveness of craft and small and medium-sized enterprises through European standardisation. This implies improving the information, participation and promotion of SMEs and craft businesses interests within the European standardisation process. This study also aims at collecting comprehensive information on national actions and support measures implemented by national administrations, national standards bodies and SME and craft organisations and sectoral professional organisations or associations. Subsequently good practices have been identified.

The action concerns 32 countries: the current 25 Member States of the EU, the three EEA states of EFTA (Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland), the Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, as well as the Candidate Countries Croatia and Turkey.

The findings of the study are presented in this report to enable stakeholders across Europe to learn from the experiences in the different countries. Chapters 2 to 4 provide background information: in Chapter 2 a short overview of the nature of European standardisation is given; in Chapter 3 the importance of standards and the standardisation process for SMEs is highlighted; whereas Chapter 4 gives an impression of the activities of the European Union with respect to standardisation. Chapter 5 discusses the selection of good practices of policies and actions to promote the participation of SME and craft enterprises in standardisation and the use of standards. The main delivery of the study is presented in Chapter 6: the selected good practices. Conclusions and some policy recommendations are given in the *Summary, conclusions and recommendations*.

Annex I provides a list of abbreviations and organisations and Annex II list the Euro Info Centres that are active in this domain.

<sup>1</sup> The European Commission launched an open call for tenders 'Promoting craft and SMEs in the area of European standardisation' in October 2004. The contract for the study was awarded to EIM Business & Policy Research in The Netherlands ([www.eim.nl](http://www.eim.nl)). EIM implemented the study in co-operation with the European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for Standardisation NORMAPME ([www.normapme.com](http://www.normapme.com)) and the members of the European Network for Social and Economic Research ENSR in the 32 countries involved ([www.ensr-net.com](http://www.ensr-net.com)).



## 2 What is standardisation?

### 2.1 Introduction

Globalised markets, the exchange of goods and services across national and regional borders, need uniform international regulations. International standards facilitate collaboration on a worldwide scale in the economic, scientific and technical field.<sup>1</sup> Standards allow for one thing to match another, but not only in a technical sense. Standards can be used as a market-regulating tool for the removal of barriers to trade or for the alleviation or relief from routine tasks. Standards also (just to name a few):

- Further rationalisation;
- Facilitate quality assurance;
- Ensure the safety at the work place and during recreational activities;
- Unify test methods and procedures, such as in the field of environment;
- Facilitate, in general, communication between the economic sector, technology, science, administration and public services. In this way standards have a positive impact<sup>2</sup> on economic growth.

In Section 2.2 some main characteristics of the standardisation process are described whereas Section 2.3 highlights some economic effects of standardisation.

### 2.2 The standardisation process

Standardisation is the process leading to the acceptance of standards. The basic principle is: Standards are not decreed 'from above'. On the contrary, they are being prepared by those requiring or in need of standards, viz. the economic sector, consumers, public administrations, science. The representatives of these parties invest a lot of time and know-how in the realisation of standards, for their own interest and for that of the community at large. These experts are active in a variety of technical committees and working groups within the national standards body. Delegates of these committees, in turn, represent the national point of view (agreed upon in advance) within the respective European and international technical committees.

<sup>1</sup> Input for the Chapters 2 to 4 has a.o. been derived from: [www.on-norm.at](http://www.on-norm.at), [www.cenorm.be](http://www.cenorm.be), [www.cenelec.org](http://www.cenelec.org), [www.etsi.org](http://www.etsi.org), [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards_policy/index_en.htm), [www.nen.nl](http://www.nen.nl), [www.normapme.com](http://www.normapme.com), [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/analysis/observatory\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/analysis/observatory_en.htm), <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/craft/craft-priorities/craft-standardisation.htm> and from the tender specifications for this project.

<sup>2</sup> From research carried out in 2005 by DTI in the UK there is clear evidence that standardisation contributes to economic growth. The researchers analysed the effects of UK standards on GDP and labour productivity. They concluded that about 13 percent of the improvements in productivity and about 10 percent of GDP growth since World War II could be attributed to the beneficial effects of standards.  
See: <http://www.iram.com.ar/Eventos/Seminario70/presentaciones/MikeLow.pdf>.



In order to attain the status of a standard, a series of *internationally acknowledged basic principles* have to be observed which ensures that the contents of standards are generally accepted and are fit for the purpose of daily practice. These principles are:

- *Collective achievement on a neutral basis*. All parties concerned are invited to and should be represented in standardisation work at all levels.
- *Consensus*. Consensus implies general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues of the document, consideration of all points of view voiced by all important parties and to reconciliation of any conflicting arguments. European and international standards shall be passed by a qualified majority.
- *Publicity*. Prior to publication, a normative document has to be submitted as a draft standard for public enquiry. Justified objections have to be considered by the technical standards committee responsible.
- *Coherence*. The preparation of every single standard entails the attention to coherence and uniformity both at national, regional and international level. For European standardisation this implies that conflicting national standards have to be withdrawn. Thus, uniformity of the body of standards and continuity are safeguarded to the benefit of the user.

The preparation of *worldwide* standards is the responsibility of the International Standards Organisation ISO (see: [www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch)), the International Electrotechnical Commission IEC (see: [www.iec.ch](http://www.iec.ch)) and the International Telecommunication Union ([www.itu.int](http://www.itu.int)). The worldwide organisation for standardisation ISO (founded in 1947) is an independent association of the official standards organisations from 130 countries altogether.

The EU decision makers have resorted to a uniform *European* standardisation system. It has served to dismantle the technical barriers to trade within Europe. In 1983, the system was initiated, backed-up by the Directive 83/189 EEC (replaced by Directive 98/34/EC<sup>1</sup>).

The *European* standardisation is a coherent system based on the principle of national delegation: CEN and CENELEC (electrotechnics) are made up of national standards bodies. When elaborating a European standard, a European technical committee is set up under the responsibility of one of its members consisting of other national members. National so-called 'mirror committees' are installed where all interested national parties (enterprises, consumers, public authorities, NGOs) can participate. They develop a national position for the drafting and voting of a European standard which is then presented at the European technical committee. ETSI (telecommunication) is based on direct participation of industry but also foresees national votes on European standards. Each year, more than 1 000 European standards are adopted through this system by the three European standards organisations.

The Council Resolution of 28th October 1999<sup>2</sup> on the role of standardisation in Europe confirms that standardisation is a voluntary, consensus driven activity and that stan-

<sup>1</sup> Directive 98/34 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the fields of technical standards and regulations and of rules on information services, OJ L 204 of 21 July 1998, amended by Directive 98/48 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 217 of 5 August 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Council Resolution of 28 October 1999, OJ No C 141/1 of 19 May 2000.

dards should have a high degree of acceptability as a result of the full involvement of all relevant interested parties. This resolution also calls for a co-operation between the Community and the European standards bodies, based on a partnership, characterised by common objectives.

In the proposed forthcoming revision of Directive 98/34/EC further improvement to the European standardisation system is envisaged by inclusion of the standardisation principles of openness, transparency, impartiality, and participation of all stakeholders.

### 2.3 Economic benefits of standards

CEN has engaged two economists, Temple and Williams, to explain why standards are important and the effect they have on enterprises, markets and the economy at large.

The authors look at standards, in a broad historical perspective, as a 'public good' and also as an instrument of marketing policy in the life cycle of products. They examine issues behind the provision of standards by the market only and/or by intervention of public authorities. The authors conclude that standards are beneficial to the overall structure of industrialised economies and explain how diverse stakeholders implicitly rely on standards.

While confirming the general belief that standards are necessary and on the whole beneficial, they also point out that the availability of standards may not be commercially advantageous for all companies at all times.

The full publication is available from CEN<sup>1</sup>, here we would like to summarise some findings:

- Standards are vital in assuring that expectations are met. They contribute to the trust needed for any economy to operate. We connect our laptops easily to computer networks anywhere in the world because there is a nearly universal type of connector used for connecting to an Ethernet network, a so-called RJ-45 plug<sup>2</sup>.
- Already, since the days of Adam Smith in the eighteenth century, economic development is based on an ever-increasing specialisation and division of labour<sup>3</sup>. This implies that production is broken down into a series of linked activities, into what is nowadays called a value chain. Obviously standards do a lot to make this possible.
- The competitive advantage of firms is based on a complex of different factors, amongst which is reputation. Certain standards such as EN ISO 9001<sup>4</sup> may help in achieving a stronger reputation.

<sup>1</sup> All CEN publications can be ordered from: CEN Sales Point, ON - Austrian Standards Institute, Heinestraße 38, A-1021 Vienna.

<sup>2</sup> The shape and dimensions of RJ45 are specified by the standard TIA-968-A, published by the Administrative Council for Terminal Attachment (ACTA). This standard does not use the term RJ45 and covers more than just RJ45, but the RJ45 connector type is the eighth position connector type described therein.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Smith, An Enquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations, 1776.

<sup>4</sup> This International Standard (EN ISO refers to a norm that has been established in cooperation between CEN and ISO) describes fundamentals of quality management systems, which form the subject of the EN ISO 9000 family.

- A complex relationship seems to exist between technical standards and economic phenomena such as market structure, innovation and international trade. At the beginning of a product life cycle, enterprises may obtain patents (intellectual property rights) to protect their investments in innovation. By preventing the entry of other firms on the market for that specific product they are in a position to set relatively high prices. This rent functions as an incentive for innovation and may therefore also be beneficial for society at large. However consumers are paying these relatively high prices so they gain from the transition over time of this protected situation to a situation of more open competition on the basis of 'standardised' products. An econometric study by Swann et al. showed that (technical) standards do not (always, only) create technical barriers to trade, but rather increase imports and hence competition within an industry<sup>1</sup>.
- Standardisation makes it easier and cheaper to outsource production. This may not only be relevant in a situation of direct foreign investments from developed economies to lower wage economies (as referred to by Temple and Williams), but also for outsourcing from large enterprises to SMEs.
- A concept in economics is 'asymmetric information'. This may for example occur in the relationship between a manufacturer of a product and its customers, the consumers. Consumers may suffer from a lack of information on the product qualities. Here standardisation may help by (i) raising overall quality; (ii) reducing information search costs (Knowing that a product conforms to a standard might be sufficient to assess the quality of the product) and (iii) reducing the need to find out exact technical specifications of a product. An official standard may indicate that safety and performance criteria are met.
- A study by economists from the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research assessing the contribution of standards to total factor productivity of the German business sector over the period 1960-1996<sup>2</sup>, found that an increased stock of capital goods is the single largest factor explaining economic growth, but that the availability of a stock of relevant standards was the second largest factor (and nearly ten times more important than the fruits of innovation).

*Paul Temple (Dept. of Economics, University of Surrey, UK) and Geoffrey Williams (Pembroke College, University of Oxford, UK), The Benefits of Standards, A CEN Management Centre Publication, CEN, 2002 (Available in English only).*

<sup>1</sup> Peter Swann (2000), The economics of Standardisation, Final report for Standards and Technical Regulations Directorate, Department of Trade and Industry, DTI (available as PDF file at the website of DTI: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file11312.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> DIN (German Institute for Standardisation), The benefits of standardisation, Summary of results. Final report and practical examples; Part A: Benefits for businesses and Part B: Benefits for the economy as a whole; Berlin Beuth Verlag GmbH, 2000 (Available from: <http://www.beuth.de>).

## 3 The importance for SMEs and craft enterprises

### 3.1 SMEs and craft enterprises in general

Enterprises are at the heart of the strategy launched by the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000. Reaching the objective of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, creating more and better jobs, and developing greater social cohesion will ultimately depend on the success of enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones.

The European Charter for Small Enterprises adopted by the Feira European Council on 19-20 June 2000<sup>1</sup> calls upon the Commission and the Member States to 'strengthen the technological capacity of small enterprises'. In particular, they should 'strengthen existing programmes aimed at promoting technology dissemination towards small enterprises, as well as the capacity of small business to identify, select and adapt technologies ... and develop and adapt quality and certification systems to small enterprises ...'.

Early in 2003 the Commission published<sup>2</sup> the Green Paper Entrepreneurship in Europe. It presents an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of entrepreneurship in the EU, together with a series of policy suggestions and possible actions. The Green Paper has stimulated the debate 'how to shape entrepreneurship policy for the future'. Following the debate launched by the Green Paper Entrepreneurship, the Commission published an Action Plan<sup>3</sup> based on the extensive feedback received. The Action Plan establishes a framework of strategic priority areas setting out Europe's agenda for entrepreneurship in the years to come.

One of the conditions to achieve the Lisbon objective is to develop a business environment in which enterprises can survive and grow and it is imperative for public policy to identify and take into account the conditions for SMEs in the European economy as a whole and in the Single Market in particular. In the European Union more than 99 % of all enterprises are SMEs<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, SMEs provide jobs for almost 120 million people, or over 2/3 of total private employment in Europe. Within the group of SMEs, the vast majority (over 90 %) are micro enterprises, employing fewer than 10 persons. Many craft enterprises belong to the group of micro firms.

Micro enterprises are in a particularly difficult situation because they often do not have the resources or time to tackle all areas of running a business as professionally as larger companies. Furthermore they may find it hard to cope with all the new challenges,

<sup>1</sup> Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/charter/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/charter/index_en.htm).

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, Green Paper Entrepreneurship in Europe, COM(2003) 27 final, 21 January 2003.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Action Plan: The European Agenda for Entrepreneurship, COM(2004) 70 final, 11 February 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Much Information about structure and development of SMEs in Europe can be found in the SME Observatory reports, prepared for the European Commission by EIM Business & Policy Research, together with the European Network for Social and Economic Research ENSR. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/analysis/observatory.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/analysis/observatory.htm).

technologies and regulatory requirements facing them. Hence, particular attention should be paid to this group of micro enterprises.

SMEs and craft enterprises are faced with increasing competitive pressure stemming from globalisation, enlargement and the opening up of markets spurred by new technologies and innovation. SMEs will need to find ways to tackle these challenges, because the challenges are likely to persist and to increase in the future. Policymakers will have to ensure the best possible framework conditions for the European SMEs enabling them to live and grow under rapidly changing market conditions. Moreover, the Single Market has recently expanded by 10 new Member States, which is increasing the pressure for market integration and competition. For the internal market to function efficiently, previously closed markets are being opened up to fair competition.

Potential, strengths and weaknesses of SMEs and crafts have been addressed over time by several communications, decisions and reports of the Commission, including notably the 2000 communication 'Challenges for enterprise policy in the knowledge-driven economy'. The European Commission, in its Communication on Innovation Policy [COM (2003) 112 final] of 11 March 2003, calls for an industry-wide innovation policy concept, which is fully supported by the small businesses and skilled crafts sector. Besides R&D, the Communication points out different routes to innovation, in particular, the interaction with other policy areas including standardisation: 'The use of open standards in different business areas reduces costs, simplifies processes and is a key factor in the dissemination of technical, managerial and organisational innovations in areas such as product development, manufacturing, marketing, etc.'<sup>1</sup>

In assessing and designing support measures for enterprises it is important to realise that SMEs are quite different from large enterprises. SMEs are subject to a number of distinctive and intrinsic characteristics that make them different from their larger counterparts, therefore affecting the contents, the nature and the extent of the SMEs' activities. In essence, some of these characteristics<sup>2</sup> include:

- The average SME is very small: it provides employment for 5 people. The average European large enterprise employs more than 1 000 people. Countries differ significantly with respect to the scale of their enterprises. About half of all enterprises have no employees at all, thus providing employment and income to the self-employed and family workers only.
- SMEs often lack personnel, financial and time resources. On the one hand, SMEs are more economically vulnerable than large enterprises, a problem that implies that long-term investments that are not directly related to the core business are regarded as secondary by owner-managers and very often are therefore postponed or not made at all. On the other hand, SME managers/owners are very likely to suffer from important time and task pressures, which leave them with little time and energy to reflect strategically and plan on future activities, especially if they are regarded as 'beyond' the direct business activities.

<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Innovation policy: updating the Union's approach in the context of the Lisbon strategy', COM(2003) 112 final dated 11 March 2003, page 18.

<sup>2</sup> The smaller the enterprise the more these characteristics usually apply.

## 3.2 SMEs and standards

In the previous paragraph the Green Paper Entrepreneurship in Europe was mentioned. The Commission had invited the public to comment on the Green Paper. Amongst the public reactions many contributions voiced concern that even in the harmonised segments the Internal Market is not working properly and that SME needs in standardisation are not given appropriate consideration. SMEs in Accession and Candidate Countries<sup>1</sup>, in particular, lacked precise knowledge of the 'acquis communautaire'. The Commission's communication on its action plan 'The European agenda for Entrepreneurship Policy' (see Paragraph 3.1) also asks for more involvement by SMEs in the European standardisation.

Often SMEs consider standards as a burden, made by large enterprises, for large enterprises; and think they are not involved. A KAN<sup>2</sup> survey among German SMEs revealed widely spread points of view across Europe. SMEs would advise that standards should:

- be comprehensible and clearly arranged;
- contain instruction for implementing the standards and concrete technical solutions (instead of general concepts);
- repeat excerpts from other standards instead of merely referring to them.

Although the standardisation process formally allows for participation and input from all interested stakeholders via the national standards bodies or via direct participation, SMEs and craft enterprises are often not aware of what is going on in standardisation and of its importance. This factor and the specific constraint of SMEs in terms of human resources and finance lead to a relatively low active participation of SMEs in the standardisation process. The specific interests of SMEs therefore risk not being properly taken into account in the resulting standards, which SMEs only learn about after their publication as national standards.

In 1994 a pilot action called 'Euromanagement: standardisation, certification, quality, hygiene and safety in the workplace' provided clear evidence of the problems encountered by SMEs with respect to European standardisation. This action identified four main problems:

- SMEs' lack of knowledge of Single Market principles;
- Difficulties to access relevant information;
- Problems to understand and apply EU directives and norms;
- Shortages in the participation of SMEs in European standardisation work.

The 1998 report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on 'Efficiency and accountability in European standardisation under the new approach'<sup>3</sup>, stressed that it is necessary to bring standardisation and standards to the attention of market participants, in particular SMEs.

In the framework of the project the Observatory of European SMEs<sup>4</sup> (carried out by EIM in co-operation with its ENSR partners) an annual survey amongst almost 8 000 SMEs

<sup>1</sup> Now: new Member States, Accession and Candidate Countries.

<sup>2</sup> KAN: Kommission Arbeitsschutz und Normung: <http://www.kan.de/>.

<sup>3</sup> COM (1998) 291 final.

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/analysis/observatory\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/analysis/observatory_en.htm).

(including craft enterprises) has been carried out. In the 2002 Enterprise Survey attention was paid to the subject of standardisation. No specific report on SMEs and standardisation has been published in the Observatory series. The questions were included in the survey at the request of the Enterprise Directorate General of the European Commission. Some outcomes are presented in the report 'Highlights from the 2002 Survey' (Chapter 6: Technology and Standardisation).

First the SMEs were asked if standards and standardisation are very important issues for their enterprise. The answers were as follows:

Totally disagree	10 %
Disagree	8 %
Neutral	17 %
Agree	26 %
Totally agree	34 %
Don't know/no answer	5 %
Total	100 %

So, the majority (60 %) considers standards as very important, which is a very positive result, taking into account that standards are not relevant to all (sub-) sectors. Considering the size of the interviewed SMEs, medium-sized enterprises state more often that they 'totally agree' with the statement than micro enterprises.

Almost 39 % of the SMEs received relevant information on standards and standardisation, but 55 % did not. In addition a relationship with size of enterprise exists: 37 % of medium-sized enterprises; 47 % of small enterprises and as much as 56 % of micro enterprises state that they did not receive relevant information on standards. So, the information problem is even more urgent for the micro enterprises (amongst which are many craft firms).

The (39 %) SMEs receiving information on standards and standardisation indicated that they received information on standards and standardisation from the following sources<sup>1</sup>:

National standards body	28 %
Craft, trade or industry associations	53 %
Euro Info Centres	6 %
Others	41 %
Don't know/no answer	3 %

From the answers by size class of enterprises it becomes clear that smaller enterprises receive less information from national standards body than larger ones: 28 % for micro and 44 % for medium-sized enterprises.

In the context of designing and assessing support measure it is very interesting to look at the answers to the question '*which problems do you face regarding standards and standardisation?*'<sup>2</sup>

Lack of information on <i>new</i> standards	26 %
Lack of information on which standards have to be met	23 %
Difficulties in applying standards correctly	21 %

<sup>1</sup> The total does not add up to 100% since the respondents have been able to indicate multiple answer categories.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.

Difficulties in obtaining certification of compliance with standards	16 %
Lack of possibility of participation in development of new standards	16 %
Other problems	7 %
No problems/not applicable	47 %
Don't know/no answer	5 %

About half of all enterprises do not report any problems, but there are major groups that experience a lack of information or difficulties in applying standards correctly. Here no strong differences between the three size classes have been found.

So, from these survey results and from other observations it is quite clear that it is necessary to move standardisation and standards to the attention of market participants, in particular SMEs.

The European Seminar on SME and Standardisation (16 January 2004) confirmed these problems and stressed further the high cost of standards and certification for SMEs as compared to large enterprises.





## 4 The activities of the European Union

### 4.1 General

In the post-war period there have been various different standards, *within* and *between* the Member States of the EU. They have had an inhibiting effect on the free circulation of goods within Europe. To eliminate this problem, the EU decision makers have resorted to a uniform European standardisation system. It has served to dismantle the technical barriers to trade within Europe. In 1983, the system was initiated, backed-up by the Directive 83/189 EEC (replaced by Directive 98/34/EC).

Standardisation does not stop at the borders of a country - today even less than ever before. After the abolition of customs duties and quota-allocations, the European Union now has to cope with and has to overcome still existing technical barriers to trade (e.g. divergent national standards) in order to enlarge the Internal Market. The aim of European standardisation, however, is also to strengthen the competitiveness of the European economy within a global market by means of the elaboration of common technical solutions. Within the framework of the so-called New Approach (see [www.newapproach.org](http://www.newapproach.org)) the European Union has decided that the directives shall only contain basic requirements for products and services as regards to health, safety, construction or function. A concrete formulation of these legal concepts will be achieved by references to ('harmonized') European standards. Thus, they form a de facto basis for a 'CE-Marking' provided for in European directives (such as in the directives on the safety of machinery, toys, personal protective equipment, etc.) falling within the scope of a directive and thus allowing free trade.

The involvement of the European Union in the European standardisation process is explained in the 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the role of European standardisation in the framework of European policies and legislation' (COM(2004) 674 final of 18 October 2004). The following is the Executive Summary of the Communication:

*'Standardisation is an integral part of the Council's and the Commission's policies to carry out 'better regulation', to increase competitiveness of enterprises and to remove barriers to trade at international level. This was confirmed by the European Parliament in 1999<sup>1</sup> and by the Council both in its Resolution of 28 October 1999<sup>2</sup> and its Conclusions of 1 March 2002<sup>3</sup> on the role of standardisation in Europe. At the same time, the Council invited the Commission to review the objectives, scope and needs of European standardisation policy. The Commission has accepted this invitation, analysed the current situation and identified the key areas where the European standardisation system and the instruments available to European standardisation policy can and should be further improved. The results of this analysis comprise two documents. The first one consists in this Communication and underlines the increasing importance of standardisation*

<sup>1</sup> Resolution on the report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament 'Efficiency and Accountability in European standardisation under the New Approach', OJ C 150 of 28 May 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Council Resolution of 28 October 1999 on 'the Role of Standardisation in Europe' (OJ C141 of 10 May 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Council conclusions on standardisation of 1 March 2002, (OJ C66 of 15 March 2002).

to support the EU's policies. The second document, a Commission staff working paper dealing with the 'challenges for European standardisation', is geared at analysing the challenges European standardisation is facing in the context of an ever-changing economy and intends to provide recommendations on how best to overcome these challenges.

The review has shown that the current standardisation system in Europe which is essentially framed by Directive 98/ 34<sup>1</sup> has delivered what it was expected to do. European standardisation has proven to be a successful tool for the completion of the Single Market for goods.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement which affects all stakeholders in European standardisation, starting from the European Commission itself, the European Standards Organisations (ESOs), the National Standards bodies, the national authorities, business, and extending to the non-governmental organisations having an interest in standardisation.

- European standardisation has made an important contribution to the functioning of Single Market legislation. Since 1998, approximately 20 new legislative acts and projects in which standards play a supportive role have been developed and implemented. These relate, in particular, to ICT, the environment and consumer protection. This gives reason to believe that, by means of the New Approach or beyond it, the use of standards to support legislation could be further extended to new areas of European legislation. The Commission will continue to promote, in accordance with its commitment to better regulation, the broader use of standards to support legislation. European standardisation can play an important role to increase the competitiveness of European enterprises. This implies that the voluntary European standardisation system is developing activities in all areas which are important for the proper functioning of the Internal Market beyond the Single Market for goods, e.g. services, ICT, consumer and environment protection.
- In this context, however, European standardisation must respond properly to market needs, in particular to those of industry. The Commission is aware of some criticism with regard to the effectiveness and speed of the standards developing process, in particular in those areas of new technologies such as ICT where quick standardisation development is necessary in order to meet the requirements of the rapidly changing market conditions. Specifications elaborated by industrial fora and consortia play an increasing role, particularly at international level. The Commission considers that there is an enormous potential for the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of the European standardisation system and its mechanisms to satisfy market needs and the needs of enterprises under continuously changing conditions. Bearing in mind that European standardisation is independent and business driven, the European Standards Organisations are invited, together with stakeholders, to verify whether their working methods, procedures and policies sufficiently reflect the needs of their stakeholders with regard to providing a better response to current market requirements.
- As a contribution from the EU side to add value to standardisation in the context of EU policies, the institutional framework must be overhauled in order to ensure that standardisation can effectively play its role. This involves the creation of a legal ba-

<sup>1</sup> Directive 98/ 34 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the fields of technical standards and regulations and of rules on information services, OJ L 204 of 21 July 1998, amended by Directive 98/48 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 217 of 5 August 1998.

*sis for the financing of European standardisation and a revision of the standards part of Directive 98/34 establishing an information procedure in the field of the standards and technical regulations.*

- *The Commission, in co-operation with the European Standards Organisations, will continue to encourage the development of international standards by the appropriate international standards bodies and promote their use. Where international standards exist, they shall, wherever possible, be uniformly transposed by the European Standards Organisations and used as a basis for Community legislation.*
- *The Commission believes that the European standardisation system and its achievements could even be more visible outside the EU with a view to presenting the advantages of the European harmonisation model, in particular to the new 'neighbours' of the EU after enlargement. In its recent Communication on 'European Neighbourhood Policy'<sup>1</sup>, the Commission has explicitly highlighted the importance of conformity assessment and standardisation in this context. Furthermore, more synergies should be created through an increased co-operation between the European Standards Organisations, their national members, the Commission and Member States to make European standardisation more visible outside Europe<sup>2</sup>.*

In the above-mentioned Communication reference is made to the Commission staff working paper '*The challenges for European standardisation*'. This paper explains - as mentioned above - the specific challenges European standardisation is facing and provides recommendations for further activities, aimed at all stakeholders in standardisation.

In the paper the Commission notes that there is a particular need for actions to enhance the availability of standards in the languages of the new Member States and to improve involvement of SMEs in European standardisation. It is also recognised that standards development is time-consuming and costly in terms of the human and financial resources that have to be provided to achieve a meaningful input into the process.

According to the Commission the participation of SMEs and societal stakeholders can be hampered by a lack of resources and technical expertise. This can, in turn, affect the consensus-reaching process and therefore cause delays in standards development. The Commission is aware of this situation and of the necessity of a broad societal stakeholder participation in standards development. It is therefore providing financial support to European organisations and associations representing SME and societal stakeholder interests. This enables them as associate members in the European Standards Organisations to participate more effectively in the standardisation process at the European level and to co-ordinate the involvement of all national experts in the standardisation development process.<sup>3</sup> These stakeholders are NORMAPME<sup>4</sup>, representing SME interests, ANEC - consumer interests, ETUI-REHS - worker interests, and ECOS - environmental interests.

<sup>1</sup> COM (2004) 373 final.

<sup>2</sup> See Commission staff working paper on 'The challenges for European standardisation' [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/standards\\_policy/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/standards_policy/index.htm) .

<sup>3</sup> In addition the Commission funds standards bodies in their translation of standards into Community languages other than the working languages of the European Standards Organisations.

<sup>4</sup> NORMAPME is the European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Standardisation. See Paragraph 4.3 of this report.

The Commission working paper refers to an enquiry amongst the Member States which has shown that the efforts of their National Standards bodies (NSBs) and public authorities to ensure the representation of interest groups vary greatly. These efforts range from allocating valuable resources to abstaining from taking any action. For example, some NSBs have allocated staff to deal specifically with consumer interests but they have no similar initiatives with respect to SMEs or environmental interests<sup>1</sup>. However, all of these interests are equally important in the context of sustainable development. Therefore, efforts must be increased to ensure that European standardisation is recognised by the industrial stakeholders, particularly SMEs, as a strategic tool to raise competitiveness. Member States are invited to take further steps ensuring the proper participation of all societal stakeholders in their National Standards bodies.

The European Commission quite often organises or contributes to conferences and workshops that pay attention to standardisation issues. Some of these are organised by or receive a contribution from the Commission; see [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards\\_policy/meetings/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards_policy/meetings/index.htm)

Examples in 2006 include:

- 'Challenges for the successful integration of crafts and small enterprises from the new Member States into the single market by 2010', Warsaw (Poland), 29 and 30 June 2006.
- Conference at the occasion of World Standards Day 2006: 'European standardisation - a key for the success of SME and craft industries', Brussels, 16th October 2006.

Additional information about the activities of the European Commission with respect to standardisation is available from:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards_policy/index_en.htm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/standardisation/harmstds/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/standardisation/harmstds/index_en.html)

The *Council* has - in its Conclusions of December 2004 on 'European Standardisation' - acknowledged the Commission's findings and invited the Commission to pursue the activities proposed in the Communication and in the staff working paper.

The *European Parliament* also considers the direct participation of SMEs in the European standardisation process to be essential. In its report on the Commission's proposal for the new Multiannual Programme (2001-2005), the European Parliament pointed out that in order to ensure consistency with the Charter for Small Enterprises adopted by the Feira European Council in 2000, the new Multiannual Programme should ensure that SMEs and their representatives participate more in the European standardisation and certification work.

<sup>1</sup> This point has obviously been recognised before. At the end of the 1980's, the Ministry of SMEs, arts and craft, services and liberal professions in France decided to take into account the needs of SMEs in the field of standardisation. In the good practice description France in Chapter 5 of this report five results are described. One of these is the 'Committee on standards and craft enterprises' of the French national standards body AFNOR. This committee was created in October 2003 and consists of representatives of craft chambers, professional organisations and public authorities. It is a place where representatives of SMEs and craft enterprises can express their concerns in the field of standardisation and suggest improvements in the standardisation process for SMEs.

On 17 May 2006 the European Parliament discussed 'Financing of European standardisation'. In a legislative resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing of European standardisation (COM(2005)0377 - C6-0252/2005 - 2005/0157(COD)) the Parliament adopted a.o. the following amendments:

- (4a) It is necessary to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly small, micro and craft enterprises are effectively able to apply European standards. These standards should therefore be designed and adapted to take account of the characteristics and environment of such enterprises.
- (7b) Member States are encouraged to ensure proper national financing for standardisation tasks.

## 4.2 The Euro Info Centres Network

The Euro Info Centre Network was established in 1987 by the European Commission and is now managed by DG Enterprise and Industry, which co-finances the network, and defines its strategy and way of operation. The EIC network is active in 46 countries and is composed of:

- 269 Euro Info Centres covering the EU, the Candidate Countries, the EEA and the EU's most remote regions;
- 14 Euro Info Correspondence Centres in third countries.

Initially the role of EICs<sup>1</sup> was to provide Community information to SMEs. In the meantime they have developed other services. Their main mission is to provide companies with information, advice and assistance in different areas. The EIC network is also involved in the Commission Interactive Policy Making initiative: EICs confidentially feed back company concerns to the Commission by gathering information through a variety of means such as direct discussions, and participation in consultation panels.

The Euro Info Centres are set up for SMEs in all sectors. When an enterprise requires certain expert information, it can contact a Euro Info Centre. The Euro Info Centre may provide the information itself or may consult the EIC network in order to find the required expertise. The Euro Info Centres closely co-operate with each other, which improves the quality of their services.

As regards standardisation<sup>2</sup>, the EIC network was involved in the promotional campaigns organised in 1995 and 1997 by DG XXIII (Enterprise policy, Tourism and Social economy) which included the theme 'Standardisation'. In this framework, EICs developed some information products and seminars intended to improve companies' knowledge in the area of standardisation.

Furthermore, between 1997 and 2004, EIC working groups were organised within the network. These working groups were composed of 8 EICs specialised in certain selected areas. Meetings were organised in Brussels and chaired by the members of the Unit in the Commission managing the EIC network. The role of these working groups was to

<sup>1</sup> All EICs sit within a bigger structure known as the 'host'; these could be Chambers of Commerce, regional development agencies or similar business support organisations. See: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/networks/eic/eic.html>.

<sup>2</sup> In Annex II a list is given of EICs that are active in the field of CE marking and/or standardisation.

develop information products and tools which can help other EICs to provide services to companies in the area covered by the working group. One of the working groups was the Standardisation Working Group, which developed information products such as fact sheets on the most important New Approach directives and a step by step guide to CE marking.

#### 4.2.1 *EICs services in the area of CE marking and standardisation*

##### *Information*

Most EICs provide information services in the area of CE marking/standardisation, as these issues are part of the EU Internal Market policy. Services provided are the following:

- 1 Answering basic questions on CE marking/standardisation. Some EICs have developed a specific service to answer questions on standardisation, e.g.: EIC BE001 Namur developed a service called 'Hotline Normalisation'.
- 2 Signposting companies to local or national technical bodies or experts. E.g. EIC DK055 Taastrup identified contact persons in central administration who can assist companies in the area of CE marking/standardisation. The EIC can therefore quickly signpost the company to the right person.
- 3 Organising seminars to raise the awareness of companies and inform them about their obligations. Examples of seminars organised in 2005 are:
  - CE marking on construction products. Due to the high number of question from enterprises on the Construction products directive, EIC HU727 Budapest organised a practical seminar on this Directive. Experts from ministries, a notified body, and construction organisations were invited. Topics covered included: general information on the Construction products directive and conformity assessment procedures.
  - CE marking: Amendment of the EMC directive<sup>1</sup>. EIC FR256 Amiens organised this meeting with the co-operation of experts from the French Ministry of Industry and technical organisations. The objective was to inform local companies about the new requirements imposed by the revised EMC directive.
- 4 Developing and disseminating information products about CE marking/standardisation. Examples of information products developed by EICs are:
  - E-brochure on CE marking, a 30-pages brochure regularly updated and published on the EIC website (EIC PL415 Gdansk).
  - Guide on CE marking and conformity assessment in 10 points distributed during seminars on CE marking (EIC TR704 Gaziantep).
  - Website offering CE-marking sections. It is used and referred to by public institutions, sector organisations, ministries and agencies. It is linked to numerous other websites, which SMEs are likely to use (EIC DK055 Taastrup).

<sup>1</sup> EMC directive (89/336/EEC) of the European Union about Electromagnetic Compatibility Directive 89/336/EEC. Manufacturers of electrical or electronic products wishing to sell into the European Union using the CE Marking route must comply with the EMC Directive. The EMC Directive is seen as the most complex and far reaching of all directives that have been introduced into the European Union. It applies to nearly all electrical and electronic products made, and compliance with the EMC Directive is mandatory. In order to comply with the EMC Directive, products must have an adequate level of immunity from external disturbances and not cause interference with other products/systems. Compliance with the EMC Directive became mandatory January 1, 1996.

### ***The Euro Info Centres in Turkey***

The Euro Info Centres in Turkey are a joint initiative of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation (KOSGEB) and the European Commission. There are 9 Euro Info Centres in Turkey, which are located in the following cities: Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Denizli, Gaziantep, Istanbul (2), Konya and Samsun. These cities account for more than 50% of the total Turkish population.

Raising the awareness of standards amongst enterprises is not a specific goal of the Turkish EICs, but the technical and financial audits that the centres are undergoing require that *standardisation* is included in the planning and reporting of activities. This has raised the awareness of the *host organisations* in the field of standardisation. As a consequence the main activities of Euro Info Centres in the field of standardisation are:

- To inform enterprises about the updated EU legislations (guidelines, product safety and responsibility, global new approach policies, etc.);
- To inform enterprises about the harmonisation processes of standards and their expiration dates;
- To support enterprises about the flow charts, certificate of conformity, etc. of the processes related to standardisation;
- To inform enterprises about the notified bodies and accredited laboratories;
- To support and inform enterprises about ISO 9000 Quality, ISO 14000 Environment Certificates, CE marking, etc.

The Euro Info Centres finance these activities from the budget of their host structures (TOBB and chambers), and the annual EU grants. Each standardisation meeting has an overall cost of EUR 3 000-100 000 depending on the size and location of the meeting. This cost is covered by TOBB and the chambers. For some big events, companies contribute as sponsors.

The Euro Info Centres in Turkey provide these services through:

- Their own web sites, and the Euro Info Centre main page;
- Answering the questions of enterprises face-to-face, by e-mail or by phone;
- Organising meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. related with standardisation;
- Printed informative materials (such as CDs, booklets, brochures, etc.) that are distributed among enterprises;
- Media (e.g. radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, etc.).

The activities in the field of standardisation are focused on existing standards. The main target group are SMEs, especially in manufacturing industries. The parties that are involved in the measure are TOBB and the local chambers (and individual experts working for TOBB and the chambers) and SMEs. TOBB is the organisation responsible for the coordination of the activities.

Seminars are organised by TOBB in cooperation with the chambers in order to raise the awareness of businessmen and employees. The costs of these meetings are covered by the organisations holding the meeting.

Short- term impact of these activities is that SMEs have more knowledge about standardisation. Costs are considered as really low compared to the benefits brought about.

The main problem is that in Turkey there seems to be insufficient interest in the standardisation topic. Apart from the fact that SMEs don't have enough budget for the adjustments in terms of compliance with EU legislations, there are no notified bodies and the number of accreditation organisations is not sufficient enough in Turkey.



#### 4.2.2 Advice and assistance

Only a few EICs provide more added value services to companies in the area of CE marking/standardisation. Examples are the following:

- 1 Training companies on CE marking/standardisation. EIC FR255 Strasbourg is organising a training session entitled 'CE marking diagnostic' for companies that want to know how to apply New Approach directives. The following aspects are dealt with: clarification of the scope of the directive, conformity assessment modules, European harmonised standards, tests, documentation to provide, etc.
- 2 Monitoring information on CE marking/standardisation. EIC DE123 Nürnberg proposes to companies an information watch service focused on CE marking/standardisation developments in certain specific sectors.
- 3 Individual assistance to companies. Examples include:
  - EIC NL452 Boxtel assists clients with the procedural steps of CE marking (technical file, manual, EC declaration of conformity, etc.). When the procedure requires the involvement of a notified body, the EIC provides the company with a list of notified bodies and acts as an intermediary between the company and the notified body.
  - EIC BE002 Antwerp developed 'Acquis communautaire' reports, which are proposed to companies planning to import into the EU or sell their products within the EU. These reports list all the relevant EU rules, and the standards, which may apply to the company's products. Information sources and answers to specific questions are also provided.
  - EIC ES218 Llanera-Asturias assists companies in determining whether their products fall under the scope of a CE marking directive(s), and the requirements which must be complied with. The EIC provides relevant legislation and documentation and signposts the company to competent bodies when necessary.

#### 4.3 NORMAPME

*In the text boxes some practical examples are given of NORMAPME's activities in the European standardisation process*

NORMAPME<sup>1</sup> is the European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Standardisation. It was created to improve the participation of SMEs in European standardisation, to increase the influence of small enterprises in standard writing and help them understand and implement standards. Since July 2002 NORMAPME receives financial support from the European Commission with the aim to guarantee the necessary regularity, openness and breadth of cover to assisting SMEs in the standardisation process<sup>2</sup>. NORMAPME - in co-operation with UEAPME<sup>3</sup> - has to execute a certain number of tasks destined to increase the participation of SMEs and craft enterprises and to promote their interests in the European standardisation process.

<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.normapme.com/>

<sup>2</sup> The financial support is given on the basis of a contract following a tender procedure won by NORMAPME.

<sup>3</sup> UEAPME: the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises is the organisation that has created NORMAPME with the support of the European Commission.

With this financial support of the European Commission, NORMAPME has been able to create a small team of SME standardisation experts and a secretariat in Brussels.

The operations of NORMAPME can be basically divided into two major tasks:

- 1 *Visibility and representation* - Establish the representation of SMEs in the standardisation field, ensure their presence in the drafting of standards.
- 2 *Information, stimulation and influence* - Explain the standardisation process to the SMEs and their representative organisations, inform them how to be involved, what are the interesting subjects, stimulate discussions and help to create a pan-European point of view on specific standardisation issues, and finally pass on this opinion to the decision makers.

#### **Building Anchors**

The ETAG1 by EOTA has been a long-standing problem for small and medium-sized enterprises, producers of building anchors, because the CE marking scheme, requiring long and costly laboratory tests, was created without their participation and against their objections. NORMAPME organized a campaign to change the ETAG1 (a quasi standard). The most recent result is that EOTA is now planning to change the guideline, simplifying it, taking into account the interests of small and medium-sized enterprises. Participation of SME representatives in the Technical Committee and of NORMAPME in the Bureau Technique ( BT) will help improve the conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises. A long period of technical negotiation is starting since the association of SMEs that are concerned requests that the modified guideline(s) should be rewritten from the beginning. See also: Section 4.3.3.

#### 4.3.1 *Visibility and representation*

One of the most important results of the NORMAPME operation is the establishment of strong visibility of small and medium-sized enterprises in standardisation fora.

##### *Members*

For this purpose a network of contacts has been created, consisting of UEAPME and NORMAPME members. This has become the natural channel of contact to the majority of European SMEs and craft enterprises. NORMAPME is successfully working with its 13 members, mainly European trade associations active in a specific industry. UEAPME is one of the 13 members of NORMAPME; it has currently 79 members, mainly the national craft and SME umbrella and trade associations. They represent sectors ranging from construction to textiles and dentistry. All organisations share the common goal of searching for simplified standards and simplifying the standardisation process in favour of their members which represent European and international SMEs and craft enterprises.

##### *Partners*

NORMAPME maintains an active relationship with several partners. This is necessary to promote the interests of small and medium-sized enterprises in European standardisation. Thanks to these partnerships, NORMAPME is now accepted as an active stakeholder in the European standardisation system and it has created a large network of contact persons in European Standards Organisations and National Standards Bodies, giving it access to information in areas it is active in. Its aim is to extend these partnerships in order to get an even more active role in the standardisation process.

At the moment, the activities of the Board and General Assembly of CEN and ETSI, the Bureau Technique (BT) of CEN and the Information and Communication Technology Standards Board (ICTSB) are all systematically monitored by NORMAPME. Moreover, the

General Assembly of CENELEC (and the BT) is monitored, while contributions to thematic conferences and seminars are frequently made. In ETSI, one NORMAPME staff member that also serves as president of the Users Group has held one board seat for two years. EOTA (European Organisation for Technical Approvals) has invited NORMAPME to participation in the BT.

*Participation in the drafting of standards*

The NORMAPME members have set the priorities for participation in the technical committees that draft standards that are of interest to SMEs. In addition the members have provided the experts that actually participate in these committees. Currently, SME experts participate in selected Technical Committees of CEN<sup>1</sup>, CENELEC and ISO. Working groups have been activated for almost all of the 22 Technical Committees (TC) in which NORMAPME participates (presently there are 18 working groups) ensuring a wide participation of many more experts from member and non member organisations.

**Doors and Windows**

Long and animated discussions on the Doors and Windows Draft Standard have been carried out with the aim to make possible the simplification of CE marking for craft producers of doors and windows. After a long campaign by NORMAPME and the construction sector association EBC the European Commission recently issued Guidance Paper M, favourable to SME opinions, defining the non-series production for simplified conditions of implementation. Furthermore, a new meeting has been called by CEN to encourage translating the favourable provisions of Guidance Paper M into the existing draft standard.

Usually, it was the perceived urgency to work in certain areas that motivated the selection of the committees. In the course of the years some changes were necessary as the work on some important standards came to an end as the efficiency of participation was re-evaluated (CEN TC 206 Biocompatibility, CEN TC 250 Euro codes); or the interest shifted to new areas of standardisation (CEN TC 156 [Ventilation for buildings] and 228 [Heating Systems in Buildings]). The shift in priorities has mainly been towards new work of standardisation (as opposed to joining a TC at the end of the standards drafting process) where the participation from the beginning in the Technical Committees guarantees taking into account the SME interests in the standards under discussion.

At present NORMAPME experts are active in the following technical committees:

1	CEN TC 127	Fire safety in Buildings
2	CEN TC 33	Doors & Windows
3	ISO TC176	Quality Management & Quality Assurance
4	ISO TC 207	Environmental Management
5	CEN TC 143	Machine safety
6	ISO TC 38	Textiles
7	CEN TC 254	Flexible roofing materials
8	CEN TC 10	Lifts
9	CEN TC 55	Dentistry
10	CENELEC 64.b	Electrical installations of buildings: Protection against electric shock
11	CEN TC 156	Ventilation for buildings
12	CEN TC 228	Heating Systems in Buildings

<sup>1</sup> There are 220 Technical Committees with CEN.

13	CEN TC 153	Food Processing Machinery, Food Standards, HACCP, Inspection
14	CEN TC 350	Sustainability of construction works
15	CEN TC 351	Dangerous substances in Construction Products
16	CEN TC 175	Round and sawn timber
17	ISO TC 228	Tourism
18	CEN 128	Roofs
19	CEN 234	Gas supply
20	EOTA ETAG	Building anchors
21	ISO TMB/WG SR	Social Responsibility
22	CEN BT TF 181	Business support services for SMEs

A small secretariat in Brussels (presently 7 employees) is currently co-ordinating these efforts and maintaining contact with the European Commission and the standards organisations managements, whilst promoting SME opinions on standards and related regulations.

**Food Safety, ISO 22000 Standard**

In the food safety sector specific proposals drafted by the food group of NORMAPME/-UEAPME were submitted to ISO specifying simplified inspection methods carried out under the authority of professional organisations that guarantee food safety. They have been included in the January version of the draft ISO 22000 standard. The provisions devised for large companies are recognised as inapplicable by small enterprises and thus leading to exclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises. The developments must be carefully followed up.

4.3.2 *Information, stimulation and influence*

Raising awareness and disseminating of information are very important tasks for NORMAPME. Website, newsletter, circulars, seminars and more informal information forms are used to alert small and medium-sized enterprises on standardisation developments.

*Website*

The website has the advantage of being continuously available to all interested parties without any distinction between members and non-members. It contains practically all the information produced and distributed by NORMAPME and it has the advantage of giving an indication as to the popularity and usefulness of the information by measuring the frequency of links to it. It is available in six languages and it gives an easy access to information on standardisation (mandates, standards, draft standards, new work items, consultations, CE-marking) and all the information on the NORMAPME mission and activities.

*Newsletters*

The newsletters are published on the website but they are also mailed electronically to all members of UEAPME/NORMAPME and individuals or organisations that have requested receiving them. Therefore, SME and crafts organisations are 'reminded' of the standardisation activity and are stimulated to respond to new information 'pushed' on them.

*Circulars*

Circulars have a more specific function to inform member organisations (and non-members) on specific issues arising from standardisation activities, which are considered of great importance and for which a reaction is expected and/or specifically requested.

### *Notes*

Short information notes are mainly used to communicate information to restricted groups of interest such as the members of a working group, a forum, or targeted experts.

### *Information request*

NORMAPME is encouraging everybody to ask questions about standardisation and it receives several questions per week on European standards and related subjects. All questions are answered. More than 50 % of the correspondents express their satisfaction in writing.

### *Seminars*

Seminars are also playing an important role in informing, raising awareness among small and medium-sized enterprises on the importance of European standardisation and creating a network of interested contacts that has become very important for advancing the objectives of the project. The basic content of the seminars is the explanation of the European standardisation system, how SME organisations can participate with the help of NORMAPME in the European standardisation work and influence the content of new standards. Examples of important ongoing standards drafting are presented at the seminars and the relevance to small and medium-sized enterprises is explained. Other more detailed technical aspects of standardisation are presented according to the specific interest of the audience.

#### 4.3.3 *Results*

Sustained presence over the years has strongly influenced standards and related directives, guidance papers, guidelines and other standards related documents. Some specific results lately obtained are:

- The ISO 22000 draft standard modification;
- The new version of the Guidance Paper M<sup>1</sup> favourably defining non series production for craft enterprises;
- Another example is the standard ETAG<sup>2</sup>-020 (European Technical Guideline) on building anchors. NORMAPME's interventions lead to an agreement with the standards organisation ECAP<sup>3</sup> to redraft the standards text. Participation of SME representatives in the Technical Committee and technical support by NORMAPME brought in new proposals from an SME point of view. As a result, the necessary tests for small producers of building anchors of different types were reduced by 39 % and the standard text itself was shortened by 44 %. Now the standard's text is readable and the use is simplified considerably. The Technical Approval document was shortened by 80 % to a 2-page text. The safety provisions, however, had not been weakened.

<sup>1</sup> Conformity assessment under the Construction Products Directive.

<sup>2</sup> An ETA Guideline (ETAG) is a document drafted by and for the EOTA Approval Bodies as a result of a mandate from the European Commission and EFTA. Its basic aim is to establish how Approval Bodies should evaluate the specific characteristics/requirements of a product or family of products.

<sup>3</sup> ECAP is the Consortium of European Small and Middle-sized Anchors Producers that represents and safeguards their common interests legally, technically and on a services front. ECAP is member of NORMAPME.

### ***Monthly report on the food industry***

In the UK the Forum of Private Business (FPB) lobbies on behalf of small and medium-sized enterprises. It is a non-profit-seeking, membership-based organisation. They represent around 25 000 businesses. FPB is the UK member of UEAPME – the organisation, which represents crafts, trades, and SMEs across the EU. FPB provides several experts from the UK to NORMAPME in different fields to monitor and participate in the activities of the various Technical Committees. One of the experts is active in the food industry. The food industry is one of eighteen industrial sectors within NORMAPME.

Since 2004 the UK expert has written a monthly report for the food industry in a set format to the CEN technical committee representative in each Member State. The content of the report varies from month to month depending on the issues of maximum importance at the time. The format is simple but consistent namely:

*Expert Monthly Report*

*Technical Committee 153*

*Name of CEN Food Expert*

*Last meeting date;*

- 1 Monthly activities;*
- 2 NORMAPME Working group (Distribution list)*
- 3 Main issues arising*
- 4 How are these affecting SMEs in Europe?*
- 5 Recommended actions*
- 6 Follow up action*
- 7 Any other comments*

The main issues, which are included in these monthly reports are: how do standards affect SMEs in Europe, recommended actions, dates for follow up activities, any other comments. SMEs benefit from these reports in the sense that they become more aware of standardisation and that tend to become more involved in the standardisation making process.

The reports are distributed to about thirty organisations in the EU Member States. These organisations represent over twelve million enterprises, almost all SMEs. The reports cover the food sector and are aimed at a wide range of enterprises from small artisan and craft organisations to purely commercial undertakings. The production of these reports is funded by 'European' money being distributed via NORMAPME.

The reports take a pragmatic view that standards can increase the profitability of many SMEs, particularly by opening up market opportunities that may not have been available without the use and understanding of standards. The reports focus both on the standard making process and on the use and benefits of existing standards.

According to both FPB and NORMAPME this activity is effective and should be continued. The objectives are, to a large extent, realized and the costs and benefits seem to be more or less equal. The content and delivery to target group score both high. The most notable short-term effect is making SMEs aware of the importance of the standard making process and to modify standards to suit SME characteristics and interests. It overcomes apathy and ignorance of SMEs for the standardisation process.



## 5 Selecting good practices in promoting the participation of SME and craft enterprises

Chapters 2 to 4 of this report introduce general issues relating to standardisation and European SMEs. Section 5.1 describes the surveys that were implemented to identify policies and actions to foster the participation of SME and craft enterprises in both the development of standards ('standardisation' in a narrow sense) and the use of standards in their own enterprises. In addition the selection process and the considerations used to arrive at good practice examples are also described. Section 5.2 presents an overview of the results obtained in the survey and an introduction to the set of twenty-three good practices that are presented in Chapter 6. The final Section 5.3 provides a classification of all measure identified.

### 5.1 The Internet survey

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

The objectives of the project were to collect information on the activities and policy measures for the promotion of craft enterprises and SMEs in the area of standardisation and to present a set of carefully selected good practice descriptions. The study covered 32 countries (25 EU Member States plus Norway; Iceland; Lichtenstein; Bulgaria; Romania; Turkey and Croatia) and focussed on three types of organisations:

- National governments;
- National standards bodies;
- SME and craft organisations and associations.

#### 5.1.2 Data collection

The project started by designing and implementing an Internet survey to identify the on-going programmes and activities in each of the 32 countries:

- *Questionnaire*. The questionnaire for the Internet survey was developed in English and subsequently translated into 24 languages to guarantee easy access for the entire target group. The questionnaire addresses general characteristics of the organisations concerned as well the policy measures that are the core of this study;
- *Sampling*. Addresses for the three types of stakeholders listed above were collected, subsequently checked and made complete by EIM's research partners in each of the 32 countries;
- *Hosting*. The questionnaires were programmed and a tailor-made log-in procedure was developed in order to guarantee that only the target group would have access to the survey and that responses could be adequately monitored, both by country and by type of organisations;
- *Fieldwork*. The Internet survey was launched in September 2005 by inviting approximately 1 200 individuals from national governments, national standards bodies and SME and craft organisations to respond;
- *Response*. After sending reminders and doing re-calls the survey was closed on 30 November 2005 with the following results: the number of people finally invited amounts to 1 202 of which: 340 completed the entire questionnaire (28 %) and 153 partly completed the questionnaire (13 %); together 493 or 41 %. These numbers should be interpreted with care as on the one hand, not all respondents had policy measures to report about while on the other hand respondents could of



course provide information on more than one policy measure, e.g. a travel-grant to SME and a series of workshops organised by the same organisation).

### 5.1.3 *The response*

Table 1 provides the response per country for national administrations, national standards bodies and SME and craft organisations. Table 1 only shows 465 responses because some respondents (6 %) did not answer the first question about the type of organisation they belong to.

### 5.1.4 *Results*

People invited to participate in the survey were all believed to belong to the first three types of respondents (in line with the objectives of the study):

- National administrations;
- National standards bodies;
- SME and craft organisations.

However, especially in the third category, SME and craft organisations, some respondents classified themselves as 'others'. In this category we find organisations such as:

- 1 Chambers of Commerce;
- 2 Sectoral standards organisations, i.e. for textiles only;
- 3 Euro Info Centres;
- 4 Industrial or regional development institutes;
- 5 Some sectoral organisations, e.g. a hotels and restaurants association;
- 6 Research and consulting organisations.

Nearly 70 % of the respondents are personally involved in standardisation issues. For 20 % standardisation is a main task, for nearly 50 % it is part of their task. Obviously this figure varies substantially by type of organisation. The percentage of respondents for whom standardisation is the main task is (by type of organisation):

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| - National administrations             | 15 % |
| - National standards bodies (NSB)      | 85 % |
| - National SME and craft organisations | 11 % |
| - Others                               | 5 %  |
| - Total (average)                      | 20 % |

About 90 % of the 269 people answering this question state that they pay special attention to SMEs and craft enterprises. Amongst national administrations this is lowest at 74 %, amongst NSB 88 % and amongst SME, craft and sectoral professional organisations obviously highest at 96 %.

The large majority (78 %) of the respondents focussing on SMEs and craft enterprises co-operate with other organisations to actual reach this target group; for national standards bodies this figure is 93 %.

The respondents from national SME and/or sectoral professional organisations, etc. can be divided in three groups of similar size:

- Involved less than once a year in activities of the national standards body;
- Involved a few times a year;
- Involved almost every month.

**Table 1 Responses by country and type of organisation**

	<i>Type 1</i>	<i>Type 2</i>	<i>Type 3</i>	<i>Type 4</i>	
	<i>National admini- strations</i>	<i>National stan- dards bodies</i>	<i>National SME and craft organisations</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Austria	4	2	3	2	11
Belgium	1	1	7	2	11
Bulgaria	3	1	10	3	17
Croatia	1	1	6	6	14
Cyprus	2	3	3	3	11
Czech Rep.	4	2	5	1	12
Denmark	4	1	7	1	13
Estonia	0	2	1	0	3
Finland	7	3	11	2	23
France	3	5	14	6	28
Germany	7	2	10	4	23
Greece	0	1	2	6	9
Hungary	3	3	5	2	13
Iceland	1	1	0	1	3
Ireland	1	3	8	3	15
Italy	3	3	17	5	28
Latvia	2	1	2	3	8
Liechtenstein	1	0	2	1	4
Lithuania	0	1	2	0	3
Luxembourg	3	0	7	1	11
Malta	0	1	4	2	7
Netherlands	2	2	15	4	23
Norway	4	4	7	5	20
Poland	10	4	5	28	47
Portugal	2	2	4	1	9
Romania	4	1	8	2	15
Slovakia	6	0	3	1	10
Slovenia	4	2	8	7	21
Spain	1	1	7	1	10
Sweden	0	3	9	0	12
Turkey	5	3	4	1	13
UK	4	0	13	1	18
Total	92	59	209	105	465

Source: Database Internet Survey, EIM, 1 December 2005.

Nearly 60 % of all respondents have enterprises registered with their organisation. For national administrations this is only 16 %, but for national standards bodies this is more than two-thirds.

Table 2 shows that 61 % of the respondents state that their organisation has specific instruments, subsidies, activities, etc. to foster the participation of SMEs and craft enterprises in the development and use of standards (143 out of 233). The highest figures are found with NSBs and SME and professional organisations, about two-thirds. These figures should however be used with care and considered to be maximum estimates, as especially those respondents that are active in this area will probably have completed the questionnaire.

**Table 2 Percentage of organisations having specific instruments to foster the participation of SMEs and craft enterprises, by type of organisation**

<i>Type of respondent</i>	<i>Having such measures %</i>
1 National administration	51
2 National standards body	70
3 National SME, craft or sectoral professional organisation	66
4 Others	56
Total	61

In total 401 measures<sup>1</sup> have been identified. From these 401 measures, a set of 118 measures were selected as being 'potentially good practices'. This initial selection was made solely on the basis of information provided from the Internet survey.

## 5.2 The selection process of good practices

In total 401 measures have been identified in 29 countries. For Estonia, Greece and Liechtenstein no measures were identified. The next step in the project was to select good practices. This section presents some considerations that were formulated and used in the process<sup>2</sup>. Following a set of instructions, EIM's research team classified all 401 policy measures in four categories. The study and this report focus on the list of 118 potentially good practises that resulted.

### *Identifying good practices*

In identifying good practices the following issues were considered:

- *Reach*. A large output and a relatively high reach of the target group, indicate something about 'popularity' and 'suitability' of an instrument. (However, sometimes the reach can be low, because the instrument is new or only in a pilot/

<sup>1</sup> After the information resulting from open questions was translated back into English, a profile of all organisations concerned (its activities, aims etc.) and of all 401 measures identified was made. This information is available as one bulky PDF file of 1 143 pages. This may be downloaded from <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/craft/craft-priorities/craft-standardisation.htm> or mail to [Entr-Craft-Small-Business@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Entr-Craft-Small-Business@ec.europa.eu).

<sup>2</sup> These criteria for the selection of good practices were obviously developed early on in the process in order to support the drafting of the questionnaire for the Internet survey and developing guidelines for research partners in all 32 countries to collect additional information.

experimental phase, in such cases this was used as an immediate ground for exclusion).

- *Effectiveness/impact*. A good score for effectiveness/impact is important. High effectiveness can be in terms of:
  - Increase of participation in standardisation process (i.e. creating standards) by target group;
  - Improvement of quality of input in standardisation process;
  - (Both elements mentioned above to be judged in relation to stated objectives when instrument was initiated);
  - Growth in enterprises' willingness to contribute to the standardisation process;
  - Growth in enterprises' willingness to use standards;
  - Raising awareness of the necessity of standardisation;
  - Raising awareness of the benefits of being informed on standardisation;
  - Durability of effects.
- *Efficiency*. Costs benefit ratios & volume of administrative burdens. It is important to get an idea of the resources being allocated (either in the form of budgets being made available in advance such as the amount of money available to be distributed as subsidies to enterprises or in the form of additional costs born by implementing agencies or participating enterprises) for a specific measure in relation to the effect obtained.
- *Implementation issues/administrative burden*. If an instrument suffers from a lot of problems in the implementation process and leads to a lot of bureaucracy, this is not a recommendation for a good practice. If the administrative burden for participating or benefiting enterprises is limited, this is a clear advantage.
- *Transferability is important*. However, measures that are effective in every type of context may simply not exist. Therefore, it would be important to know why a particular measure was introduced and which circumstances were of influence on its results. Then, we might get an idea in which situations (groups, sectors, regions, countries) the measure is successful and in which situations it will probably not be successful.

The information from the Internet survey about several of these elements did allow for the construction of a long list of potentially good practices<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, a proper assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of a measure would only be possible if good evaluation studies are available.

Criteria for a good evaluation are a.o. (See also the textbox)

- Attention is paid to different criteria for success;
- An analysis is made on deadweight loss (how many enterprises that are using the incentives would have participated in standardisation activities also without the instrument being in place);
- It is better to base results on objective criteria (e.g. comparison with control groups) than only on subjective judgements of parties concerned;
- An explanation is given for success or failure.

Unfortunately hardly any good evaluation studies could be traced. To the extent possible, additional local information on the (potentially) good practices was gathered in the framework of this study to overcome this weakness.

<sup>1</sup> In addition respondents were asked to also directly indicate possible 'good' or 'bad' practices from among the instruments of their organisation.

### **Evaluation of policy measures**

The main goal of the instruments considered in this study is to stimulate the participation of SMEs in standardisation. Here we briefly address the possible ways to evaluate these types of measures.

A fairly simple way to evaluate is comparing the volume of participation before and after a specific measure is introduced. However, the problem with such an approach is that it is unsure to what extent changes in volume can be really attributed to the measure. All types of other factors may also influence the participation of standardisation over time, for example the business cycle or specific technical developments in the market.

Similar problems appear when evaluations only look at the extent of take-up of the measure. If enterprises 'use' the measure (e.g. the subsidy) this does not automatically mean that participation takes place because of the measure. Enterprises could also have participated without the measure, but the measure might simply be used to recover part of the associated costs. The proportion of participation that took place within the framework of a measure that would have taken place anyhow, is called deadweight. The proportion of participation that would not have taken place without the measure is sometimes called the net-effect (in contrast to the gross effect which is the take up or reach of a measure).

To determine the deadweight or the complementary net effect, there are a number of options. The first option is to ask users of the measure directly what would have taken place without the measure. Would the enterprise have participated also without the measure? Of course, this is subjective information involving a certain risk. Entrepreneurs could give strategic answers, for example suggesting a high net effect in order to secure this type of financial support in future.

An alternative would be to try to quantify the effects by using a so-called control group approach. The most sophisticated way of a control group approach is an experiment. This means that a certain instrument is introduced in for example one region and not in another region that functions as a control group. Another example is if a certain subsidy for enterprises is available to a certain group of randomly assigned enterprises (the 'treatment group'), but not to another comparable group (the control group).

The behaviour of the experimental group (or region) will be compared with the control group to determine additional 'net' effects. However, in Europe experimental designs with new policy measures are very unusual in contrast to the United States (for example with measures to support take up of training).

As far as we know, there are no evaluations of the measures under consideration that are based on an experimental design. This does not mean that a control group approach is not possible without an experiment. Many measures are specifically targeted towards a specific group of employees or companies. This means that there are possibilities for forming control groups of those who are not entitled to the measure. However, there will most likely be systematic differences in the characteristics of both groups, which could also influence differences in participation in standardisation between 'treatment' group and control group. So it is possible that some of the differences should not be attributed to the measure but to the effect of other differences. The more different both groups are, the more difficult it will be to come to robust conclusions.

Most 'evaluation' studies do not even focus on the effect on the measure, but are merely process evaluations. So we have to conclude that the material is rather 'thin' to allow formulating very robust conclusions of what actually is a good practice. In another study - on which this textbox is based - considering national policy instruments in Europe to support training of employees we referred to general findings from the literature that most instruments and incentives really helped to increase the participation in training, but that in the studies in which a deadweight effect is calculated, this amounts from 20 % to more than 50 %. To what extent this is 'bad' or 'good' is difficult to judge. To arrive at more firm conclusions on this issue, a cost-benefit analysis per instrument would be a suitable approach.

*This textbox is based on a study commissioned by The Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission: Final report Lifelong Learning Volume 1 Main Report, Policy instruments to foster training of the employed. EIM/SEOR, January 2005 (Available at website DG Employment).*

In assessing individual policy instruments and in trying to answer the question 'what works in practice', the following must be taken into account. For many instruments it is not realistic to consider the effects of the instrument in isolation. Various instruments and factors might need to be considered in combination and in the institutional environment (country, sector, etc.) in which they operate. The effect might be brought about by a combination of instruments (and other factors). To give an obvious example: raising awareness about the importance of standardisation, providing easy access to information about existing standards and a subsidy for enterprises to participate in the elaboration of new standards might be especially effective when offered as a package. When commenting on the transferability of policy instruments such issues were considered. However, it is still important to assess the contribution of individual instruments to the desired outcome as much as possible.

#### *Selection final set of good practices*

From the long list, i.e. all 118 instruments considered to be potentially good practices, a limited number of 20 to 30 had to be selected to be described in more detail<sup>1</sup>.

The next stage was to take a closer look at the scope of the measures, in order to avoid presenting a seminar for only 7 enterprises as a good European example. In addition, attention was paid to:

- 'Variety'. Examples of good practices chosen must reflect a certain variety in:
  - Types of instruments chosen (fiscal incentives, subsidies, training, promotion activities, etc.);
  - Main target group (enterprises in general, SMEs only, crafts only, SMEs or craft enterprises in particular sector only, etc.);
  - Partners involved (e.g. involvement of government agencies, standards institutes, SME associations, chambers of commerce, etc.);
  - Country.
- Current: the measure is still in place;
- Transferability: the measure is of general application targeting at and/or being able to be used by different organisations working with target groups with different characteristics (size, sector, etc.);
- Evaluation study available. Any documentation, a written proof of monitoring or evaluating such measures with a positive outcome would support the selection of the measure as 'good practice' (as written above in many cases such good evaluations were not available).

For each of these over 100 measures additional information was collected in the countries concerned. Respondents were contacted by telephone (in their native language), and information on 12 additional issues was obtained. Considering this additional information; the long list of 118 measures was discussed with the Commission and a selection of 34 measures agreed upon. For each of the 34 (potentially) good practice cases a description of 3 to 5 pages was made based on (i) information from the Internet survey; (ii) the twelve additional questions and (iii) additional information collected by the local research partner by not only talking to the organisation running the activities but also, for example, representatives of the target group.

<sup>1</sup> These case descriptions are presented in Chapter 6.

The final set of good practice descriptions were carefully considered by the project team. Some cases were removed from the set of good practices, mainly for three reasons:

- The final detailed description showed that - although it may concern an interesting initiative with potential - the activity in question is really too small (only a few enterprises involved) to be presented as a good European practice;
- The final detailed description showed that although the activity was considered useful and was running on a significant scale it could not be considered as a good practice for a support measure because participants directly contributed all funds required, so basically it should be considered as a commercially (useful) activity, although run by a national standards body or an SME association;
- The measure was being identified and described as national measure but actually concerned a European level initiative such as the activities of the EICs in Turkey (described in a text box in Section 4.2 or the activities initiated by NORMAPME such as the sector reports (described in text boxes in Section 4.3).

Finally, 23 good practice descriptions result that are presented in Chapter 6 in about 3 to 5 pages each using a standard profile:

- A. Background
- B. General description
- C. Results
- D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks
- E. Elements of good practice and transferability
- F. Literature

*To summarise:*

- In the 32 countries 401 instruments were listed.
- After a first assessment, 118 measures and instruments were classified as potentially good practices.
- Out of these 118 initially 34 cases were selected - using the additional criteria mentioned above - to be described in further detail by collecting additional information in the countries concerned.
- After carefully considering the initial drafts of the selected 34 good practices, some more cases were excluded. Finally 23 good practice examples remained that are described in Chapter 6.

### 5.3 Classification of all 401 policy measures identified

All 401 measures were assessed and classified in four classes:

A = probably good practice;

B = intermediate;

C = probably poor practice;

D = not enough valid information to classify as good practice.

Table 3 lists the information from the Internet survey used for this classification. Some general remarks are in order:

- Class A - Probably good practice. If not all information is available or clear, there might still be enough to (preliminary) classify a measure as 'A'. In such cases, additional information was collected later in the process - in the countries concerned - to allow adequate description of good practice examples.

- Class B - Intermediate. Either many questions get 'in between' answers, or/and because major information is lacking.

In Table 3 twelve items are listed that are used as criteria, a class 'A' measure should score at least 67 %, i.e. 8 out of 12. A class C measure, probably bad practice on the other hand should score at least 67 % negatively.

**Table 3** Information from Internet survey used for the classification of policy measures

<i>Three classes of measures</i>		<i>Class A/D</i>	<i>Class B</i>	<i>Class C</i>
		<i>Probably good practice</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Probably poor practice</i>
<i>Ser. no.</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Positive score</i>		<i>Negative score</i>
1	Effect of measures (with general information)	Quite effective		Not that effective
2	Short term effect	'Serious answer'		-
3	Barriers overcome	'Serious answer'		-
4	Realisation of objectives	Fully, or to a large extent		No
5	Cost-benefit relationship	Costs small in relation to benefits		Costs large in relation to benefits
6	Overall opinion	Very important		Not that important
	Score of measure			
7	- Visibility	- (Very) high		- Low
8	- Content	- (Very) high		- Low
9	- Delivery to target group	- (Very) high		- Low
10	Evaluation study available	Yes		No
11	Conclusions evaluation study	Positive		Negative
12a	Measure listed as good practice	Yes		
12b	Measure listed as poor practice			Yes



As already stated before, 118 out of the 401 of the policy measures (or 30 %) are classified as 'potentially good practice'. In Table 4 the overall picture by country is presented.

In Table 5 the 118 measures classified as 'potentially good practice' are depicted by country and type of measure. In the table the following types of measures are distinguished:

- Workshop/ seminar
- Information/ publication
- Website
- Subsidy
- Consultancy
- Committee
- Miscellaneous (this concerns a.o. translations of standards, networks, individual training and awards).

Table 4 Classification of 401 policy measures by country

		<i>Classification of measures*</i>				
	<i>Countries</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	Austria	1	5	0	1	7
2	Belgium	0	0	0	0	0
3	Bulgaria	6	1	1	0	8
4	Croatia	4	1	0	5	10
5	Cyprus	2	0	0	0	2
6	Czech Republic	2	5	5	0	12
7	Denmark	4	5	2	2	13
8	Estonia	0	0	0	0	0
9	Finland	9	22	0	15	46
10	France	8	6	0	28	42
11	Germany	9	3	0	13	25
12	Greece	0	0	0	0	0
13	Hungary	6	4	5	10	25
14	Iceland	1	2	0	1	3
15	Ireland	2	1	0	5	8
16	Italy	12	3	0	13	28
17	Latvia	0	1	3	2	6
18	Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0
19	Lithuania	1	2	0	2	5
20	Luxemburg	3	2	4	0	9
21	Malta	2	0	0	0	2
22	Netherlands	6	8	0	4	18
23	Norway	4	4	7	10	25
24	Poland	6	3	0	0	9
25	Portugal	1	6	0	3	10
26	Romania	9	4	0	1	14
27	Slovenia	3	2	0	2	7
28	Slovakia	4	2	8	5	19
29	Spain	4	3	0	8	15
30	Sweden	2	3	0	1	6
31	Turkey	2	4	2	0	8
32	UK	5	2	3	9	19
	Total	118	104	40	140	401

\* Legend (see also main text): A= probably good practice; B= intermediate; C= probably poor practice; D= not enough valid information.

Table 5 Classification of 118 potentially good practises by country and type of measure

	<i>Country</i>	<i>Work-shop/ seminar</i>	<i>Informa- tion/pub lication</i>	<i>Web- site</i>	<i>Sub- sidy</i>	<i>Consul- tancy</i>	<i>Com- mittee</i>	<i>Miscella- neous</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	Austria	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Bulgaria	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	6
4	Croatia	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	4
5	Cyprus	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
6	Czech Rep.	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
7	Denmark	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	4
8	Estonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Finland	2	0	1	2	0	0	4	9
10	France	0	2	1	2	1	1	1	8
11	Germany	4	2	0	0	1	1	1	9
12	Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Hungary	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	6
14	Iceland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
15	Ireland	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
16	Italy	5	0	1	2	0	2	2	12
17	Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Lithuania	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
20	Luxemburg	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
21	Malta	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
22	Nederland	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	6
23	Norway	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
24	Poland	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	6
25	Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
26	Romania	4	1	0	1	1	0	2	9
27	Slovenia	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
28	Slovakia	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	4
29	Spain	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
30	Sweden	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
31	Turkey	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
32	UK	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	5
	Total	41	17	5	19	5	10	21	118

## 6 Twenty-three good practices in Europe

This chapter presents a detailed description of the selected 23 good practice examples, each in a separate section of about 4 pages.

The 'Matrix of Contents', shown after the Table of Contents in this report presents easy access to these good practice examples by organising them by type of measure and type of organisation.

This chapters contains 23 sections:

6.1	Croatia	-	Co-financing and certification services	52
6.2	Czech Republic	-	Information Points for Entrepreneurs	58
6.3	Denmark	-	Danish Standard University	61
6.4	Finland	-	Travel allowance	65
6.5	France	-	Standardisation activities Ministry of SME	70
6.6	Germany	-	KAN-Reports on OHS-Standardisation	74
6.7	Germany	-	Mechanical Engineering Standards Comm. (NAM)	80
6.8	Hungary	-	Seminars; training for awareness	86
6.9	Italy	-	Website	90
6.10	Italy	-	Institutional conventions	95
6.11	Luxembourg	-	Standards for information security	100
6.12	Malta	-	Supply of standards at reduced rate	103
6.13	Netherlands	-	Project Awareness	106
6.14	Norway	-	Network forums	112
6.15	Poland	-	Training and Seminars 'Welding'	115
6.16	Poland	-	Training Environmental Standards	120
6.17	Portugal	-	Face-to-face contacts	125
6.18	Slovakia	-	Direct support	128
6.19	Slovenia	-	Seminar and workshop	131
6.20	Spain	-	Promotion of Working Groups	135
6.21	Spain	-	Grants for attending European meetings	139
6.22	Sweden	-	Travel allowance for Standardisation Meetings	143
6.23	UK	-	Meetings and Newsletters	146

## 6.1 Croatia - Co-financing and certification services

Non-repayable grants for the process of business system certification  
Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship (MELE)  
Ulica grada Vukovara 78, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia  
Tel: +385 16 10 61 11  
info@mingorp.hr, <http://www.mingo.hr>

### *A. Background*

In the programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the 2003-2007 mandate, the Government plans to create a stimulating atmosphere for the more rapid development of Croatian entrepreneurship. In this programme, SMEs are considered as a driving force of Croatian economy. Therefore, the Government developed a strategy of linking small, medium and large enterprises to increase the efficiency and international competitiveness of Croatian enterprises. In relation to that specific goal the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship (MELE) designed the programme for stimulating the development of SMEs. Among other measures and instruments, in 2006 the Ministry continues to work on a project supporting the implementation of standards, called 'Technical Harmonization'. With this specific project the Ministry works on adopting EU standards to SMEs in Croatia. Technical Harmonization has been implemented since 2001, but under another name. In 2006, the project includes one new measure: co-financing supply of standards.

In implementing the Technical Harmonization project the MELE co-operates with different institutions, such as Croatian Standards Institute, Croatian Accreditation Agency, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Croatian Society for Quality, as well as with seven certification institutions from the Republic of Croatia. Jointly with the Croatian Chamber of Economy and Croatian Chamber of Crafts, the MELE organizes, for example, different workshops on standards implementation in business processes.

The MELE deals also with the creation of a new legislative framework supporting the development of SMEs, crafts and co-operatives, and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

### *B. General description*

The measure (project) described contains financial support for the following parts in the process of certification:

- Consultancy services or education when implementing (adopting) a quality system
- Certification of the system
- Certification of the products
- Supply (harmonization) of standards<sup>1</sup>

Co-financed consultant services in adopting a quality system are a subsidized service for SMEs which engage external consultants to help them to deal with standards. In the same programme there is also the possibility to receive grants for the business system or product certification or for harmonization (supply) of standards. Selected companies receive a grant for implementing a certification process or for engaging outsourced consultants who will help them in the implementation of quality systems. Grants are given for consultation services in adopting quality systems, certification of systems, cer-

<sup>1</sup> Supply of norms is part of the project from 2006 and three other measures from 2001.

tification of the products and supply of standards. According to data received from the MELE, grants are given for implementation and certification of the following certificates: ISO 9001, ISO 14001; ISO 17025, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point<sup>1</sup> and other norms. Maximum contribution from the MELE is (according to a new tender from 2006):

- For consultancy services or education when implementing a quality system, up to 75 % of the total cost, maximum contribution HRK 20 000 (EUR 2 740)
- Certification of system up to 75 % of the total cost, maximum contribution HRK 15 000 (EUR 2 055)
- Certification of the products - proof of conformity up to 75 % of the total cost, maximum contribution HRK 40 000 (EUR 5 480)
- Harmonization (supply) of standards up to 50 %, maximum contribution HRK 15 000 (EUR 2 055)

(Harmonization is new, with effect from 2006).

Maximum subsidy amount per beneficiary is up to HRK 80 000 (EUR 10 960).

Main objectives for developing these measures were increasing the use of standards in SMEs and crafts and increasing the total number of business entities, which are using total management system. These measures should contribute to improved competitiveness of SMEs on internal and external market. First grants were disbursed in 2001. Measures are still active. Selection criteria for the measures are that beneficiaries are manufacturing businesses (small and medium-sized companies, crafts and co-operatives) with at least 3 employees (except start-ups).

The main goals of the project are: promotion of the implementation of total management and environmentally oriented management system, certification of the products in compliance with Croatian and European standards and guidelines, and supply of technical standards.

Besides providing financial support for implementing quality standards in managing small businesses, the measures are focused on increasing the awareness about the importance of standardisation and providing information on standardisation in general.

Selected SMEs and crafts benefit through getting quality certificates. This certification is in compliance with EU recommendations. Measures are focused on the SMEs, crafts and co-operatives in manufacturing sectors. Parties involved, other than entrepreneurs, are MELE, consultants registered in Croatia (for that specific activity), certification institutions registered in Croatia and Croatian Accreditation Agency.

Measures are active since 2001. Every year there is new invitation for tender on the website of the MELE. Entrepreneurs are informed through publications, newspapers and other relevant websites (e.g. Centres for entrepreneurship).

Total budget of the whole scheme in 2006 is HRK 4 500 000 (EUR 616 438), which is provided from the public money, through the government budget. This is the budget for consultancy services, certification and supply of norms.

<sup>1</sup> HACCP involves a system approach to identification of hazard, assessment of chances of occurrence of hazards during each phase, raw material procurement, manufacturing, distribution, usage of food products, and in defining the measures for hazard control.  
<http://www.bis.org.in/forms/haccp.htm>

According to data received from MELE (and shown the table below), in the first year of implementation of this project (2001) 48 companies received grants in total amounting to HRK 947 000 or EUR 129 726.

Number of certificates per year and share of subsidies by MELE in Croatian Kunas and Euro

YEAR	Total number of certificates in the year*	Subsidies granted by MELE	Total amount granted in HRK	Amount granted in EUR**
2001	122	48	947 000	129 726
2002	168	195	3 497 410	479 097
2003	230	252	4 646 155	636 459
2004	364	202	3 511 000	480 958
2005	481	229	4 213 500	577 191

\* Calculated from <http://kvaliteta.inet.hr/HR%20Survey%202005.pdf>.

\*\* Calculation rate 1 EUR=7.3 HRK.

Source: MELE and Croatian Society for Quality.

In 2002 the amount of grants was already significantly higher. In 2005 229 companies received grants in the amount of HRK 4 213 500 (EUR 577 191). These yearly budgets are calculated for financing consultant services and certification.

In 2006 it is planned that 210 subsidies will be granted.<sup>1</sup> Before this project was introduced in 2001, according to the Croatian Society for Quality, there were only 225 certificates, whereas now there are 1 523 certificates.

### C. Results

The MELE finds the measures very effective. The main visible effect is that it increases the number of certified enterprises. It will take time to measure how much the quality of business activities will be pushed up through this procedure. Since 2001 already 926 enterprises used the measure for implementation of quality system and certification.

According to an opinion expressed by an interviewed person from the Croatian Society for Quality, it is possible that half of the certified enterprises entered the certification process driven by this measure. It is realistic that the other half of certified companies would have been certified even without the subsidy, because they were legally obliged to do it.

Measures are effective, transparency in spending received grants is provided through the obligation of businesses - grant recipients - to report after the certification process is finished. In the short term it increased the number of certified SMEs and crafts in Croatia, increased the number of companies that work according to total management system and it is expected that it has had a positive influence on increasing their competitiveness.

A very important feature of these measures is that they helped to overcome high certification price as a major barrier for small businesses to implement quality standards.

<sup>1</sup> In 2006 besides for consultancy services and certification, part of the budget includes supply of standards.

Measures score high in terms of visibility, content and delivery to the target group. The objectives are fully realized, therefore the MELE has a strong opinion that the measures should be continued. It is likely that costs of the measures are small compared to benefits, because of good impacts of certification on SMEs competitiveness. Total number of certified companies in Croatia, when compared to total number of registered companies, is less than 1 %.<sup>1</sup> All interested parties agree that this measure needs to be continued.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Based on information collected through interviews, determinants of success as well as bottlenecks can be identified as following:

- Determinants of success
  - Interest of businesses to improve their core competencies, as a prerequisite for up-grading the level of competitiveness (demand driven)
  - Availability of governmental subsidy for covering costs of certification.
- Bottlenecks
  - High priced certification services
  - Type of 'monopoly' of certification agencies in formulating supply side conditions (price, delivery process)
  - Not enough transparent information about the quality of certification services
  - Not enough knowledge on the side of small businesses about certification, which ones are important for a specific business, validity of certificates, etc.
  - Not enough public awareness of importance of quality management as a prerequisite for building competitiveness capacity of small businesses.

Determinants of success were crucial in increasing the number of certificates from 225 certificates in 2001 to 1523 certificates in 2005, despite existing bottlenecks. Removal of bottlenecks (making supply side of certification services more transparent) and increasing negotiation power of small businesses (through the better information about certification services, their price and value) will also contribute to broadening the implementation quality management in the SME sector.

From the study *Overall Assessment and Policy Recommendations*<sup>2</sup>, it is clear that efficiency of the advisory services in Croatia is rated low (2.3 out of 5)<sup>3</sup>. Focus group participants were not satisfied with the efficiency of the advisory network. According to their opinion, the lack of available certified organisation is a great problem.

#### *E. Elements good practice and transferability*

As already mentioned, the measures are considered as good practice. The project has been working for 6 years but it is believed that the total amount of HRK 4 500 000 (about EUR 600 000) can reach only a small percentage of total number of interested companies. There are no available data of number of requests for subsidy, but according to an Internet survey the rate of rejection is around 30 %.

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from <http://kvaliteta.inet.hr/firme.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Published in Enterprise Policy Performance Assessment – Croatia, in the part 'Views of the SME Owners and Managers'.

<sup>3</sup> Enterprise policy performance assessment – Croatia, March 2005, page 46 and 47.



According to the *Overall Assessment and Policy Recommendations*, published in *Enterprise Policy Performance Assessment - Croatia: Summary of Progress on the European Charter for Small Enterprises*, in the area of strengthening the technological capacity of small enterprises the following statement is emphasized: benchmark target number of companies has been exceeded<sup>1</sup>.

In the same part of the study focus group of SME owners and managers also rated:

- Government's provision of information about the business standards and business opportunities for SMEs - 2.1 out of 5, in 2004. 'There is a need to improve dissemination of information on requirements for ISO and other quality standards to the SME community.'
- Government programmes to improve the technological capacity of small enterprises - rate 1.9 (out of 5), in 2004.

'In 2004 Government programmes and activities aimed at improving technological capacities are assessed as being on average just under 'poor'. Most of the SME participants thought that the Government is unaware of the importance of this issue to competitiveness.'<sup>2</sup>

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2005 report: *Why Croatia is an entrepreneurial country?* Government programmes are ranked as 22nd of 33 countries that participated in GEM research in 2005. But, Government policies in the area of subsidies are ranked lower (27/33) as well as business and professional infrastructure in Croatia, which is ranked 31/33.<sup>3</sup>

Measures are effective, as estimated from the table above, around 50 % of all certified companies in each year received grants from this project. It is also obvious that from 2001 - 2005 the number of certificates issued has grown from 225 to 1523.<sup>4</sup> An interview with an independent expert showed that in his opinion there is a need for wider dissemination of information to companies on total management system.

The measure is specific neither to an industry nor to a country, what means it is transferable across industries as well as across countries. Transferability of the measure is contained in money incentives for implementing quality management in small businesses, as well as in the main challenge to improve overall competitiveness of small businesses. Improved functioning of the business model implemented in a particular small business entity as well as improved products/services contribute to quality standardisation, and in many cases also to cost reduction (through standardisation of business processes). Due to its focus, this measure is neither constrained to the manufacturing sector, nor to any specific industry. The measure is also not constrained to specific countries. Effectiveness of implementation of these measures in a specific industry or country could be insured through specific public campaigns focusing on the importance of achieving higher level of competitiveness in a specific industry, due to its importance

<sup>1</sup> Enterprise policy performance assessment – Croatia, March 2005, page 16.

<sup>2</sup> Enterprise policy performance assessment – Croatia, March 2005, page 53.

<sup>3</sup> GEM 2005 report: *Why Croatia is an entrepreneurial country?*, CEPOR, Zagreb, 2006, page 50 and 53.

<sup>4</sup> Data calculated from <http://kvaliteta.inet.hr/HR%20Survey%202005.pdf> (certificates ISO 9001, ISO14001, BS7799-2/ISO 27001, OHSAS 18001, ISO 22000/HACCP).

to the national economy. Benchmarking information of competitiveness level in such industries could be a helpful tool for promoting quality management among SMEs.

*F. Literature and other references*

- Programme of the Government of the Republic Croatia, for the 2003-2007 mandate.
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## 6.2 Czech Republic - Information Points for Entrepreneurs

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### *A. Background*

The Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic (EC CR) is a public institution that represents all entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic. It is an equivalent of Chambers of Commerce in other countries. EC CR is an association of large, medium and small businesses in regional chambers and trade associations (<http://www.komora.cz/>). The Economic Chamber focuses on enterprises in all sectors. Its membership is voluntary for individual entrepreneurs - physical persons, companies - legal persons as well as collective members - entrepreneurial associations. Its status is determined by the Act No. 301/1992 Coll.LL. It has a regional network structure and includes more than 13 000 member companies in all sectors. Services of EC CR are available for all entrepreneurs but its members have some benefits e.g. lower prices for paid services.

In the framework of the programme 'Support of competitiveness of Czech industry', the Economic Chamber of Czech Republic has started in 2003 the 'Information Points for Entrepreneurs' project with several information points and sector coordination points. It has been designed mainly for small and medium enterprises, for which the access of the Czech Republic to the European Union meant a high risk.

The Association of Entrepreneurs in Technical Equipment (SPTZ) is a national association that looks after the interests of craft and SME enterprises active in the technical equipment of building; construction; and energy savings. It is a collective member of EC CR. It is an association of sectoral and employer collective members that include more than 4 000 individual members and additional collective members. The SPTZ provides information to SMEs, comments on legislation in these sectors and participates in the Committee for Standards of the Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing. The SPTZ is involved in the creation of rules for practical usage of standards. SPTZ has directly participated on the Information Points for Entrepreneurs project from its beginning in 2003. It established four Sectoral coordination points and provides expert support for them.

The SPTZ closely co-operates with the Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic, Association of Entrepreneurs in Construction, Association of Industry and Trade, Research Institute of Over ground Building, accredited testing institutions and other professional organisations.

The Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic started its most complex project 'Information Points for Entrepreneurs' in September 2003. About 160 information offices are already opened in about 80 towns (Regional Information Points). The target is to create

205 offices around the Czech Republic. Of the 160 information points, about 25 also have the task of sectoral coordination points.

### *B. General description*

The measure described, 'Information points for entrepreneurs' and the section 'Sectoral coordination points', are run by the Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic. In Czech Republic there are already about 160 regional information points targeted at micro, craft and SME enterprises in all sectors. Information points for entrepreneurs are functioning like one-stop-shops. The aim of this project is to create an umbrella for all support activities and information for SMEs and make them accessible for entrepreneurs at one point close to their location. Provided information ranges from establishing a company, financing, legal framework for entrepreneurs, to specific sectoral information including technical and standard issues. All this is supported by an information database that provides very specific information in all information points. The information points, apart from answering questions, also provide information through publications, organise trainings, seminars related to actual specific issues and offer additional services like electronic auctions through the website (<http://www.komora.cz>). Generally, basic services are free of charge. Some specific services and counselling are moderately charged. Services are provided face-to-face or electronically through web site or e-mail. Offices are generally opened five days a week; only in smaller towns it is fewer days a week.

Of the 160 offices, there are in 2006, 25 offices that have a double task: that of information and sector coordination point. The task of these offices is primarily to gather and provide information related to technical and standard issues directly to enterprises and also through other Information points. They thereby increase the effective use of standards to improve competitiveness and stimulate participation of Czech enterprises and specialists in European standard committees. SPTZ as a collective member of EC CR established four of those sectoral coordination points that cover all technology sectors associated in SPTZ.

The offices with the sector coordination task provide enterprises with sector specific standard information. These offices each cover a different area and their activities are professionally backed by relevant sectoral entrepreneurial associations. They write manuals for entrepreneurs that include a list of necessary standards. These manuals are updated when there are new standards in the sector. The offices with the sector coordination task provide, like the other information point, information through publications, website and organise activities like trainings and/or seminars.

Estimated costs for the 'Information Points for Entrepreneurs' project are about CZK 110 million (EUR 4 million). Costs are covered every year from the state budget.

### *C. Results*

According to SPTZ the offices that are information point and the offices that are also sector coordination point are effective and important. The objectives have been achieved to a large extent and the relatively small support has large effects. The measure scores high in terms of visibility and content. This is proved by a rapid extension of the network and a high demand for its services. The target group is the whole entrepreneurial sector with the focus on SMEs. The range of information services covers all relevant information for entrepreneurs that are delivered by the most convenient means from personal consultations to electronic contacts. SPTZ is of the opinion that the measure is important and should be continued.

The offices that are information points and the offices that are also sector coordination points provide information on technical standards, which is otherwise not so easily available, and thereby increase competitiveness of companies' production, economise financial resources by fast access to necessary information and overcome the lack of admission to standards. In 2006 the Economic Chamber is preparing an overview of the services for enterprises concerning standardisation.

No evaluation study is available; however the Ministry of Industry and Trade issued recently a preliminary report presenting some achievements of the 'Information Points for Entrepreneurs' project. There are already 160 regional information points that provided more than 34 000 consultations. Those concerned mainly financial issues, mediation of business contacts, counselling for establishing and running companies and technical issues including standards.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

General information concerning standards is provided by the dense network of contact points which means that these services are available in every district and very conveniently located. Moreover there are sectoral coordination points that have a capacity to deliver more specific information concerning standards and allow mutual interaction with specialised standard institutions. Services are available not only by personal visits in regional information point offices but also electronically through Internet and e-mail. The advantage of the network is that a very specific request can be processed and delivered to a client in every location.

#### *E. Elements good practice and transferability*

There are no specific aspects of the support program that would prevent its implementation in another environment. Its main advantage is that providing specific information concerning standards is a part of other complex services offered to entrepreneurs.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

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- <http://www.mpo.cz/> - website of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.
- <http://www.sptz.cz/> - website of the Association of Entrepreneurs in Technical Equipment.
- Informant from SPTZ.

### 6.3 Denmark - Danish Standard University

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#### *A. Background*

Danish Standards Association (DS) is a private, non-profit organisation that aims to strengthen the Danish society through the provision of standardisation, certification and the dissemination of knowledge in these areas. DS is Denmark's national standards body and one of the leading certification enterprises in Denmark. DS wants to serve the interests of Danish trade and industry and also society. As such their mission is to:

- Contribute to increasing Danish influence on European and international standards;
- Further matters of importance to society, such as health, safety, environmental, and consumer protection matters, through the inclusion of these themes in standardisation and certification work;
- Develop, establish and administer certification, marking and control schemes;
- Ensure that Danish enterprises have easy access to information about standards and certification.

As the national standards body, Danish Standards has a big influence on national standardisation policies. The organisation co-operates with the Danish ministries and administrative agencies that deal with standardisation issues. Together with the Ministry for Economics and Business Affairs, DS has played a key role in the formulation of the new national strategy for standardisation. Despite the fact that DS is a private organisation it is attached to the Ministry for Economics and Business Affairs through a performance contract. The performance contracts sets out the framework and objectives of DS activities as a national standards body, for the benefit of society. In turn the DS receives financing from ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The activities of DS relate to all sectors of the industry. Special attention is warranted for craft and SME enterprises. These enterprises generally have insufficient language skills and insufficient resources to deal with standardisation issues. The exact number of enterprises that are registered with DS is not known - partly because DS has recently changed some of its registration procedures.

One of the important and rather effective activities regarding the promotion of standardisation competencies among Danish enterprises is the so-called Danish Standard University that was initiated in 1996. This initiative was taken because the technical manager of Danish Standard at that time wanted to provide the Danish industry with the competencies needed to exert influence on the formation of new standards. The ambition was to educate the Danish enterprises to handle negotiations at national as well as international levels, although the latter was considered to be the most urgent; in international standardisation negotiations other countries often delegate a large group of representatives whereas the Danish SMEs have fewer resources and can often only send a single representative. Consequently, this person has to have a very broad knowledge of standardisation.

<sup>1</sup> The Danish Standards Stakeholder Report 2005.

The target group of the Danish Standard University is anyone working with national and international standardisation and the development thereof, but the participants can typically be divided into four groups: 1) private companies, 2) non-governmental organisations and associations, 3) research and knowledge institutions and 4) public authorities. The large majority of the participants are from private companies, but there are also a lot of participants from the second group.

### *B. General description*

The Danish Standard University is a part of DS's broader knowledge diffusion strategy. The main objectives of the Danish Standard University are - for all sectors of the economy - to:

- Increase the awareness about the importance of standardisation;
- Educate Danish partners in understanding standardisation by providing information and training;
- Provide information on new standards;
- Increase the use of standards;
- Ensure that partners increase their activities in the area of standardisation, a.o. Increase participation of enterprises in the development of standards, e.g. participate in committees and meetings;
- Increase Danish influence on new European standards through knowledge about standardisations and 'the rules of the game'.

To achieve these aims, education and training is provided in the native language to give SMEs a better foundation for planning their future business operations. It will not solve all problems, but should be seen as an important eye-opener, a first step to highlight potential problems and ways to address these.

In practice, the 'University' offers a range of one-day seminars, and there are typically five of these each year. The seminars are considered as modules that can be taken individually, although some of them supplement each other. As an example, the programme for 2006 has the following five modules: one introductory course (comprised of two one-day seminars), one electro-technical seminar, one seminar on European standardisation and one on international standardisation (ISO). If the participant does not sign up for all of the five modules, it is recommended that the introductory course should be combined with one of the other courses.

Participation is entirely free of charge (and open to non-members), which is a requirement for activities provided by the University. If the participants ask for a more specific seminar aimed at one particular industry or sector they are referred to the regular training facilities of Danish Standards (which can provide tailored courses). However, if a majority of the participants in a seminar come from one enterprise or sector, the University might choose to make a course specifically for this group - this is to avoid one professional group dominating the seminar<sup>1</sup>.

The annual budget for the University is DKK 350 000, which is about EUR 47 000, and is provided by 'Erhvervs- og Selskabsstyrelsen', the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency, an agency under the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs.

<sup>1</sup> However, it is a requirement for these special seminars that they must not overlap/compete with the regular standardisation courses offered by different suppliers on the Danish market.

### *C. Results*

According to the Danish Standard University, its activities scores high on visibility, content and delivery to the target group.

The number of SME involved is not exactly known, but in total there were about 112 participants in the seminars in 2005, and each enterprise typically sends 1-2 participants.

The effects realised are increased knowledge among the participants and enhanced interest in standardisation issues. In other words, standardisation gets 'demystified'. Many people have a vague idea about what standardisation is, but the seminars provide a completely different impression - for instance, the fact that about 30 000 people are working with standardisation in Europe often surprises the participants. According to the feedback from the participants, the seminars are good at providing knowledge on how standardisation can be used by the enterprises in practice. As the participants on the seminars are very diverse (since they come from a variety of different enterprises and sectors), the dialogue raises the awareness that participants deal with the same issues across sectors and types of enterprises. The participants report that this underlines the relevance of standardisation and further instigate their interest in the subject. Finally, the seminars serve as a very useful overview on standardisation, which would be very difficult to obtain without previous knowledge.

However, the seminars have also received some criticism. Some participants feel that the world of standardisation is very inaccessible, and that the training at the seminars is incomprehensible to people with no previous knowledge. To prevent this, the teachers always endeavour to include practical examples from the world of the participants'.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the University's objectives have been realised to a large extent. The costs are very small compared to the benefits brought about, so it can be concluded that the University is an important measure that should be continued.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

An important determinant of success is the Danish industry structure. Danish SMEs rarely have the resources to educate specialists in the field of standardisation, and the participants therefore join the seminars to obtain valuable knowledge that the enterprise cannot acquire otherwise. The participants are therefore very determined and eager to learn, and this ensures a productive learning environment.

In principle, the Danish Standard University has been successful in meeting the needs of their target groups. There are sometimes participants who experience that the training is too basic, but the University makes an effort to increase the seminars' relevance for these participants by providing up-to-date information of the newest standards, etc.

The University has primarily marketed its seminars through two sources: the DS website and the information material to new DS members. This has ensured the high visibility of the University. This however, is not as effective as the recruitment strategy that the University used in the beginning where the University programme was presented in a catalogue sent to DS members and to public authorities. This method recruited about 250 participants, but was too expensive.



#### *E. Elements good practice and transferability*

The concept of free education on standardisation can be defined as a good practice in itself. The seminars provide a valuable opportunity for all enterprise (especially those with few resources) to acquire knowledge on a very complex issue. It seems that the University has been successful in striking a balance between the basic and more advanced contents, and that the teaching methods have been adapted to the inaccessible subject matter. In sum, the University has benefited from its focus on teaching and presentation methods, and this can be recommended for similar educational activities in other countries.

Before transferring the concept of the University to other countries, some aspects ought to be considered. First, the fact the seminars are free might not appeal to target groups of other nationalities, as in some countries free-of-charge courses are associated with poor quality and lack of seriousness. Secondly, the lack of formality might be regarded in a similar manner. As an example, the University used to issue diplomas to the participants for completing a seminar - but the Danish participants were not interested in the diplomas, partly because such seminars do not have a status as vocational training in Denmark. As a result, the use of diplomas was abandoned. In other countries, however, such courses add to the participants' merits and it is therefore decisive that the participants gain some sort of certification.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

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- The website of Dansk Standard: [www.ds.dk](http://www.ds.dk).
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- Danish Standards: 'Stakeholder Report 2005' (2006).

## 6.4 Finland - Travel allowance

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### *A. Background*

The objectives set by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Finland for the standardisation include e.g. promotion of Finnish innovations and technological know-how as well as security. Also the objective is to pay attention to the environment, to the needs of the consumers and also to the special circumstances, like climate and soil, in Finland. In order to promote these issues the ministry considers it important that Finnish experts participate in standardisation work in international forums such as standardisation committees and work groups where it is possible to have influence on the contents of standards.

The SESKO Standardisation in Finland (former named the Finnish Electro Technical Standards Association) is an independent standards organisation composed of 20 private and governmental bodies representing the main interest groups in the electrical and electronics field. The members of SESKO are mainly organisations and associations as well as large companies representing electronics, electrical engineering and automation sectors. SESKO was founded in 1943 and was made an independent association in 1965. SESKO is a member of the Finnish Standards Association (SFS) which is responsible for the publication and sales of all national standards offered by various branch organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Since the end of the 1970s' SESKO Standardisation in Finland has paid a travel allowance to experts to promote their participation in international standardisation work. Since SESKO is involved in international standardisation as a member of IEC and CENELEC the importance of the international activities (taking part into meetings, workgroups, etc.) concerning standardisation in the industry have been recognised for years. The compatibility issues have always been important, but for example globalisation and technological development have further increased the importance of standardisation and need for international standards. Nowadays when the standards are created, mainly at international level, the participation of Finnish experts in international standardisation is important in order to make the Finnish point of views heard. Therefore SESKO supports Finnish enterprises to participate actively in international standardisation. In this SESKO pays special attention to SMEs to address three kinds of barriers SMEs face. SMEs often perceive that using standards and participating in standardisation activities are too expensive. They also lack information about standardisation and standards as well as time to participate in standardisation and to get really acquainted with standards. One measure used to attack these barriers by SESKO is - since 1990 - the travel allowance.

### *B. General description*

The travel allowance is a grant that covers part of the travel expenses caused from the participation in international standardisation meetings to enterprises operating in the

<sup>1</sup> At present, there exist more than 600 (about 17 000 pages) published electro technical SFS-standards in Finnish. Almost 90 % of them are based on international (IEC) and European (EN) standards.

field of electronics and electrical engineering. The focus in the meetings is mainly on developing new standards. However, the updating of old standards is also important. Because the majority of the SMEs lack resources in terms of finance and time, as stated above, these grants are especially important to them. Finnish SMEs as well as larger companies can apply for these travel grants but the priority is given to SMEs. The main objective of the travel allowance that compensates part of the travel costs is to enable as many Finnish experts as possible to participate in international working groups that are preparing standards and with the help of active preparation to get the Finnish economy widely committed to the use of standards. The measure also contributes in a general way to the awareness of the importance of standardisation as due to the active participation of a wider group of SMEs in the international decision making in standardisation, the whole issue becomes little by little more visible and gets more attention among SMEs in Finland.

SESKO has 44 committees and follow-up groups corresponding to the committees of CENELEC and IEC. There are altogether around 450 experts, who participate in standardisation work at all levels, registered in these committees and groups. One third of the experts comes from SMEs. In order to be able to participate in international meetings the experts have to pay a participation fee to SESKO who in turn pays its own participation fee to CENELEC and IEC. The annual fee for each committee or follow-up group is EUR 650 per person. After paying the fee the experts are able to participate in national as well as international meetings of those committees or work groups where they have registered.

The travel allowance is granted for only one expert per meeting. The SMEs have the priority in receiving the allowances. According to SESKO, quite often the bigger companies do not even apply for the allowance. If there is more than one application for the same meeting the travel allowance is granted for the expert who has submitted the application first. It is possible to receive the allowance more than once during a year. The allowance is aimed to support participation in international meetings of technical committees, their workgroups and subcommittees. It is not possible to receive allowance for international administrative meetings, such as general assemblies of IEC and CENELEC.

The travel allowance paid per trip is EUR 500 when travelling in Europe and EUR 1000 when travelling outside Europe. The written applications for the travel allowance have to be sent to SESKO before the trip. The allowance is paid afterwards against receipts and a travel account.

The total annual budget, originating from taxpayers money, for this measure in electrical and electronics industry is EUR 40 000 (2006). The Ministry of Trade and Industry has a budget of about EUR 250 000 grants for standardisation targeted to sectoral organisations in various industries. The total budget is coordinated and distributed by the Finnish Standards Association (SFS) among different industries of which electronics is only one. SESKO uses the money received from SFS for the travel allowances described here, in other sectors different activities are subsidised.

### *C. Results*

In 2005 69 grants were allocated to experts from 21 companies of which 11 were SMEs. 38 experts of the 69 who received the allowance were working in SMEs. The number of travel allowances has been increasing in past few years. In 2003 40 grants were allocated, whereas in 2004 the number of grants was 51. SESKO estimates that there are about 180 international technical committees where there are participants from Finland. SESKO is able to provide travel allowance for a third of them. There are generally more applicants than the budget is able to accept.

The travel allowance is considered to be an important and quite effective tool to reach SESKO's objectives. The objectives of the measure are fully realised and one feels that 'Costs are really small compared to the benefits brought about'. The conclusion is that SESKO is of the opinion that this is an important measure that should be continued as the measure is perceived to score very high in terms of 'visibility' and 'delivery to target group'.

The measure has succeeded in addressing financial barriers for SMEs. The grant has enabled more experts to participate in international standardisation work, not only those who have money by themselves. As a short term effect of the measure the participation in international standardisation work has increased, but in the long-term the activity of participation fluctuates. The travel allowance has made it possible for SMEs to participate and made itself heard in the preparation of standards and have influence on the contents of standards. Through participation the experts have got first-hand information about forthcoming standards and their requirements which had enabled them to pay attention to the requirements already at early stage while developing their own production or other activities. Also through participation the enterprises are able to network with foreign enterprises in the industry. The international meetings are also a great place for enterprises to share views and experiences with other enterprises, authorities and research and training institutes as well as to benchmark competitors.

#### *Deadweight loss*

No evaluation studies have been conducted on the travel allowance. Therefore, the deadweight loss effect cannot be assessed in detail, only based on subjective opinions. According to SESKO the large companies would participate in international meetings despite the availability of the allowance, but the SMEs would not. This view was shared with the SMEs. Even though the travel allowance covers only about third of the travel expenses the SMEs considers it important. Without the grant they would not participate in international meetings or they would at least consider participation carefully.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Although any formal evaluations on the travel allowance are not available some success factors and bottlenecks can be presented.

#### *Amount of the travel allowance*

The SMEs consider the amount of the travel allowance quite small but still big enough to encourage them to participate in international meetings. As the travel allowance is not covering all the travelling expenses, self-financing from the enterprises is needed which in turn increases the commitment of experts to standardisation work.

#### *Possibility for SMEs to influence*

With the help of travel allowance the SMEs have the possibility to participate in international standardisation work and to influence on the contents of the prepared standards. The role of enterprises in the meetings is considered important as the enterprises are in touch with practice they can comment e.g. how certain requirements would work in practice.

#### *Fluent application process*

Applying for the travel allowance has been made easy for the applicants. The instructions as well the application form is available on the Internet pages of SESKO. The applicant can send the application either by e-mail or fax to SESKO where the decision about the approval of travel allowance is made in a week after receiving the applica-

tion. In a month after the participation in the meeting the expert can charge the amount of the accepted travel allowance from SFS. All receipts, copy of the notice of accepted travel allowance, as well as a travel account have to be attached to the invoice. The travel account also has to be sent to SESKO.

#### *Travel accounts*

In order to receive the travel allowance the expert has to draw up a travel account to SESKO. The travel account is distributed to the members of corresponding Finnish committee to which the expert participated in international level. The travel accounts give first-hand information about the meeting, otherwise SESKO and members of Finnish committees and follow-up groups receive only official material from the meetings. So far there is no format for the travel accounts; instead each expert draws up the travel account as he/she considers best. With a format it could be guaranteed that certain aspects would be always covered.

SESKO would like to raise the annual budget for the travel allowances provided by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. With more money available SESKO would be able to admit more grants and also more travel accounts would be available and they could be better utilised nationally. If more information from travel accounts were available the authorities could utilise it in advance which could avoid them using safeguard clauses, since the authorities are not always able to participate in international meetings. Also if more travel accounts were available information about the work actually done in the international meetings would spread wider and it could possibly encourage more people to participate in the meetings.

#### *Uncertainty about the annual budget for the travel allowance*

The Ministry of Trade and Industry provides a budget for the measure annually. SESKO experiences uncertainty about the amount received annually. Some years there might be more international activities and meetings than earlier but the allowance is not necessarily raised according to the need.

#### *Allocation of travel allowances*

At the beginning of each year, SESKO asks enterprises to provide them a plan about their intentions to participate in international meetings during the year. This way SESKO has been able to estimate the sufficiency of the allowances and to allocate it better for the whole year. For some reason this practice is not in use at the moment, therefore, there have not been always enough allowances for the year-end.

#### *Information about the travel allowance*

Information about the travel allowance and applications is available on the Internet pages of SESKO. Also information about the grant is sent to the participants with the invoice for the annual participation fee to the committees. In addition, the travel allowance is promoted in SESKO's bulletin and their training and info sessions. It seems that the information about the travel allowance is disseminated mainly to enterprises that already are involved with standardisation, not to the ones who are not. As quite a small number of SMEs are involved in standardisation work in SESKO the travel allowance could be promoted more widely in order to get more SMEs to participate.

#### *E. Elements good practice and transferability*

As standards are created nowadays mainly at international level it is important to get national conditions and views taken into account in the preparation of new standards.

This is done by participating in international committees and work groups. The travel allowance granted by SESKO has successfully enabled experts from enterprises to participate in international standardisation work and influence on the contents of standards. The travel allowance was launched in its first form at the end 1970s. The current system has been in use since 1990. The long history of the travel allowance demonstrates the functionality of the measure.

Similar kinds of grant exist in other countries as well. The travel allowance is not tied to certain industries. If suitable financing is available it should be quite easy to implement the travel allowance to other countries.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

Interviews with:

- Director of SESKO on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
- Two experts from SMEs who have received travel allowances, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

## 6.5 France - Standardisation activities Ministry of SME

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### A. Background

At the end of the 1980's, the Ministry of SMEs, trade, arts and craft, and liberal professions decided to take into account the needs of SMEs in the field of standardisation. This decision was made in a more general context of European standards activities under the New Approach Directives and 'Objectif 92' (Objective 92): achievement of the European internal market.

The first step was the implementation of a consultative council: the superior council of quality in arts and craft (Conseil supérieur de la qualité artisanale), from 1987 to 1997 presided by the minister of SMEs. Its goal was to identify standardisation's main issues. There was a dialogue between small enterprises and the government. The council was dismissed in 1997, mostly because the political interest had declined and the necessary measures had been initiated.

The ministry of SMEs, and especially DCASPL (direction of administrative and project coordination of the ministry of SMEs) are dedicated to the economic development of SMEs and craft enterprises.

The objective of the policy was to give an opportunity to French SMEs and craft enterprises to take part to the standardisation process and to make sure that their specific needs (production scale, lack of qualified staff, etc.) are taken into account.

The policy has been developed in order to promote standardisation among SMEs and craft enterprises. Technical standards (on processes and tests) are often not adapted to small enterprises because they are made for large scale production enterprises: performance and quality standards are very difficult to reach for SMEs, especially for financial reasons. However, SMEs still need support from the ministry, because many of them are still not aware of their legal obligations and/or of what they can do to adapt to the statutory framework.

Since 2000, the economic weight of SMEs has tended to be taken into account more seriously. However, AFNOR still considers SMEs as 'small' actors in the standardisation process: often they are seen as users of standards and not as actors in the process.

Five major actions have been implemented in order to adapt standards to the needs of SMEs' and to promote their practical usefulness. Four of the actions are briefly described below. After that the description will focus only on the action: '*Particular attention to standards having a direct impact on SMEs and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs), especially for CE marking*'.

#### 1. AFNOR's 'committee on standards and craft enterprises'

The 'committee on standards and craft enterprises' (CCNA) was created in October 2003. It is part of AFNOR (French national standardisation association). The committee consists of representatives of craft chambers, of professional organisations and of public authorities. It is a place where representatives of SMEs and craft enterprises can express their concerns in the field of standardisation. They are also more closely associated to the definition of standards and can suggest improvements in the standardisation process for SMEs.

2. Particular measures to help SMEs identify useful standards

SMEs seldom use standards because they do not really understand their aim.

The ministry of SMEs finances CCNA's and AFNOR's work in order to define methodology that will help SMEs identify the usefulness of standards.

The work consists in the elaboration of forms to be filled by SMEs: activity, functions of the enterprise, need to prove conformity with statutory requirements, need to obtain quality certification, etc. The forms are a kind of checklist: enterprises describe their activities and the forms help them identify the standards that they have to implement.

A collection of 60 forms should be issued soon. The ministry is still working on the forms: their implementation is more complicated than initially thought.

This action was implemented in order to help enterprises identify the standards that they have to integrate to their production or management processes. AFNOR's website is not adapted to users who do not know what standard is adapted to their sector of activity. The Ministry of SMEs decided to create forms because it seemed that it would be a very practical tool from a user's point of view.

3. Implication for professional organisations in the standardisation process, especially when SMEs are concerned. Example: ISO 9 000, ISO 14 000

It started in the 1990's with management standards (ISO 9000 and now ISO 14000).

AFNOR's involvement in the implementation of normative documents (mostly guidebooks) has been a way to make professional organisations take part in the standardisation process.

4. Financial support for the use of standards and normative documents (guidebooks,) focused on SMEs' needs

Work on management standards for SMEs has led the ministry to consider the need to implement specific normative tools for the needs and activities of SMEs. Financial support is provided to organisations like AFNOR. These organisations are active in the production of guidebooks, standards and systems of reference for service certification, in the field of standardisation and certification.

*B. General description*

Particular attention to standards having a direct impact on SMEs and VSEs, especially for CE marking.

Standards in the proof of statutory conformity, especially CE marking, are particularly relevant for the art and craft sector and SMEs. The Ministry of SMEs - and especially DCASPL - has implemented projects in order to help small enterprises implement CE marking<sup>1</sup>. The main goal was to find alternative proof of statutory conformity and to encourage them to open up to standardisation issues.

The measure started in the middle of the nineties and is still continuing despite the decline of political interest in these questions and the reduction of financial support. In 1994, the ministry financed the implementation of an engineer network in craft chambers and amongst other specific professional organisations. Their mission is to help SMEs and craft enterprises understand their needs and statutory requirements.

The Ministry of SMEs supports very actively (in partnership with AFNOR) implementation of experiments and support processes for SMEs (examples: dental technicians, sub-

<sup>1</sup> The letters 'CE' on a product indicate that the product meets the requirements of relevant European directives. (<http://www.bsi-global.com/CEMark/index.xalter>)



contractors in the field of metallurgy). The support process: implementation of standards that are of value to professional organisation's service activities (water sports, etc.) and of private systems of reference for service certification. Private systems of reference are actually 'normative documents' implemented in coordination with certifier organisations; they tend to be officially accepted by AFNOR.

The main objective is to encourage professional organisations to adhere to the standardisation policy instead of rejecting national and European rules and standards. The measure's aim is to find solutions to adapt SMEs to standards (and CE marking) too, and to take into account the financial and technical weight of the implementations of security and quality requirements.

The ministry tries to curb SMEs' and craft enterprises' reluctance to European standards and rules. Standards are seen as obstacles and constraints. It also tries to increase awareness of the standardisation process, especially for craft enterprises by statutory obligations and CE marking. Now, SMEs and craft enterprises tend to take part in standardisation works.

All SMEs and craft enterprises are concerned by questions and/or problems of standardisation. The measure is mainly focused on the sector of services and industry, for example, in the toy industry. CE marking is mandatory for toys. SMEs and craft enterprises have to apply security standards and to include a series of tests, which are expensive and technically very difficult to implement in small structures. In this particular sector a solution has not been found yet.

Another example is the dental technicians. Their professional organisation had to find a solution in the framework of the 'new approach' directive. Together with the ministry, they have created a guidebook and a specific private system of reference. The ministry has financially participated in paying an expert who assisted the organisation in the implementation of the solutions.

The ministry does not work with individual enterprises but with professional organisations. Consular chambers, like the chamber of craft, are also involved: they are essential to the implementation of projects.

This measure may be characterised as a general measure. The ministry tries to involve trade SMEs; standardisation is still dominated by larger industrial enterprises.

The measure's main goal is to help SMEs and craft enterprises comply with existing standards. It is not really concerned with the development of new standards.

Several experiments have been led by the ministry showing that some technical standards were indispensable in order to prove quality and security. SMEs were not able to develop new standards adapted to their need within AFNOR. Consequently, they have encouraged professional organisations to implement private systems of reference for service certification.

The ministry mainly co-operates with other financial contributors at the local level (regions, departments). So it does not have a global vision of the costs. However, the ministry's contribution does not exceed a few hundred of thousands of euros per year.

### *C. Results*

The results are very positive in terms of structuring of professional organisations and effectiveness of their staff: experiments and private systems of reference are made by organisations (not by individual enterprises). A better coordination between the ministry and professional organisations has led to a better understanding of the value of standardisation.

However, in the meantime, there has been a break between small enterprises and their representatives. That is quite an unexpected side effect because the ministry's aim was to fill the gap between enterprises and the standards that they have to implement. The cost-benefit relationship is quite positive. The ministry's budget for this measure is low and in some cases (such as the dental technicians), the results are very significant and satisfactory. However, there are still some efforts to make in order to improve the measure's visibility. The consular chambers (e.g. chamber of craft) could be used as a communication tool: this could encourage other professional organisations to take part in these activities.

The ministry had to overcome SMEs' and professional organisations' reluctance to work on standardisation issues. It also had to encourage professional organisations to take part in experiments and the implementation of private systems of reference (see above). It also has to overcome a declining financial support.

The ministry cannot tell how many small enterprises have been involved in the measure because it only works with professional organisations and cannot evaluate the delivery to target group (so it does not know how many enterprises benefit from the works). The overall opinion of the ministry is rather positive, but there is no evaluation study available. So, the opinion is mainly based on impressions. There have been some real successes, some really satisfactory results (dental technicians) and some failures (toy industry). Even if the measure does not always give satisfactory results, the ministry is of the opinion that it has to continue.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

The lack of organisation of some professional branches is obviously one of the major bottlenecks. Even when they are well organized, professional organisations are not always able and/or willing to communicate on the results of their work. Consequently, it is difficult to evaluate the number of small enterprises that can actually use the tools created for them. The ministry does not have a structure that permits such an evaluation.

Even if some enterprises do not benefit from these results, the ministry considers that it is worth keeping working on such projects.

The measure is very positive for enterprises that are willing to comply with standards and CE marking. The ministry provides tools and offers an accompaniment, but professional organisations have to take active part in the process, which is very positive: they are the actors of the process.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The measure shows that the ministry of SMEs is able to take into account the needs of small enterprises and to develop tools to facilitate their access to standards and/or find solutions to create specific normative documents. Consequently, we can imagine that any government that shows real political will, should be able to implement such measures.

According to the ministry, the engineer network is very much linked to France's consular chambers' organisation. That is why it does not seem that it would be transferable to other countries. However, the ministry's support to SMEs is a sign of political will.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

Informant from the direction of administrative and project coordination of the ministry of SMEs, arts and craft, services and liberal professions.

## 6.6 Germany - KAN-Reports on OHS-Standardisation

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### *A. Background*

As a result of the European Union's 'New Approach' with regard to standardisation in the European Single Market, the safety-related design of products and services is nowadays regulated in EU-directives and European standards. While EU-directives contain fundamental safety requirements usually formulated in general terms, standards provide the kind of detailed technical safety-specifications that formerly had been regulated on national level. The New Approach therefore resulted in a loss of direct influence of German - and other national - institutions on occupational health & safety (OHS) matters. In order to assert German interests in OHS-matters with regard to standardisation - especially at European level - the Commission for Occupational Health & Safety and Standardisation (KAN) was founded in 1994. KAN is composed of representatives of the social partners (employer associations and trade unions), the state (national and regional governments), the Federation of Institutions for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention (HVBG) and the German Institute for Standardisation (DIN).

KAN's overall objective is to work for an effective prevention of (occupational) accidents and diseases and to guarantee a high safety level at work. One of KAN's central tasks is to pool public interests in the field of occupational health & safety and to exert influence on current and future standardisation projects and mandates by issuing comments on specific (draft) standards. KAN itself is not a standards body. Its resolutions on OHS and standardisation take the form of recommendations, which are based on a broad consensus of all relevant institutions involved in OHS. In addition to formulating fundamental OHS positions, KAN also assesses the contents of standards to determine whether they meet the OHS requirements from the German point of view and whether they comply with the protection goals specified in European directives. Furthermore, KAN also checks whether there is a need for additional standardisation from the OHS point of view. Another important part of KAN's activities is to provide OHS experts and other interested bodies with comprehensive information on standardisation and to make the standardisation process more transparent. In general, KAN's work is focused on all enterprises regardless of size. Nevertheless, KAN is well aware of SMEs' special needs, characteristics and limitations and takes these into account.

KAN's work is supported by a secretariat that is currently staffed with 15 employees, of which eleven have university or college degrees. The KAN-Secretariat is a service provider. It assists the work of KAN by formulating opinions on standards and by designing, accompanying and evaluating studies and expert methods for the analysis of standardisation fields. Moreover, it also prepares KAN meetings and implements KAN's resolutions. The Secretariat addresses the general/interested public and reports on KAN's work, holds seminars, workshops and conferences and conducts an exchange of information and experiences with OHS and standardisation experts at national, European and international level. One of the central tasks of the KAN Secretariat is to provide SMEs and standardisation experts in other interested institutions with high-quality and up-to-date information on OHS-related standardisation issues in both print and in electronic publications. Its comprehensive information services include KAN-Reports, KAN-Briefs, KAN-Mail, KAN's internet website and the OHS standards search tool

NoRA. KAN-Reports are an important part of KAN's information activities and should be seen in context with KAN's other publications and with KAN's work as a whole.

### *B. General description*

Right from the beginning of its existence in 1994, KAN started to produce KAN-Report studies in order to analyse occupational health & safety aspects in standardisation and to identify deficiencies or gaps in standardisation work. The reports also aim at informing enterprises (including SMEs) and other interested institutions on OHS-related standards and at raising awareness for the importance of an active involvement in the standardisation process. Motivated by KAN-Reports, SMEs can influence the result of OHS-relevant standards by contacting KAN directly with suggestions and practical experiences or via the BDA employer confederation, which is an official member of KAN. Targeted SMEs include both manufacturers as well as service providers that have to observe OHS-related standards.

So far, KAN has published 34 KAN-Reports that analyse mostly European or international standardisation topics in the field of OHS. A large number of KAN-Reports deal with already existing OHS-standards that are relevant for specific products, services or industry branches (e.g. medical devices, pressure equipment, rail traffic, etc.). Other studies focus on organisational and procedural aspects of OHS and standardisation (for example: possible ways for the OHS sector to influence ISO standards, SMEs' need for and availability of information on OHS and standardisation, standardisation in the field of OHS management systems, etc.).

The preparation of KAN-Reports is commissioned to external experts. While writing the study the experts are assisted by the KAN-Secretariat and by a working group composed of representatives from all KAN-members, i.e. the social partners, the state, the Federation of Institutions for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention and the German Institute for Standardisation (DIN). The project-specific working group defines the contents and aims of the study, provides assistance to the authors and discusses the interim and final report. Every KAN-Report contains a number of conclusions and recommendations for policy actions that are proposed first by the authors. Before being published, the recommendations are thoroughly discussed and sometimes modified or developed further by the KAN-Secretariat and the members of the working group (who represent all KAN-members and therefore all German institutions that deal with OHS and standardisation). In this process, SME interests are explicitly brought forward by the representatives of the BDA employer association. The consideration of all major interest groups ensures that the practical recommendations are readily accepted and implemented by all institutions that deal with OHS in Germany. The recommendations acquire the status of official KAN-resolutions whose implementation progress is monitored by an internal information system that informs all KAN-members about the current implementation status.

KAN-Reports are published free of charge in German, English and French language in order to reach and inform German and international standardisation experts and thus to make German views on standardisation issues known and considered also at supranational level. All reports are not only published in print version but are also available for download on the Internet (<http://www.kan.de>).

Costs for the projects, resulting in KAN-Reports vary. The maximum is up to 100.000 EUR, sometimes significantly less. The average time budget for a project in preparation of a KAN-report is approx. 3-6 months. The costs are financed out of KAN's general

budget, which amounts to EUR 1.75 million per year and which is funded jointly by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (49 %) and the Association for the Promotion of Occupational Health & Safety in Europe (VFA; 51 %).

KAN-Reports can develop a highly practical value for SMEs. For example, as a result of the policy recommendations of one of the KAN-Reports an innovative OHS standards search tool (NoRA) has been developed and made available on KAN's internet website in 2002. Before, many SMEs faced particular difficulties in determining which standards are relevant for their individual business. They expressed the need to have access to up-to-date information on standards relevant to their branch of business or their field of technology and to obtain information on current draft standards and withdrawn standards.

NoRA is an Internet database for standards related to occupational health and safety. It currently contains information on some 5 100 standards, including German draft standards, pre-standards and standards together with standards drafted at European or international level which have been transposed into the DIN body of standards. It enables SMEs and other users to perform keyword searches on the subject of OHS and standardisation free of charge and to find out which standards are relevant for their particular work field. The search tool provides users with a short description of the standards, a table of contents and information on where to order the full-text version of the standards (including information on the price). NoRA is updated at monthly intervals by the inclusion and indexing of new standards of relevance to occupational health and safety. An English version of NoRA will be available in summer 2006.

KAN-Reports are supplemented by the regular KAN-Brief series, an information publication for OHS experts involved in standardisation. The purpose of KAN-Briefs is to promote the exchange of information between KAN and OHS experts participating in standardisation. It also aims at facilitating communication with experts in other European Member States. As the name suggests, the articles - written by the staff at the KAN-Secretariat, KAN-members or external authors - are short and concise. Each issue of the KAN-Brief has a thematic focus, several short articles on different subjects and a service section with information in brief and references to publications, events and Internet addresses. Reflecting the European and increasingly international dimension of standardisation, the KAN-Brief is published in five languages (German, English, French, Italian and Polish). The KAN-Brief appears quarterly free of charge and is available in printed and electronic versions.

Finally, the KAN-Mail - an e-mail-based information system - is a facility by which KAN sends short, up-to-date bulletins on occupational health & safety and standardisation, independent of the regular publication dates of the KAN-Brief. The e-mails also point at newly available KAN-publications (KAN Reports, KAN Briefs, etc.).

### *C. Results*

According to KAN, the measure is important and effective and its objectives have been realised to a large extent. The policy recommendations made are frequently implemented and can produce significant improvements for SMEs as illustrated by the development of the NoRA search tool. The measure scores high in terms of delivery to target groups and very high in terms of visibility and content. The large number of readers of KAN-Reports and subscribers to KAN-Briefs demonstrates that the measure is considered as very important by the target groups. About 500 to 1 000 copies of each KAN-Report are printed. The reports may also be downloaded from KAN's Internet website.

Thereby, the KAN-Reports reach a large target group, not only in Germany and the EU but also worldwide. Indeed, the electronic publication of KAN-Reports has become increasingly important for informing KAN's target groups. Some KAN-Reports are accessed up to 8 500 times per months.

KAN's success in informing OHS and standardisation experts in Germany and worldwide is further documented by the outreach of its other information activities. The KAN-Briefs on paper are sent to 9 000 subscribers in 57 countries worldwide each quarter. They may also be downloaded through the Internet. The KAN e-Mails are sent to 3 100 subscribers in 44 countries. The KAN website has approximately 120 000 hits per month which is equivalent to approx. 20 000 users. The NoRA search tool on the Internet is accessed approx. 30 000 times per month (5000 users). The success of NoRA is also demonstrated by the strong interest expressed by the European Office for Crafts, Trades and SMEs for Standardisation (NORMAPME) to make it available EU-wide.

KAN's information activities and exertion of influence on OHS-related standardisation form the basis for reaching KAN's original goal, that is the improvement of health and safety at work and the prevention of occupational diseases and accidents. KAN's activities have indeed very positive effects on users of products and services, employers and the economy as a whole. They pay off in terms of higher OHS-levels at work and thus in a reduction of costs to enterprises due to employees' sick leave, in lower medical treatment costs and a reduction of accident insurance levies and payments. In 1990, for example, 4 840 cutting injuries have been registered as a result of the use of sausage slicer machines in butcher shops. Small technical modifications laid down in standards for these machines resulted in a significant reduction of occupational injuries. In fact, by 2 000 the number of cutting injuries had decreased to 2 550.

The costs of this measure are really small compared to the benefits. As the measure is effective and important, KAN is of the opinion that the measure should be continued.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

##### *Participation of all relevant OHS-institutions*

A major success factor of KAN's work is its organisational structure that combines the know-how and expertise of all groups that are involved in occupational health and safety matters. KAN-resolutions are therefore thoroughly discussed and supported by all major OHS-players. The consideration and internal co-ordination of various interest groups allows for a smooth and speedy implementation of the resolutions.

##### *Efficient link of KAN to HVBG*

KAN resides in the building of a KAN-member, i.e. the Federation of Institutions for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention (HVBG). This allows KAN to make use of general management services provided by HVBG such as IT services, reception, post department, canteen, etc. KAN pays a monthly flat rate for these services and is therefore able to significantly reduce its fixed costs.

##### *Practice- and implementation-oriented KAN-Reports*

One of the special strengths of the KAN-Reports is their focus on the development of practical policy recommendations that are effectively implemented by the various KAN-members. The implementation of the policy recommendations is greatly facilitated by the existence of the working group composed of representatives of all KAN-members.

This proceeding guarantees that the recommendations are based on a broad consensus and can be implemented without major hindrances and resistance.

#### *International orientation of KAN-Reports and KAN itself*

Right from the beginning KAN-Reports and KAN itself have been designed to reach both German and international OHS and standardisation experts. KAN-Reports and KAN's other publications are available in at least three languages. This international orientation is deemed important in order to represent German OHS-interests effectively at supra-national level where most of today's standards are being developed. Furthermore, KAN is the co-founder and active member of the European Occupational Safety and Health Network (EUROSHNET) that provides a platform for the co-operation of European experts in standardisation, testing and certification.

#### *Buying in know-how from external experts*

KAN holds special budgetary funds available that can be used to buy in external know-how for projects and studies such as the KAN-Reports. This guarantees high quality standards of the KAN-Reports and ensures that the reports cover a large variety of specialised technical fields that the KAN-Secretariat with its relatively small staff is not able to work upon itself.

#### *E. Elements good practice and transferability*

KAN has received feedback from many experts from other European Member States who consider KAN as a desirable model for effectively introducing OHS-interests into standardisation. A key advantage of KAN is its organisational structure that brings all groups with an interest in OHS together and allows for a smooth and speedy implementation of its resolutions.

SMEs benefit especially from KAN's comprehensive information services that allow them to find out about current developments in OHS and standardisation and to observe the respective standards when producing goods or delivering services. Furthermore, the broad information activities make the standardisation process more transparent and motivate SMEs to engage actively in standardisation work.

Basically, the KAN model and its core element - that is the involvement and co-operation of all relevant OHS groups and institutions - is transferable to other countries. There are, however, country-specific characteristics that might not be easily transferred to other countries, but at the same time they do not have a decisive influence on the entire concept. In Germany, for example, there is a dual system of public and semi-public (i.e. industry-specific institutions for statutory accident insurance and prevention) OHS-institutions that have both competencies in the field of occupational health and safety, while in other countries only public institutions are active in this field. This would mean that in other countries a similar model might involve only the social partners (employer associations and trade unions), the state (national and regional governments) and the national standards institute, thus excluding a body like the HVBG/VFA that represents institutions for statutory accident insurance and prevention. This organisational question also concerns the financing of a model like KAN. In Germany, the semi-public institutions for statutory accident insurance and prevention ('Berufsgenossenschaften', BGs) - which are members of HVBG/VFA - contribute 51 % to KAN's budget. So, countries that do not have an equivalent to the semi-public BGs might have to find another way to finance a similar model like KAN. Despite these limitations the basic idea of KAN is indeed transferable to other countries.

As a basic principle, the concept of KAN-Reports - and especially the joint elaboration of policy recommendations - is also transferable to other countries. However, the implementation of the policy recommendations is significantly supported by KAN's accompanying working group that co-ordinates all relevant OHS-interests. For this reason, the existence of a permanent institution like KAN that pools various OHS-interests is of great advantage for the success of KAN-Reports. Other countries interested in publishing similar reports might build up a similar permanent structure like KAN or might create special steering committees for single reports.

*F. Literature and other references*

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- Information from KAN's internet-website: <http://www.kan.de>.



## 6.7 Germany - Mechanical Engineering Standards Committee (NAM)

Implementing organisation:

Mechanical Engineering Standards Committee (NAM)

within DIN (German Institute for Standardisation)

on behalf of Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau e.V.

(VDMA; Federation of German Machine and Plant Building Industry)

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### *A. Background*

In Germany the participation of SMEs and craft enterprises in the process of creating and developing standards is organised in standards committees ('Normenausschüsse') and their subsidiary working bodies.<sup>1</sup> The standards committees are organisationally tied to the German national standards body 'DIN' (Deutsches Institut für Normung, German Institute for Standardisation). In 2006 approximately 70 standards committees are in place, each one with a specific sectoral focus. The 'Mechanical Engineering Standards Committee' ('Normenausschuss Maschinenbau', NAM) ranks among the largest and first established of the standards committees.

One of the outstanding features of NAM is its organisational set-up. Although being tied formally to the German Institute for Standardisation, it is completely financed and staffed by the Federation of German Machine and Plant Building Industry ('Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau', VDMA). All of NAM's activities are therefore implemented by the VDMA-federation. Nevertheless, in its standardisation work NAM has to follow specific operational rules set by DIN.

VDMA, as the umbrella association of the German machine and plant building industry, represents 3 000 mainly small and medium-sized member companies (approximately 83 %), making it one of the largest and most important industrial associations in Europe.<sup>2</sup> VDMA and its 39 sectoral member associations cover the entire process chain - everything from components and plant manufacturers, system suppliers and system integrators through to service providers, permitting both industry-specific and inter-industry co-operation. Mechanical engineering itself is one of the largest industrial sectors and employers in Germany, accounting for sales of roughly EUR 143 000 million and 865 000 employees. The products and services of the German engineering industry are highly regarded worldwide, roughly two thirds of its production is exported.

The general objective of VDMA is to represent the interests of its member associations and member companies vis-à-vis various political and economical institutions at national, European and international level (e.g. with the aim to reduce technical trade barriers within and outside the EU). Another important goal is to provide comprehensive services, which help to secure and increase the competitiveness of its member enterprises. Furthermore, VDMA wants to act as 'the' reliable source of up-to-date and substantiated business knowledge for its members.

<sup>1</sup> Large enterprises and other interested institutions such as OHS insurance organisations of the social partners (Berufsgenossenschaften), Labour Ministries, academia etc. are also invited to participate in the standardisation process.

<sup>2</sup> Approx. 85 % of all German machine and plant building enterprises are members of VDMA.

The NAM standards committee was established as early as in 1949. During the first years of its existence it mostly focused on the development of standards which were applicable on national level only. In line with the intensification of European integration and the 'New Approach' created by the European Union, the NAM standards committee has dedicated an ever - increasing part of its activities to the European level, this holds especially true for the last 20 years. Since the end of the 1990s, NAM's scope of work has significantly widened again, making the global harmonisation of standards an increasingly important field of work. Nowadays, indeed 90-95 % of NAM's work focuses on European and international standards, and only 5-10 % on national standards.

The work carried out by the NAM standards committee is well integrated into the German Standardisation Strategy<sup>1</sup> which was developed jointly in late 2003 by representatives from business, government, research and standards bodies (including DIN and NAM). The aim of the strategy was to develop a future-oriented approach to standardisation, which would be supported by all stakeholders. The standards committees play an integral role in reaching the strategic goals set out in the strategy. The operational tasks taken over by the standards committees include among others: - increasing awareness for the economic significance of standardisation among decision-makers in enterprises, government and society, - developing networks between standards bodies, enterprises, business associations and government, - promoting the European model for adopting international standards, - improving the flow of information on standardisation in enterprises, - intensifying education and training in standardisation, and - optimising standardisation processes.

#### *B. General description*

The NAM standards committee is responsible for standardisation issues in the machine and plant building industry in Germany and co-ordinates activities in this field at national, European and international level. NAM has 27 departments ('Fachbereiche'), reflecting 27 sectoral member associations of the VDMA-federation.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 220 specialised technical committees ('Gremien') have been established for the practical standardisation work. NAM employs a staff of 50 standardisation consultants ('Normungsreferenten') and 30 secretarial assistants. The standardisation consultants are full-time employees of VDMA and dedicate approx. half of their working time to NAM. They are highly specialised experts with a profound technical knowledge of one particular branch of the German machine and plant building industry. Due to their close cooperation with enterprises and enterprise owners they are also well acquainted with the business conditions in their specific branch. During the remaining working time they pursue tasks in other related technical and R&D fields, which helps to broaden their knowledge further.

One of the central tasks of NAM is the timely provision of information to standardisation experts in (mostly) SMEs with respect to new draft standards that are currently being developed at European or international level. The standardisation consultants thoroughly analyse new draft standards and highlight the most important points. In this way they make it 'digestible' for SMEs, which in general do not have the time, personnel and financial capacities to analyse all the documents themselves. After receiving this

<sup>1</sup> Cp. DIN Deutsches Institut für Normung e.V. (2004): German Standardisation Strategy, Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> In each of the 27 departments, on average, between 150 and 350 enterprises co-operate with NAM (approx. 93 % SMEs and 7 % LSEs). Depending on the scope of their business activities some enterprises co-operate with more than one department.

condensed information, SMEs are then invited to comment on the drafts of the new standards either by e-mail/post or in person during committee meetings.<sup>1</sup> The committee considers all comments and opinions, formulates a common statement (paying particular attention to SME interests) and transfers it back to the standards bodies at European or international level. This process ensures that the interests and experiences of German SMEs are represented adequately on supra-national level and not only those of large, multinational companies. NAM therefore holds a key position in this 'national reflection/mirroring' process which runs in two directions: (1) from standards bodies at supra-national level to SMEs at national level and (2) backwards from SMEs at national level to standards bodies at supra-national level. Besides new (draft) standards, the consultants also focus on (changes in) existing standards, standards in general and they address difficulties in compliance with standards that are relevant to the machine and plant building industry.

The preparatory work performed by the consultants (i.e. screening and condensing of information) does not only include administrative tasks but also professional/technical work that requires a lot of expert knowledge and experience. SMEs especially are thereby relieved from comprehensive screening work and can concentrate on the professional/technical core-aspects of standardisation and bring in their special expertise. The standardisation consultants also provide information and advice to large enterprises and SMEs whenever they request it. Furthermore, NAM also organises workshops and seminars that provide enterprises with information on specific standards. In case, a newly developed standard proves to be impractical or ineffective, SMEs can address NAM and ask for a revision of the standards at supra-national level.

The exchange of information between NAM and the standardisation experts in SMEs and other interested institutions is facilitated by DIN-LiveLink, an electronic system on the internet. Thereby, registered users have direct access to all documents.<sup>2</sup> When new documents are made available, the users are notified by e-mail, so that they can have immediate access to this new information. This procedure has led to an improved flow of information and to a simplification and acceleration of the standardisation work and co-operation. In addition, NAM also provides SMEs with standardisation information through face-to-face conversations in committee meetings, telephone contacts, newsletters, workshops, their own Internet website ([www.nam.din.de](http://www.nam.din.de)), brochures, CD-ROMs and through articles in professional journals.

The total annual costs of the NAM standards committee amount to approx. EUR 2.5 million and include all labour, material and travel costs related to NAM's activities. The costs are funded by membership fees of enterprises registered with VDMA. The standardisation experts in SMEs who co-operate with NAM work on a purely honorary basis (motivated by their own economic interest) and do not receive a financial compensation.

<sup>1</sup> Large enterprises also have access to the standardisation consultants but do not rely as much as SMEs on the work provided by them. They often have their own standardisation department and experts.

<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, approx. 85 % of all 3 000 standardisation experts that co-operate with NAM have registered for DIN-LiveLink.

### *C. Results*

The measure is effective according to VDMA and SME enterprise owners. The objectives have been fully realised. The measure scores high in terms of visibility and content due to NAM's effective PR activities and customer-oriented services. Moreover, the NAM standards committee scores very high in terms of delivery to target group. In fact, a large number of SMEs has been reached by this measure. All in all, NAM succeeds in reaching approx. 3 000 standardisation experts from various backgrounds, thereof approx. 1 950 SMEs, 150 LSEs<sup>1</sup> and 900 experts from other interested institutions.

The comprehensive preparatory work of the standardisation consultants has allowed a large number of SMEs to become actively involved in the standardisation process. Approx. 60 % of the 1 950 SMEs reached (that is approx. 1 170 SMEs) actively participate in the standardisation work.<sup>2</sup> The success of SMEs' active participation in the standardisation process is reflected by the fact that European and international standards frequently pay attention to the interests of SMEs. In addition, all 1 950 SMEs are regularly informed about the results of NAM's standardisation activities. Furthermore, the standardisation consultants answer each year approx. 1 000 requests for information from SMEs.

The costs are really small compared to the benefits. More specific evaluation studies are not available, however, the regular member surveys carried out by VDMA also include questions on standardisation and the assistance provided by NAM. The member enterprises usually display a high degree of satisfaction with the services offered by VDMA and the NAM standards committee.

SMEs which are actively involved in standardisation work point out that their active participation brings about positive effects with regard to cost savings and competitive status. By exerting influence on the development of new standards, participating SMEs can anticipate future standards and can already adjust the design of their products and services accordingly before the standards become effective. Having access to this early information helps SMEs to save costs and to gain a competitive edge because they will not need to make extensive modifications in their production technology once a European or international standard has been developed. Furthermore, they will be able to access markets with products and services that are compatible to the new standards earlier than their non-participating competitors. Thus, a major motivation for SMEs to participate in the standardisation process is their advantage over non-participating firms in terms of insider knowledge.

The overall opinion is that the measure is important and should be continued.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks* *Effective consideration of SME knowledge and expertise*

Right from the start of the NAM standards committee in 1949 the main reason for the special co-operation between the German national standards body 'DIN' and the VDMA-federation was to make available the specific knowledge and expertise of an industrial umbrella association and its member companies (mostly SMEs) for the stan-

<sup>1</sup> Large Scale Enterprises.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the SMEs co-operate with NAM on a regular basis and might even take the chair of one of NAM's technical committees. Others participate in NAM's standardisation work from time to time, especially in connection with issues that directly affect their businesses.

standardisation work. This stands in contrast to other countries where the standardisation work within the national standards bodies is carried out mainly by officials who do not have such a close insight into the peculiarities of the industries and who are not so well acquainted with the necessities and working conditions of small and medium-sized enterprises. Over the years, linking NAM to VDMA has guaranteed quality work in the field of standardisation at a high technical level. The close organisational link allows for an adequate design and priority setting of the standardisation work that takes into account both technical/scientific aspects as well as economic policy aspects.

#### *Broad technical and industry-specific knowledge bundled in NAM*

The technological development in many branches of the machine and plant building industry is characterised by an increasing technology convergence. SMEs working in one particular branch increasingly integrate technologies of neighbouring branches into their products and services. The organisational structure of the NAM - combining the technical and industry-specific knowledge and expertise from 27 different branches (sectoral departments) under one roof - allows for an effective work structuring and guarantees a coherent (legislative) body of standards for the entire machine and plant building industry. The NAM-Secretariat co-ordinates and supports the standardisation work in the 27 departments and in addition works on horizontal standardisation topics. It also acts as a liaison agency towards the DIN executive board and to other standards committees.

#### *Active involvement in standardisation work vital for internationally active SMEs*

For the export-oriented German machine and plant building industry it is of special importance to be actively involved - via NAM - in the development of new standards at European and international level. Active and successful involvement in standardisation ensures the decisive lead with regard to the access of global markets, promotes the introduction of new technologies and guarantees a high but nevertheless economically viable safety level. All in all, it substantially contributes to maintaining the competitiveness of the SME-dominated German machine and plant building industry.

#### *Comprehensive customer-oriented services*

Another major success factor of the measure is the comprehensive preparatory work done by the standardisation consultants. Without this special assistance, most SMEs would not have the time, personnel and financial resources to become actively involved in the standardisation process, especially at international and European level.

#### *Facilitated flow of information*

Linking the NAM standards committee to VDMA greatly facilitates the flow of information between SMEs, NAM and standards bodies at national, European and international level. SMEs, which actively participate in NAM's standardisation work highly appreciate the co-operation with technical experts that speak their (business) language and understand the peculiarities of their industry. This significantly contributes to a reduction of transaction costs related to the standardisation work.

#### *Further work relief demanded by SMEs*

Due to the high competitive pressures on global markets, SMEs face tighter time constraints for their active participation in standardisation work. Therefore, SMEs increasingly ask NAM to take over even more preparatory tasks. In future, the standardisation consultants will not only screen and précis information, they will also prepare proposals

that comment on new draft standards from an enterprise point of view. This new task is facilitated by the consultants' branch-specific knowledge and their familiarity with the enterprises they look after. SMEs are therefore further relieved from finding out the consequences of a particular standard for their enterprise. They can concentrate on the question whether the comments do indeed reflect the peculiarities of their specific enterprise and whether important points have been missed out.

#### *E. Elements good practice and transferability*

Standardisation experts from standards bodies and from SMEs regard the NAM standards committee as a successful good practice measure that effectively facilitates SMEs' active participation in the process of creating and developing standards. One of the key advantages of NAM is its link to the VDMA-federation, which guarantees that technical and economical aspects are adequately considered in the standardisation work (as opposed to bureaucratic aspects). Another major key advantage is the substantial relief of SMEs from preparatory work, which is brought about by the standardisation consultants.

This measure could be established in other countries as well. NAM's success is not related to the specific national context. Basically, there are only two major organisational prerequisites for its implementation in other countries: (1) the existence of an industrial umbrella association that covers a large number of industry branches and (2) an agreement with the national standards body that allows the industrial association to implement the standards committee under its own management; however, following specific operational rules set by the national standards body.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- Interview with the managing director of the Mechanical Engineering Standards Committee (NAM).
- Interview with SME-enterprise 'Gölz GmbH' (<http://www.goelz.de>).
- DIN Deutsches Institut für Normung e.V. (2004): German Standardisation Strategy, Berlin.

## 6.8 Hungary - Seminars; training for awareness

Hungarian Standardisation Corporation (MSZT)  
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### A. Background

#### *Coping with linguistic problems on standardisation in Hungary*

Hungary, as a part of the Single Market of the European Union benefits from the advantages of harmonized European standards. The abolishment of the Hungarian practice of making these standards compulsory and the membership of the European standards organisations mean a new phase in the history of Hungarian standardisation. Hungary not only follows the changes in the European standards but is also an active member in creating them and influencing their content. The Hungarian Standard Institution or MSZT helps enterprises to choose the appropriate standard for their activities. It is the standpoint of MSZT that a Hungarian standard should be in Hungarian. However, to translate that many standards would be extremely costly, therefore Hungary applies the so-called 'approving notice' supported by the European methodology. Practically, MSZT makes an announcement that from a certain date onwards the European standard is meant to be the Hungarian one as well. Consequently the English version of the European standard is to be applied. At present, 70 % of the applied European standards are available in English language in Hungary. The standards, which are bought and used most frequently by firms, are translated into Hungarian.

Standardisation turns up in two forms in the training system. Firstly, the National Training List contains a 'Creator of standards' and an 'Administrator of standards' qualification. Secondly, standardisation is a subject in economic, technical and other trainings. Awareness is fostered by education and training, which makes those professionals use standards consciously at work.

Trainings and further teaching on standardisation are held by MSZT; by companies concerned and by vocational training institutions.

MSZT has trainings with over 1 000 participants per annum, while the sessions held by companies and by vocational training institutions have at least the same volume of pupils. 1-2 % of the Hungarian employees have qualifications directly on standardisation or a strongly related subject. During secondary and higher education, the majority take up at least one lesson or subject on standardisation. 2 728 people are proven to have completed the course by the beginning of 2006 at MSZT<sup>1</sup>.

Standardisation is present in further education programmes of several companies, especially in the export-oriented sector. Large and medium-sized companies are the most important 'customers' in this training market. Tutors of these company trainings are chosen from national or international fields, often from the experts of the Hungarian Standard Institution. MSZT offers supervision and support for experts and trainers.

<sup>1</sup> Szabványügyi Közlöny, LVIII/2., February, 2006, page 45.

## *B. General description*

### *Training activity of the Hungarian Standard Institution <sup>1</sup>*

The Act on Standardisation (1995 XXVIII) authorizes the Hungarian Standard Institution (MSZT) to take part in the teaching of standardisation including the development of the topics of the syllabus, the production of the training material as well as the corporation providing the tuition outside of the national school system.

Getting companies into the market and helping them to continue with education and further training are considered to be very important tasks at MSZT. To achieve this, MSZT co-operates with training organisations and larger firms to organise trainings at their premises. These partners and the students are the target groups of training activities and training for awareness in standardisation.

MSZT is trying hard to bring into effect its slogan: to be 'Reliable', to have 'Competence' and 'Experience'. Achievement of these objectives requires continuous exchange of experiences between experts in various fields such as standardisation, quality control, economy, education and entrepreneurship. MSZT itself provides certificates that are also approved at European level.

MSZT offers mostly post-secondary and post-graduate education and training. Application announcements are put both on the Internet and published in the Standardisation Gazette. More than 1 000 experts participate in the programmes annually. Approximately 50 % of the participants come from SMEs. MSZT offers trainings on the following fields:

- Quality management;
- Environment management and control;
- Food-safety (HACCP, ISO 22000);
- Information-protection;
- Playgrounds;
- Health-protection and safety at work;
- Standardisation;
- Other vocational courses, such as: electromagnetic consistence [EMC], planning and execution of high voltage network, standardisation and certification of construction steel-products, welding safety rules and certification of products and services.

Several of the trainings listed above are acknowledged by the European Organisation of Quality (EOQ). The tuition and examination fees at MSZT can be claimed against the vocational allowance, which is a great help for enterprises and other organisations concerned. The amount of the tuition fee depends on the period of time spent in training. A one day 'keep-up' training for standardisation administrators or a one day standardisation and certification training is available for about 80 EUR. A 4 day training on environmental auditory also including the examination is about 550 EUR. These prices are not beyond the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Educational and staff-certificate procedures of MSZT are determined by the European Quality Organisation's harmonizing directive, the quality controlling system on MSZ EN ISO 9001 and by the practical appliance of the staff-certificate system on MSZ EN ISO/IEC 17024.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bede, Klára (2006), page 86-88.



Participants' satisfaction of courses held by MSZT was rated as very good (4.5) on a scale from 1 to 5, in 2005.

#### *Company trainings and adult education on standardisation in Hungary*

Two training courses of adult training institutions dealt with standardisation: the standard-creator and the administrator of standards.

A *standard-creator* qualification enables you to participate in the development of standards. Ten percent of the training period is focused on gaining practical knowledge, such as: investigating standards, working out suggestions, estimating plans, participating in the work of several committees. Requirements include: legal background; knowledge on standardisation; knowledge on quality and quality-control; being able to work out company standards; determining and organizing the standardisation process at companies; knowledge of the types of standards; regulations on environment protection, working safety and fire regulations. The demand for this type of work is continuously increasing because of the introduction of the harmonised European standardisation. There is an increasing need for firms and service providers to make their products and services marketable in the EU.

An *administrator of standards* qualification enables you to administrate the use of standards within an organisation. Also here, 10 % of the training is focused on gaining practical knowledge. They have to be able to work individually with standards and to understand the national, European and international standards. They also should be able to maintain the standard files; to disseminate information about modified and invalid standards to users; to withdraw invalid standards from use; to create and control standardisation rules for the firms and to maintain, use, store and register standards.

#### *C. Results*

SMEs face serious problems in the field of standardisation because a lack of information about standardisation. Training courses address this lack of information. In an article by Dr. Bede, the training activities of the Hungarian Standard Institution (MSZT) are evaluated positively:

- They are based on valid and authentic sources,
- They are held by well prepared professionals,
- The qualifications obtained are acknowledged both nationally and internationally.

Also available information on the satisfaction of training participants in quality management trainings shows positive indicators.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Specific success factors of Hungarian standardisation trainings are:

- The centralized organisation of the most important trainings by MSZT and the professional supervision of trainings in the field nationwide;
- Intensive exchanges of experience among lecturers, tutors, examiners, which manifests for example in co-operation between universities and MSZT, to hold trainings, campaigns and take part in education.

Bottlenecks and lessons learned are:

- The lack of information among SMEs, because the information supply at MSZT is not sufficient for them - SMEs need more particular information sources that are located in their vicinity;
- Structure and subject matter of standards is not user-friendly and easily understandable in most cases, so there is a growing need for specific learning materials and courses to cope with these difficulties.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

Hungarian training systems in standardisation could be considered as a good practice because of the central supervision by Hungarian Standard Institution (MSZT) and the wide supply of courses by different institutions. The high quality content of related facts and text books at technical departments in higher education and at vocational schools ensures the awareness in using standards among students in general. Another important factor is that MSZT offers several courses in Hungarian language. The role of MSZT in training and education is worth consideration in the standardisation trainings system Europe-wide.

Based on the Hungarian experience, prerequisites for success in developing such a training system and in obtaining awareness of standards among SMEs are:

- High quality level of training (supported by the trainers' knowledge on management and law, and exchange of experience among experts);
- A wide-range training offer;
- Centralized supervision of training activities by MSZT;
- Availability of grants and affordable prices.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- Szabványügyi Közlöny [Standardisation Gazette], LVIII/2., February, 2006, page 45.
- Dr. Bede, Klára: A Magyar Szabványügyi Testület oktatási tevékenysége. [Training activities of the Hungarian Standard Institution] Min ségmenedzsment, 2006/2. page 86-88.
- II. National Development Plan of Hungary 2007-2013. Discussion Paper for Society Debate, 2006, Budapest.
- Dr. Bíró Béla - Rátné Dr. Ludányi Ágnes (2004) A kis- és középvállalkozások részvétele a szabványosításban az Európai Unióban és Magyarországon. - Oktatási anyag a magyarországi mikro, kis- és középvállalkozások számára. [SME's Participation in Standardisation in the European Union and in Hungary. -Text book for Hungarian SME's] SME-FIT Project, IPOSZ, Budapest.

## 6.9 Italy - Website

Sindacato Nazionale Odontotecnici  
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### *A. Background*

Orthodontists are a relevant part of the dental industry that is a vertical structure, which is composed of:

- A group of manufacturers- made up both by local SMEs and large multinational firms - of machinery, equipment and material for dental surgeries;
- A traditional distribution system, comprising storehouses and sales agents;
- Orthodontic laboratories and dental surgeries, a widespread network covering the whole country, made up by orthodontists and dentists, who take care of the dental treatment, that is the production of dentures and odontic care.

In Italy, there are about 15 300 orthodontic laboratories<sup>1</sup>, this number has decreased over the last ten years. The average size of each company (about 1.7 employees only) has increased slightly. The average size is, however, still one of the lowest in the EU and very far from UK levels, where only a few hundred orthodontic laboratories (sometimes with hundreds of employees each) are at work.

In the second half of last century, safety regulations took on growing relevance both for enterprises and for policy makers due to the political pressure exerted by consumers' rights movements. The possible economic consequences in terms of costs to be faced for possible civil (or even penal) liabilities in the case of defective or faulty products became really relevant, especially when, as it is now, the principle of reversal of the proof has been established, that is the fact that the producer must prove that he has complied with technical rules in production instead of the consumer being obliged to prove that the product was faulty. This is true for the medical sector in general and the dental sector, in particular.

Besides Safety Regulations over the years also Technical Standardisation problems have acquired growing relevance both for enterprises and for policy makers in the dental sector. In this sector, firms with different technologies and different know-how face different costs in complying with technical standards. Not surprisingly, enterprises are seriously interested in having a word in the design of the technical standards themselves. Such standards may be binding on a voluntary or contractual basis, or compliance might even become compulsory by law. Relevant for the dental sector is for instance the EU Directive 93/42/CEE on medical devices, whose crucial points seem to be (at least, in the Associations' opinion):

- The appraisal procedures of the compliance of firms' activities with the directive and with the standards;
- The evaluation of clinical data;
- The monitoring of post-commercialisation activities;
- The transparency and the control of the sector activities.

<sup>1</sup> Data refer to 2003, last figure available from the Government Revenue Agency.

It is estimated that 400 000 medical devices are produced each year in Italy, both mass-produced and custom-made. EU Directive 93/42/CEE requires both the producers of machinery, equipment, material for dental surgeries, and the orthodontists, makers of dentures to guarantee that their product complies with the essential health and safety specifications put forward by the EU Directive. The orthodontist needs to provide the customer with a "declaration of compliance", specifying the required information:

- Production procedures;
- Specific performances;
- Personal liabilities undertaking.

SNO, the National Union of Orthodontists, is a national association for SME and craft enterprises active in fields related to the dental technician sector. SNO is affiliated to the Craftsman National Confederation for small and medium enterprises (CNA, see: [www.cna.it/sno](http://www.cna.it/sno)).

SNO membership amount to 7 000 enterprises out of more than 15 000 in the sector at large. The activities of SNO concern primarily medical, electronic and mechanical activities in the field of dental technician sector. The objectives of SNO are:

- To impartially determine and communicate to its members the best ways to produce (among other products) prototypes, samples and custom-made products;
- To allow every citizen to inquire publicly about the projects and initiatives carried out by SNO;
- To design and implement training courses aimed at upgrading competences in the dental field;
- To present - in cooperation with other associations in the field - the opinions of the sector to policy-makers and regulators regarding the problems of the dental sector, etc.

At the moment, SNO and other associations in the sector are specially pressing Italian policy-makers in order to get support in tackling the economic downturn in the sector due to a decreasing demand for dental services as this is not just a problem for the enterprises in the sector, but it also concerns public health. The way-out, suggested by SNO and its allies, is many-sided. To stimulate the demand side, a combination of awareness raising events and a lowering of the cost directly borne by the citizen, e.g. fiscal incentives, have been suggested.

On the supply side, the usual array of measures of the so-called Italian industrial policy is advocated: greater efficiency both by fostering mergers to increase the scale of production and by technology upgrading, for example by better use of ICT; investments in R&D and machinery; know-how and new technology purchases; reduction of labour costs through a partial exemption from the payment of social security charges; etc. In performing its tasks SNO cooperates with other Italian associations operating in the dental sector, with Italian standardisation associations and with NORMAPME.

After the enforcement of EU Directive 93/42/CEE, back in June 1998, standardisation issues have become more and more relevant for SNO's members. SNO collects information on standards from international and European sources, e.g. Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry of the Commission and NORMAPME, as well as from the National Standards Body UNI.

SNO also cooperates with NORMAPME on the implementation of European projects. For instance, at the moment a project is being implemented that would allow evaluation and comparison of skills and quality levels of orthodontists in different EU Member States.

To summarise: SNO looks after the interest of the SMEs and craft enterprises that perform activities related to orthodontists and orthodontic laboratories.

A website has been created in order to provide these enterprises access to useful information and help them to overcome technical problems through experts' opinion and the exchange of experiences between members. The site [www.cna.it/sno](http://www.cna.it/sno) was created in 1998 and is still active.

### *B. General description*

The website has been created, as a part of an array of measures that SNO undertakes to distribute more general information but also to foster the participation of SMEs, Craft enterprises and self-employed in standardisation. As well as the website, the promotion of workshops is quite relevant. Also newsletters, focus groups, the production of technical handbooks, the provision of assistance to members about compliance with standards are important.

The main objectives of the website are the provision of information on standardisation and on the services provided by SNO. The focus is on helping to overcome technical problems and reviewing news of interest to members. The website provides: information on events; news; information on standardisation in general; on new standards and existing standards in the orthodontic operations and in the other parts of the dental sector; some papers about seminars; dossiers; studies and brochures that may be downloaded or ordered to be delivered by mail against payment of the required price. An efficient system of mailing lists for SNO members is a tool employed to accelerate the spread of information. Besides, the website supports the organisation of: meetings and seminars on standardisation; training courses and seminars on policy options and technical publications.

In this way the website intends: to increase the awareness about the importance of standardisation; to provide information on which standards have to be met; to increase the use of standards, giving information and news on them; to foster the participation of enterprises in the development of standards, both directly (participating in committees and meetings for this scope) and indirectly (channelling opinion to the experts).

The website is mainly targeted at Custom-made Mechanical Medical Devices (CMMD) manufacturers, machine manufacturers and Custom-made Porcelain Devices (CPD) manufacturers. They are obliged by EU Directive 93/42/CEE to comply with European standards in terms of production procedures, of machinery used and of materials employed.

Both technical experts and associates, exchanging their experiences and giving advice, keep the website up-to-date and solve problems put forward by other SNO members.

The website is partly funded out of the general funds of SNO for organisational purposes and it is partly self-financed, through the mark-up paid on the purchase of publishing material (papers, dossiers, studies and brochures) to be downloaded or to be delivered by mail after being ordered through the website.

### *C. Results*

The website has proved to be a useful way to overcome barriers that SMEs face in the dental sector, namely a limited knowledge of technical language on the operators side, costs in acquiring the relevant information and a frequent lack of focus on issues of interest for small producers.

SNO's website works side by side with SNO's workshop advertised on it and manned by experts of the sector, that is a useful way for professional upgrading of SNO members and a useful way to make networking overcome organisational problems. It is a virtual meeting point of experts and useful discussions. Of course, it is also a way to discuss and provide explanation of standards (most newly established standards rather than old standards), but it is not concerned with the process of defining new standards. Of course, feedbacks from workshop discussions of newly established standards might provide quite useful information for the implementation of them and in showing the possible need of the drafting of new standards.

According to SNO the website is an important and effective measure that should be continued, although the costs are large compared to the direct benefits (the self-financed part of the budget). Nevertheless, in independent experts' opinion, the website is important in terms of increased awareness of the relevance of standards on the orthodontists' side and in terms of increased participation of SNO members in the Association's life, strengthening its position when pressing Italian policy-makers on matters relevant for SNO.

The objectives of the measure have largely been realised and the website is said by SNO to score high on content and delivery to the target group, and very high on visibility. The website provides a wide range of useful information and thereby overcomes the lack of information available to the enterprises. For instance, the availability on the website of papers about seminars organised by SNO, has proved to be popular. SNO estimates that a large number of enterprises is reached through the website.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Two elements appear to be the main determinants of the success of the website (and of the workshops): one institutional and one organisational.

As far as the institutional side is concerned, in Italy the orthodontist sector (or, better, the whole dental sector) is heavily regulated. Therefore, there is a need for a strong trade association in order to present their opinions to policy-makers and regulators about the problems of the dental sector, on one side, and to press (or lobby) the Parliament and the Government to take notice of their position, related not only to their interests but also the people's dental health, on the other side.

In order to strengthen the organisation of SNO it is crucial to keep them together as a community aware of their common problems. So, both ways to increase members' knowledge of the regulations (standards) relevant for them and the possibility of exchanges of technical problem-solving experiences and best practices between members are powerful means to boost this identity feeling. Website and workshops must be seen in this framework.

Also the possibility to meet and to know in person the heads of the Association at national, regional and county level and to communicate directly with them is relevant in order to make SNO members feel that their opinions can be properly heard.

As far as the organisational side is concerned, the availability of a very efficient mailing list service at SNO members disposal, allows them a continuous exchange of information and updating of knowledge related to topics relevant for all orthodontists. The large survey of the press, implemented on a continuous basis by the Association, moni-

tors non-stop the evolution of the legislative activity related to the sector and brings users up-to-date about the evolutions of institutional fiscal and commercial norms.

Referring to bottlenecks in the website operations, the collection of documents needs to be better organised in order to obtain a more efficient subdivision into official rules, proposals, comments and survey of the press.

*E. Elements good practice and transferability*

The "best practice" idea, which can be transferred, is not the website in itself (a rather common tool, nowadays), but rather the interlinking of website, workshops, survey of the press and mailing-list, all manned by an Association aiming at: the increase of members' "identity consciousness"; the building-up and updating of a common "pool" of technical competences and specialised knowledge; the possibility to get feedback from members about proposals, standards and rules.

*F. Literature and other references*

- Interview with an expert active in the orthodontist sector.
- Interview with an expert active in the (non-orthodontist) dental sector.
- Information from SNO's website: [www.cna.it/sno](http://www.cna.it/sno).

## 6.10 Italy - Institutional Conventions

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### *A. Background*

Over the years Technical Standardisation and Safety regulations have acquired growing relevance both for enterprises and for policy makers. Firms need to be sure that their suppliers of components and assemblies comply with the technical characteristics, as established in the contracts, and technical standards are a good basis for contracts. Since firms with different technologies and different know-how face different costs in complying with different technical standards, there is clearly a strong argument for firms to be active in the design of the technical standards themselves in the form of technical norms (binding on a voluntary or contractual basis). Over time the compliance with some standards is made compulsory by law. In any case, firms must set up procedures for quality control and they must invest in technologies and restructuring of their production organisation in order to attain the required technical standards.

Safety regulations have been pushed forward by the political pressure exerted by consumers' rights movements. All in all, the possible economic consequences in terms of costs to be faced for possible civil (or even penal) liabilities in the case of defective or faulty products, especially when, as it is now, the principle of reversal of the proof<sup>1</sup> has been established.

To improve the competitiveness and innovativeness of its own production structure, any Government wants to be sure that:

- Experts of its economy have a say in the drafting of technical standards at international level;
- The diffusion of standardisation culture be maximised in the economy and society at large, in order to make people aware of the economic advantages both in terms of competitiveness and in respect of environment and safety standards.

Instruments of Government policy in this field are basically the support for the activity of the national standardisation organisation at international level, on one side, and to pay part of their expenses, on the other.

The Italian Electrotechnical Committee, CEI, is a specialised Italian national standardisation organisation, operating in the electrical engineering, electronics and telecommunication industries. The main objective of this organisation is to be involved in the drafting of international and European law and technical standards related to the above-mentioned industries.

<sup>1</sup> That is: the producer must prove that he has complied with technical rules in production instead of the consumer being obliged to prove that the product was faulty.



Besides its international activities, CEI's main tasks are:

- To draw up technical norms elaborated by technical Committees, where all interested parties participate, ensuring transparency and sharing of information;
- To publish/ make known, in general, technical norms and related editorial products such as technical handbooks, both directly and indirectly through Internet (CEI WebShop);
- To spread standardisation culture through training courses, organisation of (or participation in) conferences and fairs.

The CEI is a not for profit private association, with more than 400 members. Among them, there are about 300 SMEs but only 8 craft enterprises. In performing its tasks, CEI cooperates with the Electric Industry National Association (ANIE), the Small and Medium Enterprises Confederation (CONFAPI), the Craftsman National Confederation (CNA), the Craftsman Confederation (Confartigianato) and the Italian Installers Association (ASSISTAL). The cooperation between these national organisations consists mainly of coordination of experts' activities, research, development and training in the standardisation process. It must be noted that these associations are not directly involved in the organization of the Institutional Convention, the measure here examined.

ANIE is a member of Confindustria (the Italian Manufacturer Association) and its members belong to the electrical engineering, electronics and telecommunication industries, the ones to which CEI's activities refer. At all levels<sup>1</sup>, Confindustria, local Manufacturer Union, and Industry Association, there is a SMEs Committee which takes care especially of SMEs problems at local, industry or national level. CONFAPI is a Confederation of local unions at county level, not divided on industry lines, and gathers all SMEs not belonging to Confindustria. Since CNA and Confartigianato (organising local unions at county level, with industry committees at every level) gather nearly all Italian Craftsmen, just like ANIE and CONFAPI gather nearly all SMEs belonging to the industries of interest for CEI's activities, we can state that CEI pays great attention to SMEs and craft enterprises.

CEI's activities are financed by: 1) selling editorial products related to technical standards (technical handbooks, for instance) both directly and indirectly through Internet (CEI WebShop) (about 50 %); 2) collecting annual membership fees (about 25 %); 3) receiving public funding, especially from the Italian Ministry of Economic Development (about 25 %).

In order to better fulfil one of its main task, that is to spread standardisation culture in the above- mentioned industries through the economic structure of the country and Italian society at large, CEI, back in 2000, started organising the Institutional Convention. This measure, here examined, is still active.

With the same objective, in 2005 CEI has upgraded its promotion activities specifically addressed to its customers and to the public at large. So, information campaigns, also through e-mails, have been devised addressing specific arguments and fields, customers who have previously acquired CEI products, in order to update them in time or on new norms just published and possibly of their interest. In the same way, CEI has taken care

<sup>1</sup> It must be kept in mind that Confindustria has a sort of matrix organisation, that is a firm is a member at the same time - and pay membership fees- both of a local Manufacturers Union at county level (say the Milan one) and of an Industry Association (say FEDERCHIMICA, the Chemical Manufacturer Association).

of informing its members and customers about its new publishing products, training courses, facilities deriving from the association to the CEI and from the subscriptions to different normative selections. The availability of normative documents has been guaranteed everywhere in Italy through the service of sale on-line CEI WebShop and through official CEI distributors.

#### *B. General description*

The Institutional Convention is organised by CEI. Other parties, involved in it, are CEI's Technical Secretariat, experts and professionals. The Technical Secretariat plays an operative role, by inviting people and firms to the Convention and organizing it. Experts take part in the convention as both speakers and public. There are usually 8 speakers for each convention; they are university professors, lecturers, and experts working in the sectors where CEI operates. Advertising take place also through the CEI website ([www.ceiweb.it](http://www.ceiweb.it)). Attendance to the Institutional Convention is free of charge, although with compulsory registration, and it is open to its target groups, that is people working in the industries where CEI operates, experts, consultants, press representatives, public administration officials, professors, students and everybody interested in the topics discussed.

The main objective of the Institutional Convention is to extend the culture of standardisation and safety (intended both as plant safety and as house electric safety) providing information both on technical issues in general and on the existing standards, especially the newly drafted ones, since the drafting of completely new standards is up to CEI's Technical Committees and they will be discussed in the Institutional Convention when their approval process will be completed. The aims of the Institutional Convention are also the provision of training on understanding standardisation issues, the provision of information on standardisation issues in general and on existing standards that have to be met. The Institutional Convention can, thus, be seen as an instrument in order to increase awareness on the use of standardisation, on the importance of having it and on what standards exist. The measure, through interaction and discussion with experts and other people working in the industries relevant for CEI, also stimulates firms' innovation in their efforts to reach standards and helps to upgrade the quality of their production, thus improving their competitiveness.

The Institutional Convention is mainly organised for micro enterprises, SMEs and craft enterprises in the industries concerned, helping them to overcome barriers they might face in absorbing standardisation culture, due to the unavailability of experts for them and the lack of economic resources. Public Administration officials also participate. In the framework of this measure several tools have been used to inform enterprises such as specific brochures to be sent to the operators, posters on the convention, articles in magazines focused on the involved sectors, and specific information on the website ([www.ceiweb.it](http://www.ceiweb.it)). This information focuses on the convention; the information on standards is provided through different brochures and folders, distributed at the convention.

Being free of charge for participants, the activities in the framework of this measure are financed by CEI's organizational fund, partly financed by Government funds, as mentioned above.

### *C. Results*

The Institutional Convention is considered to be effective and important by the CEI, helping firms (especially the micro ones) in finding the time and the proper place to discuss standardisation topics. The objectives have been fully realised and the measure scores high on content and delivery to target group, and very high on visibility. The measure provides enterprises with information and thereby overcomes a lack of awareness on standards that may be of great importance to the enterprises. In addition this measure supports the local promotion and contact with the public concerning standardisation topics awareness, relevant especially for safety standards.

A special aspect of this measure is the possibility of interaction and discussion on standardisation. Discussion also improves awareness on standards and their implications. Furthermore, with this measure the normative culture is extended and there is an extended awareness of the relevance to take part and/or to keep the Technical Committees informed of activities for the drafting of new Technical Standards organised by CEI.

Institutional Conventions in different Italian cities are held 10 times a year. Each time a substantial number of people is present and it is estimated by CEI to be approximately 600 people. Thus in a year the total number of participants is around 6 000 people, most of them made up from micro enterprises and SMEs.

CEI estimates that benefits brought by this measure are large compared to its costs, although no figure are given to support this statement. Accordingly to this estimate, in CEI's opinion the measure should be continued.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

The success of the measure (especially among micro enterprises, craft enterprises and SMEs) is due to the fact that enterprises are helped to overcome the main barriers they must face in acquiring awareness and competences in standardisation topics, difficulties, such as acquiring some expertise, at a price matching their limited financial resources and up-to-date information on these topics. Institutional Convention is free of charge and the published material distributed by CEI and CENELEC is affordable; with technical expertise also available.

The cooperation between CEI and CNA, Confartigianato, CONFAPI and the SMEs Committee of ANIE guarantees that CEI's normative activities will tend to be as neutral as possible between possible conflicting technological interests and needs of SMEs and Craftsmen on the one hand and large firms on the other hand, both at the Italian and at the international level. At the Italian level, micro enterprises, craft enterprises and SMEs (or, better, their Associations) might take part: 1) in the proposal and preparation of National Guides in all the fields where revision is appropriate and clarify the standardisation situation and the methods of application of the technical norms; 2) in the proposal of new National Norms on topics not yet dealt with at European or international levels; 3) in contributing to build up the Italian position at the European and/or at the international levels.

In CEI's opinion there are no special obstacles to the implementation of this measure, although it has been suggested that it could be convenient to better specify the key issues of the Institutional Conventions and to define better the operative protocols for CEI members.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The crucial idea behind this measure, that can be transferred, is the decision to build one knowledge and competence pool on standardisation topics, made up by experts linked to firms, SMEs and Craft Associations in the industries of interest for CEI. Through the Institutional Convention it is possible to reach all the enterprises and even the self-employed in these industries. All of them are made aware of the developments in the field and experts can have, at the same time, a chance to get feed back on problems to be tackled.

Institutional Convention is also useful in order to increase the technical competences of all participants (an unquestionable advantage in itself), since discussions take place among experts of the same sector, and therefore with a common ground of competences and knowledge of the technical problems to be discussed. Furthermore, participants not usually competitors, while often they cooperate as customers/suppliers or subcontractors in the same sector, so the Institutional Convention can perform also as a sort of trade "club".

Finally, another point that could be transferred is the role played in CEI and in the Institutional Convention by the President, the Secretary and the Technical Secretary of the relevant Technical Committee. The personal acquaintance of them by CEI members and participants allows the latter to know exactly the right person to address in order to get the required information at short notice, not only on the identification of a norm, but also on its interpretation, the modes of obtaining it and all that is of interest to know about norms issued by CEI and CENELEC.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- Interview with expert from CEI.
- Interview with expert from UNI.
- The website of CEI: [www.ceiweb.it](http://www.ceiweb.it).

## 6.11 Luxembourg - Standards for information security

Ministère de l'Economie et du Commerce extérieur  
(Ministry of the Economy and Foreign Trade)  
6, boulevard Royal, L - 2449 Luxembourg  
Tel: +35 24 781; Fax: +35 24 60 448  
info@eco.public.lu; <http://www.eco.public.lu>  
Website especially on this measure: <http://www.cases.lu> (French language).

### *A. Background*

The main activities of the Ministry relate to the development of the national economy and foreign trade in a European context covering all sectors of the economy with particular attention to SMEs. The Ministry is responsible for research and development, intellectual property, protection of consumers, regional development, e-business and standardisation.

The Ministry has a special department, which is the national organisation of standardisation. It represents Luxembourg in the international standardisation committees and is enforcing and overseeing standards in Luxembourg.

In its activities the Ministry appreciates the characteristics of SMEs such as where often a scarcity of resources in terms of money and time to deal with increasing complexity of the political and economic infrastructure exists.

Information security is one of the missions of the Ministry, which is promoting awareness against the risks linked to information security. In the CASES project (Cyberworld Awareness Security Enhancement Structure), the Ministry promotes and facilitates the use of standards in the field of information security, e.g. by 'downsizing' existing standards to suit SME characteristics. The main national partners in this project are the professional chambers, the Ministry of Economy, the Centre for Public Research (Henri Tudor Public Research Centre, which is the name of one Public research centre in Luxembourg) and Statistics Luxembourg (STATEC). CASES is an initiative of several European countries (Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium).

### *B. General description*

The CASES project is proposing that IT standards with regard to the information security should be implemented within SMEs. The project consists of workshops, publications, offering information on a website and coaching.

Through the project, IT-security standards will be promoted and distributed among SMEs. This concerns, above all, the ISO norms from 27000 to 27009. They describe how companies shall treat the security of information. The norms describe for instance who has access to the server room.

These ISO norms are, however, too sophisticated to be implemented by SMEs. What is special about this project is that the ISO standards are downsized by the project team, so that a 'lighter' version of these standards can be implemented within SMEs.

Since 2004 the Ministry has organized a series of workshops to increase the awareness about the importance of standardisation. The reason to initiate these workshops was to persuade SMEs to implement IT standards.

The project team will be installed as a permanent service within the Ministry.

In general terms the objectives of the workshops are to increase awareness of standardisation and promote the use of standards by educating the people concerned. It is focussed on IT standards that should safeguard the security of information, specially the standards in ISO group 27 that develop the ISO norms 27000 to 27009, which deal with the security of information. The measure is aimed at applying existing standards rather than developing new standards, however there is a side effect on the development of new standards as some members of the project team also participate in standardisation committees that are developing new standards.

Information is provided on which standards have to be met and training is provided to better understand standardisation issues. In this way the Ministry tries to overcome bottlenecks for SMEs such as the lack of time and of human resources to implement standards within the company and the fact that large standards like ISO 17799<sup>1</sup> are really not flexible enough to be easily implemented by (and in) SMEs.

The Ministry not only supports others by providing finances or other means to bring about these objectives, but also the Ministry itself is organising and running activities aimed at micro and small enterprises such as):

- Inform enterprises by publications (specific journals, brochures, etc. which treat subjects like security standards, firewalls, spyware, adaware, risk analysing)
- Inform enterprises by a website (See <http://www.cases.lu>)
- Provide or support training to SMEs and/or Craft enterprises
- Provide or support coaching in application of standards
- Arrange or support meetings, seminars, etc. on standardisation.

The target group are micro companies and SMEs in all sectors of the economy.

These activities are financed from the public budget, the budget for the whole project (including workshops, publications, website, coaching, etc.) is EUR 1 500 000 for two years for the whole project.

### *C. Results*

The measure aimed at awareness is believed to reach its objectives to a large extent and the costs involved are really small compared to the benefits brought about. All in all, this measure is believed to be important and should be continued. 'Visibility' and 'content' are considered to be high, whereas the delivery to target group is neutral.

The impact is quite large. The members of the project team are often asked for training sessions by SMEs. These sessions are not subjected to a fee. It has an impact on competitiveness as SMEs who implement the IT standards proposed by the project team are preventing collapses of information technologies,

<sup>1</sup> ISO17799, is a detailed security standard. It is organised into ten major sections, each covering a different topic or area. In each of the 10 sections are detailed statements that comprise the standard. It describes for example how to avoid interruptions to business activities, how to control access to information, measures to reduce risks of human error and theft; how to manage information security within the company; etc. Some consider ISO 17799 to be an extremely comprehensive and detailed standard. Compliance may therefore require commitment; a methodical approach, as well as access to appropriate tools and products (See for example: <http://www.computersecuritynow.com>)

Thus the measure is effective. Good experiences have been identified with SMEs as they report that they have higher IT security standards now. Even the IT security companies adapt their services for SMEs as they propose IT solutions adapted to SMEs and not to multinational companies.

Number of SME involved during the last two years:

- 5 conferences (350 participants)
- 10 training sessions (100 participants)
- 4 private trainings sessions (100 participants).

A transfer of know-how towards SMEs and more secure IT- security systems are the immediate effects for SMEs.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Through the connectivity of networks, SMEs run a higher risk of attack. This factor contributed to the high interest of SMEs in this project.

The success of the project is shown by the number of participants in the training sessions, which has been reached even without launching any special marketing campaign.

However some efforts still have to be made in order to make the project more well-known.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The project can be seen as a good practise with regard to building awareness. However only a smaller part of the CASES project deals with standardisation.

However it is the first international norm that is adapted to the needs of SMEs.

The measure could easily been implemented in other countries as the IT security standards are international.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

Interviews with the responsible experts, i.e. members of the project team of the Ministry of the Economy and Foreign Trade.

## 6.12 Malta - Supply of standards at reduced rate

Malta Standards Authority (MSA)  
National standards organisation  
info@msa.org.mt, <http://www.msa.org.mt>

### *A. Background*

The Malta Board of Standards was constituted by law in 1965 with the aim of preparing and publishing standards, as well as the monitoring and granting of licences for the use of the standard mark. In 1996 the board was replaced by the Malta Standards Authority with the aim of building the necessary quality and measurement infrastructure for Malta to meet EU requirements. In 2000, the Standardisation Directorate was set up under the Malta Standards Authority (MSA) Act 2000 by Legal Notice 213 of 2000. Before that, both the quality and measurement of infrastructures were practically inexistent.

The Malta Standards Authority (MSA) is the national standards body. The work fields of MSA relate to standardisation, conformity assessment and technical advice to various ministries and governmental bodies. It also serves as an EU and WTO/TBT notification point and is responsible for co-ordinating testing requirements, providing certification, accreditation and industrial metrology (calibration) in Malta. Its policy objectives are the adoption of standards such as EN, ISO and IEC, the preparation of National Standards and the promulgation of standardisation in general. MSA covers all sectors of industry as Malta has only one standards body. The Authority is presently a full member of CEN, CENELEC, ETSI, ISO, EA, WELMEC, and EUROMET and associate member of IEC and corresponding member of OIML.

MSA implements several activities to help SME and craft enterprises to deal with standardisation issues. MSA organises for example regular workshops on issues such as:

- ISO 9000 familiarisation Workshop
- Environmental Management System (EMS) Implementation Workshop
- ISO 9000 Internal Audit Course.

MSA has a close collaboration with the Crafts Council. The organisations have for example worked together to prepare national standards for traditional *lace and filigree work*.

About 230 enterprises are registered with MSA of which nearly 200 are SMEs and only 14 craft enterprises.

MSA has two measures to promote the role of craft and SMEs in standardisation, which are being described as good practices. This case focuses on 'supply of standards at reduced prices', initiated in 2001 with the aim of encouraging crafts and SMEs to adopt international standards.

This measure is still continuing.

### *B. General description*

Since 2001 MSA has a policy to offer standards at a reduced price. The policy of MSA of making standards available at a special price has encouraged many SMEs to purchase standards especially when they are tendering for a Government bid where reference to a particular standard is made.



Also, more SMEs are seen to be using standards to improve their products in general, especially if they are export oriented.

The aim of the measure is to make European and international standards better available locally at an affordable price. The target groups are member enterprises and students. The measure aims at an increased knowledge build-up in the area of standardisation.

In the framework of the scheme, the following services are offered:

- 50 % discounts on MSA Standards
- Free draft European standards in electronic format
- E-mail updating on what is happening in European and international standardisation
- E-Mail notification with services offered by MSA
- E-Mail notification on new/revised drafts and standards issued by subscribed Technical Committee/s in the areas of interest

The total annual fee for the above is EUR 58.

Apart from the services included in the package, the MSA also organises training for its members, through the form of seminars and workshops. These are offered at a relatively low cost.

Standards at reduced price are sold directly to the enterprises.

### *C. Results*

The measure is apparently successful as an increased flow of information with regard to standards, and a higher volume of sales for all type of standards has taken place. However MSA reports that the objectives are only met to a limited extent - there are a total of 80 members registered in this particular scheme, which is quite high for a small country like Malta but still one would have expected a higher number given that the scheme is offered at a low cost. Nevertheless, the scheme has been very successful in creating awareness about the importance of standardisation.

The perception is that costs and benefits brought about are more or less equal. Industry sources say that the typical price for a standard is EUR 100. Therefore unless they purchase more than two standards per annum (which at a discount of 50 % would cost EUR 50), the fee of EUR 58 would not be recovered. However, the general opinion is that it is an important measure that should be continued as it is considered to be a good practice.

The measure scores high in terms of visibility the content and delivery to the target group in the sense that the objectives of the scheme are very clear while the target groups are somewhat vast consisting of companies, and self-employed individuals that have an interest in self-employed work.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

#### *Low price and the need for standardisation*

The main success factor can be attributed to the fact that the scheme is offered at a relatively low price of EUR 58 per annum. This is only possible because the MSA is a non-profit making organisation. However, apart from the price, as explained above,

standards are becoming a must for those SMEs and craft enterprises which are seeking to tap foreign markets or those that are bidding for Government or EU tenders.

#### *Focus on smaller firms*

Although the scheme is available for all enterprises, the main targets are smaller firms. The latter may normally find standardisation fees as an additional burden. This scheme aims to encourage standardisation at a relatively low cost.

#### *Illegal distribution of standards*

The main factor that has inhibited certain enterprises to enrol to this scheme is that sometimes they manage to obtain a copy of a particular standard for free, instead of purchasing the original one. With Malta being a small country, having plenty of informal networks, this distribution of information becomes easier. For instance on certain occasions, if a Government tender stipulates that the product or service provided has to meet a particular standard, instead of purchasing the standard from the MSA, operators seek to obtain an illegal copy from someone who already owns this standard.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

We believe that such a practice is transferable and could be implemented in a number of countries, particularly in those where standardisation fees are relatively high. Of course some variants of this measure could be implemented, to suit the particular needs of each country. For instance, it could be that in some countries, certain industries are failing to adopt certain standards more than others. Hence rather than implementing a holistic scheme, like the one for Malta, other countries could implement tailor-made schemes for specific industries.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

Information was obtained from <http://www.msa.org.mt/standards/users.htm> and by consulting the Director of MSA.

## 6.13 Netherlands - Project Awareness

Nederlands Normalisatie Instituut (NEN)  
Dutch Standards institute  
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Tel: +31 15 26 90 390, Fax: +31 15 26 90 190  
info@nen.nl, <http://www.nen.nl>

### *A. Background*

At the end of the 1980's, beginning of the 1990's the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs began to take the needs of the SMEs and the opportunities of standardisation and standards seriously into account.

This led to the following basic policy documents

- Standards, certification and open borders 1994
- The standard is international 2000.

These two documents gave a stimulus to various research studies to improve the involvement of SMEs in the process of standardisation in the Netherlands.

These studies were - amongst others - undertaken by the Netherlands Standards institute (NEN) and were supported by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs.

NEN aims at supporting the interest of the national stakeholders. Apart from supporting SMEs in standardisation issues, NEN also produces and sells standards. Additionally, consultancy in the field of standardisation is a work field of NEN. In total there are 3 800 enterprises registered with NEN, of which 1 536 are SMEs. The research and publications of NEN focussed primarily on:

- The knowledge of SMEs of technical standards and the way to deal with them;
- The value of standards and standardisation for SMEs;
- The co-operation with Chambers of Commerce in order to improve the information of SMEs;
- Interviewing management of SMEs, which are already familiar with standardisation and standards in order to inform the ones that are not involved.

These efforts had in common that they tried to overcome the barrier of lack of awareness by SMEs of standardisation and the existence of standards.

Recommendations and conclusions of such research and publications of NEN contributed to the launching of the Dutch Standardisation Awareness Project 2002-2004 (Project Kenbaarheid).

### *B. General description*

The Awareness Project was a fairly large project (EUR 3 million for two years). The project was preceded by a bottleneck analysis of which - with regard to SMEs - the most important points were:

- Investments have to be done before one can harvest the profits (costs before benefits).
- The problem how to inform management about the significance of participation in standards development.
- The problem of financing participation in standards development.
- The problem of communication.
- The problem of time (standardisation can be time consuming).
- The problem finding the right standards.
- The problem of understanding the content of standards, etc.

These bottlenecks were clustered in various themes: communication, carefulness, impact, performance and financing.

On the basis of these bottlenecks and resulting themes, the following sub-projects were defined:

- 1 NEN Portal making information more easily available (especially for SMEs);
- 2 The role of Dutch government in standardisation (different roles, all supporting the idea that Dutch government is an interested party with corresponding responsibilities);
- 3 The financing of standardisation (perhaps how to increase the number of SMEs involved, e.g.. by government financing);
- 4 Information for SMEs (based on earlier research co-operation with trade organisations, special information campaigns, etc.);
- 5 Strengthening the consultancy function of NEN (special consultancy projects for SMEs);
- 6 Consumer organisations in standardisation (research on *how to increase involvement of consumer organisations*);
- 7 Improvement of formal standardisation (solving bottlenecks of weak parties by means of innovative measurements in the standardisation process);
- 8 Standards and education (investment in future standards users);
- 9 Evaluation of investments in standardisation (profits of standardisation and standards);
- 10 The use of industrial associations in standardisation (possibility of trade organisations acting as secretariats).

All the projects were evaluated in 'Analysis of the Dutch Awareness Project (2004)'. Sub-projects 1, 4 and 9 were of special importance to SMEs, whereas sub-projects 2, 3 and 8 were of lesser importance. So the three most important sub-projects for SMEs are:

- 1 Making standards and information about standards easily available to SMEs.
- 4 Making special products available to SMEs (information meeting, special products as CD-ROMs).
- 9 Making SMEs aware of the additional value of standardisation. Standardisation as an instrument for business improvement.

These three projects are considered as good practices because efforts lead to results and are reproducible.

As was said before that the bottlenecks were roughly:

- How to inform management about the significance of participation in standards development (detailed answers and possibilities in project 9).
- How to finance participation in standards development (detailed possibilities to make standardisation more available to SMEs by identifying new and alternative ways of financing).
- How to communicate (the portal makes all information easily available), the problem finding the right standards (also portal possibilities), the problem of understanding the content of standards (by making alternative information products, etc.).

The main objective of the awareness project is to increase the knowledge of SMEs of standardisation and to increase the number of SMEs involved.

Earlier studies concluded that the best way to increase awareness by SMEs is to co-operate with industrial-organisations and other business organisations and that the best way to reach SMEs is to give regional presentations and to develop various informative publications and other products. This line of research and activity was followed in the 4<sup>th</sup> project 'Information for SMEs'. In this project co-operation was sought with the *MKB Nederland* (the Dutch SME Association), *Syntens* (an innovation network for enterprise initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs) and the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to the increased co-operation with trade organisations and other business organisations the renewal of the NEN website has also been seen as an important measure to make the information for the various target groups of NEN, especially for SMEs, available. In the Awareness Project it was decided to develop a portal not only with general information about standardisation but also with specific information about standards and standard development projects (information about the various industrial sectors, together with the standards development committees available on [www.nen.nl](http://www.nen.nl)).

Since the renewal the website attracts more visitors<sup>1</sup>, NEN continues to renew and professionalize the website and its content.

The measure targeted about 300 SMEs in different sectors. The total costs of the Awareness Project were about EUR 3 million, financed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (60 %) and NEN together with other parties (40 %).

The project was guided by a platform of Dutch interested parties and it consisted (in addition to NEN) of Dutch employers organisations, trade union, consumers' association, the Dutch SME Association and the Dutch pressure group for producers and users of standards<sup>2</sup>.

Participants in the project did not pay a fee, but contributed nonetheless by supplying their knowledge and time. Some of the projects were even executed by them.

### *C. Results*

The project started in 2002 and ended in 2004. The Awareness Project was meant as a stimulus. Continuation - based on the various recommendations - will take place in forthcoming years. PR issues are currently under discussion. Communication was one of the themes tackled with the measure. For instance the results of sub-project 9 have to be made available in clear - non-scientific - language to SMEs.

Practically, the project resulted in a renewed website ([www.nen.nl](http://www.nen.nl)), which is more easily accessible for SMEs. In addition the co-operation with trade organisations and other business organisations still exists.

Short-term effects of the project were an increased awareness of standardisation and standards by SMEs and an increased involvement of representatives in the standards making process.

<sup>1</sup> Social impact in which the total number of hits is counted is still rising.

<sup>2</sup> Normalisatie Kringen Nederland, see [www.nkn.nl](http://www.nkn.nl). NKN is a member of IFAN, the International Federation of Standards Users, see: <http://www.ifan.org>

Barriers that the project overcame were a lack of public available information on standardisation and a lack of involvement of stakeholders in the standard making process. In addition communication was improved. Several recommendations concerning the thoroughness of the standards making process were addressed in the quality system of NEN, the research into the impact of standards in the public context and using standards as a means for self-regulation resulted in clear recommendations for the national government to address. The overall performance was optimized and finally the research into the financing of standards development gave insight into innovative means of dealing with this issue.

The main objectives have been, to a large extent, realized. The measure scores high in terms of visibility, content and delivery to the target group. NEN is very positive about the project and feels that it should be continued.

The conclusion of the evaluation study was also positive<sup>1</sup>. It resulted in several recommendations to all the parties that were involved in the platform (listed above). The platform presented their recommendations to the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs and at the time of writing - summer 2006 - a special working group - which consist of members of the Dutch interdepartmental committee for standardisation and certification - is preparing a new policy with regard to standardisation.

Recommendations which are made to Dutch government are:

- Dutch government has to develop a univocal vision on standardisation.
- It needs to investigate whether or not the financial support by the Dutch government is sufficient.
- It needs to prepare a survey on what standards will be used in legislation,
- It needs to support 'the weaker parties'.
- It needs to broaden the availability of standards with a connection to legislation.

The evaluation study was positive about the role NEN played in the project awareness. NEN used the results of project awareness to improve its advice, information and education to SMEs in the field of standardisation. Several recommendations were made: NEN has to develop its role in giving advice, information and education to SMEs even further. To improve the services of NEN it can use the insights, instruments and recommendations of project awareness. Finally, it is important that NEN knows its responsibilities in the field of providing information to SMEs.

For industry the most important recommendation of the evaluation study was that it is necessary that its branch organisations should be actively involved in informing their members about standardisation and the impact of standardisation. Societal organisations such as consumers' associations need to intensify their co-operation with their sister organisations abroad in order to create more power. They need to professionalize and have to address national governments in order to get support and a better position.

<sup>1</sup> Dutch Standardisation Awareness Project, A study commissioned by the Awareness Platform, Meta-analysis, Susan van Klaveren en André Oostdijk. RVB Leiden 12 May 2004 (Available as PDF file at: <http://www.ifan.org>).

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

The above-mentioned recommendations are, to a greater or lesser extent, the determinants of success and bottlenecks. It is important that the Dutch government develops a clear vision on standardisation and on supporting the parties involved. NEN needs to concentrate better on informing SMEs in the Netherlands. Dutch SMEs need to be inspired to be less reluctant in mobilizing standardisation for their own use and benefit. The lack of professionalism of the societal organisations is also a bottleneck and even if they are professionally organised it still will be most difficult for them to participate due to a lack of funding.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The measure shows that the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs is able to take into account the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises. It can help to improve and increase the knowledge of SMEs of standardisation. It can also increase the number of SMEs actually involved in the process of standards making.

With regard to the transferability: this measure is transferable to other countries, which are dealing with the same problems when involving SMEs in standardisation and standards, because no specific country elements are involved.

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## 6.14 Norway - Network forums

Eforum I Standard Norge

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### *A. Background*

Eforum I Standard Norge was established on June 17. 1998. There were 50 persons from 37 enterprises and organisations participating in Eforum, representing a cross section of leading e-businesses throughout the country. There are several challenges in the E-business branch, that need mutual solutions such as creating infrastructure, building markets and assuring confidence and reliability in terms of e-commerce. Norway represents a rather small market, and it is an obvious advantage to work together through Eforum and thus being better equipped to cope with international competition. This overcomes possible leaks of knowledge and competence as a result of not collaborating or being sufficiently pro-active. It is also a goal of Eforum to assist Norwegian companies in their approach to international market entries.

Eforum I Standard Norge is a network of competence related to the national standards body. The objective of the organisation is to spread know-how about e-business, transferring knowledge about existing standards and where they are being used and performed. Eforum I Standard Norge plays a part in the decision on standardisation projects that will be executed and in which way follow-up and evaluations are carried out following the demand of the enterprises.

Eforum I Standard Norge helps SMEs to see the importance of standardisation, to understand the standardisation process and to overcome barriers for participation such as lack of resources. In total 130 enterprises are registered with Eforum I Standard Norge, 110 of these enterprises are SMEs

The scope of activities mainly relates to issues of electronic data exchange: e-government, e-business and e-society.

The measure 'network forum' has been developed mainly to reveal the need for standardisation. Other important goals of the measure are to increase the awareness about the importance of standardisation, provide information on standardisation and to increase the use of standards. The measure was introduced in 1999 and is an ongoing measure.

### *B. General description*

During 2006 the 4 Network forums will conduct a total of 14 trainings and seminars available for members of the network forums. The members get online access to documents that are exclusive for them. Each forum has its own forum website. The websites of these forums provide information about themes of interest and bring people together who are concerned about the same themes. Existing problems such as invoicing, electronic ID, etc. can be solved either by developing new standards or by using existing ones. The participants gain knowledge through a website, support meetings and seminars on standardisation and meet people and gain new relations with whom they share experiences and build networks. In this way it is possible for SMEs to learn from each other, since SMEs often do not have the resources to participate in developing new standards. The network is a communication platform, where experts and practitioners

come together to listen and to talk. The know-how exists among different enterprises that have experience in working with standards, as well as standardisation experts.

The forums are mainly set-up for associated enterprises (mainly SMEs) in the Information Technology sector. The size of the networks differs between different networks and depends on the theme. The 4 different networks defined by and divided into themes are Electronic ID, E-business, Radio Frequency Identification, Purchase & Sales. One network for example consists of 65 or more members. The total E-forum network, all 4 of them together, consists of about 300 to 400 members. The measure is focused on both the development of new standards and using existing standards.

Several tools are used in the framework of this measure, such as a website, support meetings and seminars on standardisation, but also consultancy and online publications. The costs of these activities are financed by the participants and users. The participants pay a membership fee to gain access to the network forum. The annual company fee is EUR 187 for one person and EUR 155 Euro for the second, etc. Students pay an annual rate of EUR 50. A half-day seminar costs EUR 150, a so called thematic Breakfast EUR 45 and every forum costs EUR 125. Members pay EUR 95 an hour for online and personal consultancy. Eforum organises the workshops and seminars for their members at special prices, and offers a range of publications, documents and reports for free and for sale.

### *C. Results*

Eforum I Standard Norge is of the opinion that the network forums are effective. The measure scores high in terms of visibility, content and delivery to target groups. The network forum has led to the start up of new standardisation processes, as well as increased knowledge of SMEs on existing standards. Short term effects of the measure are higher interest in standardisation projects and an increased interest of SMEs in using standards. The most important barriers that this measure has overcome are the conflict of interest between private and official organisations, between enterprises and regulating bodies and between companies operating in the same branch. E-forum builds bridges and brings people together regardless of whether they are private, official or competitors. Together they learn from each other and discover the importance of knowledge transfer. As the objectives are met to a large extent and one feels that the costs and benefits are more or less equal, the measure should be continued. Unfortunately the results of this measure are not analysed in an evaluation study.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

The actual framework setting of themes corresponding with the interests of the users is of great importance. Generating practical information for operational and strategic business planning. Developing added values. The bottleneck is that it is difficult to reach target groups with relevant information, to raise awareness and create involvement.

### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The idea about an e-business competence network is probably not a Norwegian invention, but it proves to be valuable for the members and business partners of the members in Norway. It is rather hard to believe that such a network would not work nor deliver results in another setting, in another branch or in a different country. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2005 the Eforum foundation was merged into Standard Norge. Due to the increasing importance of e-business in the Norwegian modern society, this

merger between two organisations; both dealing with competence in organised networks seems reasonable and effective in terms of approaching the vision of 'Norway; the e-country'.

*F. Literature and other references*

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## 6.15 Poland - Training and Seminars 'Welding'

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### *A. Background*

The Institute of Welding is a national organisational unit, established under the aegis of Regulation (December 11th, 1951) of the Minister of Heavy Industry. Its relevant supervising authority is the Minister of Economic Affairs. Instytut Spawalnictwa is an authorized national body for qualification of welding personnel and an authorized national body for company certification. Besides, the Institute is accredited in the 'Polish Centre for Accreditation' (PCA) for certification of welding products (conformity assessment with national, international and European norms and regulations), welding and non-destructive testing personnel and quality management systems. The Institute cooperates with both Polish and international organisations in drafting and approving welding standards as well as contributing to the development of standards by translating them into Polish and adjusting them to the Polish situation. The unit also runs the Standard Information Point, which offers information on all approved standards in Poland, on the basis of agreement with the Polish Committee for Standardisation. In addition the Instytut Spawalnictwa runs a Welding Information Data Bank, providing information on companies, materials, devices, computer programmes, certification, training and services in the field of welding. In December 2002 within the European Fifth Framework Programme (5fp)<sup>1</sup>, the Centre of Excellence project - 'Polish Welding Centre of Excellence' (INSPAW) was accepted. The main task of the INSPAW project was the creation and organisation of proper working structures in the Institute in order to enable its participation in European and Polish projects together with its national and foreign partners.

Activities run by the Institute are compliant with main programmes, legal acts or other regulations governing standardisation issues in Poland (e.g. Act on normalization, September 12th, 2002). The training and seminars that the Institute provide are in line with the concept of lifelong learning. Promotion and development of Life Long Learning is among the strategic priorities of the Polish main governmental programmes and strategies<sup>2</sup>. The documents raise the importance of lifelong learning in sustaining a high rate of economic growth, improving competitiveness and social cohesion. Achievement of the goals should be assisted by development and implementation of system solutions increasing quality and effectiveness of learning process e.g. education and examining standards, vocational qualifications standards, validation and certification of qualifications, adjusting training programmes to labour market needs.

The Institute has a long-term tradition (since 1945) for the provision of training courses in the field of welding. As a result of a transformation process, which leads to improvement of technological advancement of production companies, stronger co-

<sup>1</sup> <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp5/about.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. National Development Plans, National Strategy of Increasing Employment and Human Resources Development, National Reforms Program Towards Realization of the Lisbon Strategy in years 2005-2008, etc..

operation with foreign industries, and moving laboratories and R&D offices directly to enterprises, the previous character of performance of the Institute was modified and adjusted to the new market needs. This approach was supported by development of specialized units e.g. Marketing Department, Training and Welding Supervision Centre or Certification Centre. In 1995 the Instytut Spawalnictwa started by providing training and organizing seminars, which directly addressed the needs of companies operating in the market economy. Educational activities provided by the Institute are still being developed and presently it is the leading institution in the area of continual education of welding staff in Poland.

The general objective of the Institute is the development of knowledge and know-how in the field of welding technologies and the provision of assistance to industry in order to ensure high quality and competitiveness of welded products in both Polish and foreign markets. Within the Welding Institute there are organized secretariats of 3 technical committees of PKN (Polish Committee for Standardisation). These three technical committees for standardisation are 'Welding Procedures', 'Quality in Welding' and 'Welding Equipment'.

The Welding Institute is active for enterprises including craft and SMEs, in the field of standards in the welding industry as well as in research and providing information on materials and specialist welding devices used in the welding processes. It is also a sole stakeholder of Zakład Budowy Urządzeń Spawalniczych (Welding Devices Building Plant) Ltd., which specializes in the development and production of welding devices and welding materials and in the application of modern welding technologies to industry. This enables the Institute to conduct research work in a full cycle, i.e. research, development and implementation.

#### *B. General description*

Responding to the needs of enterprises, the Instytut Spawalnictwa offers various training to welding personnel of all levels of production, supervision and control of welding processes and products. In addition the unit authorizes other training centres and approves welding training courses in the authorized centres.

Training courses are provided according to programmes of the International Institute of Welding (IWW), European Welding Federation (EWF) and according to those developed by the Institute (the unit has an authorization of the EWF and IWW and an accreditation of PCA). This assures that training courses are compliant with the principles approved in the European Community and that knowledge and qualifications gained by the participants are in accordance with the binding standards in the field of welding.

As a result of the training, knowledge of particular welding standards is being transferred to enterprises represented by the participants of the training courses. Moreover issues regarding standardisation in the field of welding are also presented during seminars organized by the Institute, e.g. usually in spring, they organize a seminar on the latest news in the field of welding standards. Measures taken by the Institute of Welding provide participants with very concrete information about existing standards and an introduction of new ones. There is more focus on existing standards rather than on the importance of standardisation process as a whole.

The training courses and seminars also provide an opportunity to get some advice related to interpretation and implementation of standards. As a result the beneficiaries of

these measures improve their capacity related to proper implementation of existing standards and are better prepared for adjustment to the new regulations in this field.

The knowledge and competencies in the area of welding standards, gained by the beneficiaries of the measures increases competitiveness of their companies. In production, which uses welding processes, it is very important to have documents proving knowledge, which are issued by units authorized and recognized in Poland and in other European Countries. This is of great importance, especially when implementing quality management systems according to ISO 9001:2000 norms or EN 729 series of norms, as well as where strengthening the competitive position on foreign and national markets is concerned.

The main objective of this measures is providing SMEs with news in the field of normalization, interpretation of standards and support in conformity assessment of products (welding equipment, welding materials and welded constructions) according to the harmonized standards (national, international, and European norms and regulations, also in the field of energy efficiency).

The Institute organizes the training courses and seminars mainly individually and does not co-operate with other parties in this area. The measures are also a good opportunity for discussing new standards with the participants. Moreover information about the welding standards is disseminated through training and seminar materials (which can be ordered by all interested parties) as well as other publications and bulletin issued by the Institute of Welding (the detailed lists of available publications is presented on their website). These printed materials provide information about e.g. welding industry, normalization, welding devices, welding materials, as well as trainings, seminars and other services offered by the Institute.

The training and seminars are primarily set up for the representatives of SME and craft enterprises in the welding industry, industries that use welding in their production activities as well as welding equipment producers. The Welding Information Data Bank includes, a systematically updated, address list of companies operating in the widely understood welding industry. About 70 % of participants of the measure are representatives of SMEs and craft enterprises and the remaining 30 % are representatives of large companies.

The costs of these measures are financed mainly by the fees of the participants and usually no public funding is involved. However, on the basis of a contract signed at the end of 2005 with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, the Institute is granted ESF co-financing for a few training modules and its beneficiaries only have to pay a partial contribution to the costs of training (the level of contributions vary depending on the status of companies that they represent). The costs of the training course usually vary from c.a. EUR 150 up to c.a. EUR 2 200, depending on the theme and its duration, while the cost of participation in a one day seminar is about 110 euro. Detailed information, about available training courses, seminars planned for each year and terms of participation, are available at the website of the Institute.

### *C. Results*

Participation in training and seminars results in improving competences within the welding industry and promotion of European standardisation.

The Instytut Spawalnictwa indicates that the measure is effective and important. The effectiveness is assured by the expertise of their staff and access to the latest informa-

tion in the field of standardisation, enabled by direct contact with secretariats of the 3 Technical Committees of PKN, run by the unit. Moreover, due to the fact that over 70 % of members of the Committees are representatives of industrial sectors, they have good knowledge on the actual needs of SMEs and craft organisations.

The objectives of the measure have been fully realized and the costs are really small compared to the benefits. Many SMEs and craft enterprises are interested in the training that is provided. Each year, training courses provided by the Institute are attended by about 1 300 people, while the number of participants of seminars accounts for about 1 000 people. It is estimated that about 200 to 300 different companies (mainly SMEs and craft enterprises/organisations) are represented each year by participants of the training courses and seminars provided by the Institute of Welding. Some trainings or seminars are even repeated e.g. 3-4 times because of the large number of companies that are willing to participate.

The effectiveness and the quality of the training courses or seminars are also measured by questionnaires that are filled in by participants after its completion. The training or seminars enlarge the knowledge of participants on current requirements in the field of welding.

The measure overcomes three main barriers:

- 1 Lack of theoretical and practical knowledge on existing or new standards in the field of welding,
- 2 Limited ability to implement standards in the companies,
- 3 Decreasing competitiveness of companies, which do not implement quality management systems and do not have nationally and European-widely recognized documents certifying their competences.

The measure thus scores high in terms of visibility and very high in terms of content and delivery to target group. Due to the leading position of the Instytut Spawalnictwa the measures taken and diplomas, certificates or authorizations issued by them are widely recognized within the potential group of its beneficiaries. The visibility of the measure is additionally strengthened by information provided in relevant sector-specific web portals, magazines, or participation in trade fairs and conferences of the welding industry.

Long-term experience of R&D activities, development of training programmes or co-operation with national and international R&D units as well as accreditation of PCA and authorizations of EWF and IIW, assure a very high quality content of training and seminars provided by the unit. Similarly, good knowledge on the potential target group, access to a database of companies and leading position in provision of trainings in the field of welding industry enables the Institute to reach the target group effectively. The beneficiaries of the measures are mainly those enterprises, which are active in continual improving knowledge on standardisation.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Success of the measure is determined mainly by the leading position and high competences of the unit in providing training and seminars. Moreover the Institute is the only institution in Poland authorized to confer European diplomas (EWF) and international diplomas (IIW) - only one institution in each country is entitled to confer diplomas of EWF and IWW. This gives the unit a comparative advantage in reaching those clients that want to operate on foreign markets. Additionally, companies have a very limited choice and simply have to adjust to new standards in order to improve or at least maintain their market position - this situation stimulates the needs for services provided by the unit.

The main bottlenecks of the measure are the frequent changes obligatory standards and no period of transition in which former standards should be withdrawn. In the majority of Member States the transition time is about half a year, while in Poland the PKN withdraws expired standards, with the date of issuance of new ones. This situation brings a continual necessity to monitor carefully standardisation works in order to prepare for the introduction of new norms by PKN. Companies are interested not only in obtaining information on currently binding standards but also expect to get information on envisaged changes in norms that are planned for the near future. No period of transition also causes a problem with a necessity to make frequent modifications to training programmes and training materials - this raises the costs of the actions.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The case of the Institute of Welding is a good example of an effective and competent measure fostering implementation of welding standards within companies. Assistance offered to the beneficiaries of the measure has a comprehensive character and ranges from increasing accessibility of information on welding norms, direct education, up to certification. Training and seminars are based upon the Institute's expertise in the field of welding standards, which assures high quality of the services. This example shows that constant development of competencies e.g. establishing the Centre of Excellence or obtaining national and international authorizations can help to gain a leading position.

Although the measure is financed by its beneficiaries, the Institute is active in increasing availability of the assistance to enterprises e.g. by obtaining ESF co-financing of training courses, distribution of training and seminar materials and running Standard Information Point.

In practice, the Institute does not have strong competition in Poland which might offer a comparable scope and quality of services to companies. This situation is a favourable condition for development and success of the measure. Moreover frequent changes to binding standards as well as practically no transition period for withdrawal of expired standards, result in the fact that there is high and almost continuous demand for training and seminars offered by the unit. This should be stressed that the target group of the measure is active in gaining information on standards. Also very important is that more and more companies are aware of and clearly express their information needs.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- Phone conversation with representative of; Instytut Spawalnictwa.
- Phone conversation with a contact person in the major Polish web-service of welding industry 'www.spawalnictwo.pl'.
- Website of the Institute of Welding, [http:// www.is.gliwice.pl](http://www.is.gliwice.pl).
- Website of the Polish Normalisation Committee, <http://www.pkn.pl>.
- Dorota Kaczy ska 'wiat norm nie jest jednolity' ('World of norms is not uniform'), article in the 'Puls Biznesu' magazine, May 31st, 2005.



## 6.16 Poland - Training Environmental Standards

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### *A. Background*

Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego (Polish Craft Association) is a national professional association for craft enterprises and small entrepreneurs (companies up to 50 employees) with about 7000 members. ZRP has a long tradition reaching back to 1933 (in years 1933-1972 it performed as the Association of Craft Chambers, while in years 1973-1989 as the Central Craft Association).

The main objective of ZRP is the provision of comprehensive assistance to associated organisations in the achievement of their statutory tasks, development of economic, socio-professional and cultural activities, as well as representing the interests of these organisations in these areas both nationally and internationally. Moreover ZRP co-operates with public authorities and other partners in monitoring craft legislation, and analysing and developing draft regulations.

As a result of the activities taken by ZRP, assistance is provided regarding almost all aspects of running economic activities by craft and small enterprises. It focuses not only on entrepreneurship development and professional education, but also on such issues as social policy and environmental protection.

Special attention should be given to the professional education of crafts and small enterprises, which is among the priority activities of ZRP. According to the Polish legal regulations, the Association is authorised to carry out journeyman and master examinations and is obliged to develop standards (the minimum level of qualifications) for numerous professions (ZRP has developed such standards for about 108 professions). Educational activities are performed mainly by the provision of a wide selection of training and seminars but this is also accompanied by relevant publications, consultancy, etc. Apart from trainings aimed at obtaining journeyman and master qualification the ZRP also has relevant experience in the provision of environmental training. This segment of their performance was initiated in 1999, is still active and focuses more and more on environmental standards e.g. emission standards, or those which are related to the implementation of ISO 14001 norm or EMAS<sup>1</sup>. In general, the measure was developed as a response to the growing need for increasing awareness of craft and small enterprises on environmental aspects of running economic activities. It was also necessary to increase competences of craft organisations in order to better prepare them for the provision of information and consultancy services concerning environmental issues, to small craft enterprises.

### *B. General description*

The ZRP undertakes regular actions towards provision of environmental trainings and seminars. The actions are addressed both to representatives of craft organisations as well as craft enterprises. The general objective of the measure is to increase awareness among the target group about environmental standards, potential threats to the environment, legal regulations and their responsibility for the environment's condition.

<sup>1</sup> Eco- Management and Audit Scheme. This is a regulation of the European Union concerning environment management. Companies that want to obtain an EMAS registration will have to have their environment system verified and environmental report validated.

Since 1999 systematically new editions/series of training projects have been completed. The former editions were mainly oriented towards preparing employees of Craft Chambers for their future role as tutors within the Chamber. Tutors are specialists that can be addressed by craft companies with questions regarding environmental issues (including standards) and who actively disseminate the knowledge among craft enterprises through educational activities. The former series of training courses were mainly focused on general issues regarding administrative and legal aspects of environmental protection, and environmental management.

The new series of training are usually 2 years long and more directly address the concept of environmental standards. The new series of training projects ZRP is or has been involved in are briefly described below.

In years 2001-2002 ZRP implemented a project 'Competitiveness of Polish craft in the field of environmental standards'. The format of the project was the organisation of 20 one-day training courses in selected Craft Chambers for owners of craft enterprises. The trainings were organised in different country regions and depending on the place, they were addressed to craftsmen representing different industries characteristic of the particular region, e.g.: carpentry, automotive, food, electro mechanic, metal, construction, tanning industries. The training courses were coordinated by the tutors<sup>1</sup>. The training courses were focused on: Polish and EU environmental standards in production and services, environmental management systems in enterprises, eco-business elements, financing environmental protection, etc. The measure reached 523 people in total, mainly owners of craft enterprises from selected regions and other Chambers in Poland. The project was completed in co-operation with EKO-KONSULT company<sup>2</sup>, which provided experts to conduct the trainings. In addition the actions were accompanied by development and distribution of 'Small company and environment' bulletin. These bulletins have been distributed to about 8.000 craft companies. In order to complete the measure the ZRP applied for financial support from the government and as a result obtained a grant/co-financing from the Polish National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

The next project 'Improving competitiveness of Polish craft in the field of ecological standards' being a follow up to previous actions was completed in years 2003 and 2004. The measure was aimed at adjusting a significant group of small and medium-sized enterprises to continuously changing environmental standards by organising consultancy services. One of the main components of the project was training provided to so called 'leaders of ecological education' from craft organisations. The leaders are representatives of industries, guilds, examining commissions, who will, together with tutors, become a team of craft environmental experts.

15 one-day training courses for leaders were organised. About 500 people participated in these training courses. In addition a three-day training for a group of 40 tutors was organised in order to up-grade their competencies. The main role of tutors and leaders is mainstreaming ecological knowledge on standards among craftsmen by e.g.: development of data-bases, provision of training courses, developing organisational form of consultancy services, introducing environmental issues into professional training programmes, etc. Similarly to previous actions the knowledge was also disseminated by bulletins distributed to craft companies but there was a new educational publication

<sup>1</sup> This also included those tutors that already have been trained within previous projects.

<sup>2</sup> EKO-KONSULT is a consulting company specializing in environmental issues and training is one of their fields of activities.

developed. The project was co-financed by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

In 2005 ZRP launched another follow up project titled 'New instruments of environmental protection as a condition for competitiveness of small and medium craft enterprises'. Main goals of this project are: improving the knowledge of ecological education leaders and tutors on environmental management systems (which in practice are ISO 14001 and EMAS standards); increasing the number of craftsmen that have had ecological education; increasing availability of printed information for ecological education, etc. Within the project it is envisaged to organise among others a series of 10 seminars for ecological education leaders. The project is aimed at the popularisation of environmental management systems and initiating activities regarding implementation of new environmental protection instruments among entrepreneurs. It is envisaged that about 400 ecological education leaders in total will participate in these seminars. In each of the seminars about 35-45 leaders will participate. Another component of the project is the organisation of two, two-day seminars for the group of 40 tutors representing all Craft Chambers. This seminar also focuses on environmental management systems and on new instruments for environment protection. These seminars should better prepare tutors for effective performance of their tasks regarding provision of information and consultancy to craft enterprises. Moreover they should disseminate the knowledge at local meetings with entrepreneurs and employees of craft enterprises. In addition all of the above-described actions of this project include the development of training-information materials to be distributed to the target group. The project obtained co-financing of the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management and is completed with EKO-KONSULT as subcontractor.

In 2006 in Poland a national project 'National training programme in the field of environment protection' has been prepared which among others contains training modules related to environmental standards (ISO 14001 and EMAS). The project is contracted<sup>1</sup> by the 'Polish Agency for Enterprise Development' and envisages provision of trainings to over 14 000 representatives of various enterprises. It should be mentioned that the ZRP supports and co-operates with a consortium of companies ('ABC Poland Sp. z o.o.', „EKO-KONSULT Biuro Projektowo-Doradcze', „Fundacja Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju', „Uniwersytet Gdański') completing the project e.g. in activities regarding promotion of the project and recruitment of its participants.

The training projects run by ZRP provide quite detailed information on particular environmental standards and focus on existing ones.

One should note that ZRP is very active in promoting the need to increase awareness on the environmental standards within craft organisations and its members. Promotion of the concept is made not only by information materials, publications, or the Internet but also direct correspondence with the target group.

### *C. Results*

The training projects provided by ZRP can be seen as a significant step towards promotion and popularisation of environmental standards among Polish craft enterprises. It is very important that the projects support the process of Polish integration within the European Union. This integration implies meeting higher requirements and facing more strict obligations in the field of environment protection. In this context the projects completed by ZRP helped and facilitated Polish craft enterprises in adjusting to new

<sup>1</sup> The Agency cooperates with the consortium. ZRP has the role of Central Finance and Contract Unit.

economic conditions whereby environment protection is more important and meeting requirements in this field is more difficult.

The measure scores high in terms of its effectiveness and content. This is mainly due to a high quality of trainings/seminars that are provided by experts from EKO-KONSULT consulting company. These experts are specialised in environmental protection, including environmental standards.

Moreover the training projects not only focus at providing training directly to craftsmen but also and mainly to ecological education leaders and tutors. This approach has a multiplying effect, as beneficiaries of the training/seminars will disseminate the knowledge among much wider group of representatives of craft enterprises.

A good reference of the high effectiveness of the measure is the fact that the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management gradually granted co-financing for the completion of the series of follow up projects.

The consistent training policy, accompanied by publishing information materials, increased awareness on the standardisation process among a significant group of beneficiaries. In addition, as a result of the training projects, a core team of experts (leaders and tutors) have been developed within the craft structures, who promote knowledge of environmental standards among small and medium-sized craft companies.

The main barriers that are overcome by this measure are:

- Insufficient competencies of ZRP and Craft Chambers to provide craft enterprises with comprehensive assistance (consultancy) in the field of environmental standards;
- Little knowledge of environmental standards among representatives of craft enterprises;
- Lack of environmental standards experts specialised in craft ;
- Lack of available detailed information about environmental standards.

Actions taken hitherto by the ZRP in the field of environment protection, especially trainings with craft entrepreneurs proved that the needs of craft in this field are still significant and that awareness of requirements is still insufficient. Moreover the training showed that knowledge of Polish and EU obligatory regulations or rules of managing environment protection is also insufficient. This provides support for further development and continuation of the measure.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Success of the measure is largely determined by a consistent approach of ZRP to the completion of environmental training projects, including training methodology based on the concept of environmental education leaders and tutors. Moreover co-operation with the external experts of EKO-KONSULT specialising in environmental issues assures high quality of the content provided.

The organisational structure of ZRP enables easy contact with Craft Chambers, craft organisations and crafts enterprises. It thus provides favourable conditions for completing training projects and effective recruitment of training participants.

Another success factor is availability of financial support for completion of the measure; the grants provided the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The training projects run by the Polish Craft Association are a good example of initiatives that effectively promotes environmental standards among small and medium craft enterprises. It should be stressed that the Association is very active and at the same time very successful in obtaining external financial support for completion of its meas-

ures. It is also an example of actions that score high in terms of sustainability since it focuses on the development of a core team of experts (leaders and tutors) within the craft structures. These experts can be active in providing trainings or consultancy to craft enterprises for many years.

Dissemination of knowledge on environmental standards, prepared by the ZRP, has a comprehensive character and offers different forms of support: trainings/seminars, printed materials, publications, counselling, etc.

The concept of ZRP is of an organisational solution, which assures high effectiveness in reaching a large number of companies. This asset can be successfully used to popularize and promote environmental standards among the specific target groups (craft companies and SMEs). However, the asset should also be recognised as a great responsibility and a chance that should not be overlooked. Organisations like ZRP are very often the first (and in some cases probably the only) institutions to be addressed by craft companies with various questions/problems regarding different aspects of running economic activities e.g. environmental standards - the quality of assistance offered to them may determine their future competitiveness.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- Telephonic interview with an informant from ZRP.
- Report on activity of Polish Craft Association in cadence 2001-2005 (Sprawozdanie z działalności Związku Rzemiosła Polskiego z kadencji 2001-2005).
- [www.ekoszkolenia.pl](http://www.ekoszkolenia.pl).
- [www.zrp.pl](http://www.zrp.pl).

## 6.17 Portugal - Face-to-face contacts

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(National standards organisation)  
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ipq@mail.ipq.pt, <http://www.ipq.pt>

### *A. Background*

The Portuguese Standards System is a part of the National Quality System (the last changes to this system were introduced by Decree-Law no. 140/2004). Within this system IPQ (the Portuguese Institute for Quality) is the national standards body, thus coordinating all standardisation activities with the support of the sectoral standards bodies. The latter prepare a national standardisation programme, which is ratified by IPQ. IPQ has also the responsibility for approving and publishing the Portuguese Standards (NP), which are prepared by 'technical committees' (CT).

IPQ acts as the representative of Portugal in the following international organisations: European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), European Committee for Electro-technical Standardisation (CENELEC), International Electro-technical Commission (IEC), Conference General des Poids et Mesures (CGPM), International Organisation for Legal Metrology (OIML), and International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

There are about 200 technical committees in the Portuguese Standards System, of which more than half are currently active. Typically these technical committees have representatives of the interested parties, notably vertical industry associations, technology centres, public institutes and research centres. Most of these institutions are sectoral standards bodies, which are formally recognised by IPQ as possessing the qualifications and capabilities that enable them to provide the major contributions to the Portuguese standards.

Over 1 100 enterprises are registered with the IPQ of which 997 are SMEs and 11 are craft organisations. Co-operation with sectoral standardising organisations takes place through protocols with IPQ. These protocols set out (a) the requirements sectoral organisations have to fulfil in order to be recognised as official sectoral standards bodies and (b) governs the relations between IPQ and the sectoral standards bodies. These relations concern basically the responsibilities of the sectoral standards bodies in monitoring international standardisation activities, managing the above mentioned 'technical committees', maintain legal information and databases of these committees and representing the country in some specialised international organisations.

### *B. General description*

The 'Face-to-Face-contacts' approach, which started in 1996 and is still active, concerns phone contacts with people from SMEs, craft enterprises and organisations and large companies. Owners and managers of the enterprises and organisations are contacted by the Standardisation Department of IPQ as potential distributors of information. During these contacts the staff members of the Institute perform a kind of 'missionary selling' of the benefits for enterprises using standardisation, as well as the involvement of enterprises in the preparation of standards. The phone contacts are based on specific databases created by the department, according to possible audience of a particular 'campaign'. Typically these databases are based on the membership of relevant sectoral associations and the sectoral standards bodies.

This measure tries to overcome the usual lack of attention by the majority of SMEs as regard standardisation. 85 % of the contacts are targeted at SMEs, the number of craft enterprises targeted is negligible. Each month 'about a dozen' SMEs are contacted, so on an annual basis more than one hundred enterprises are contacted. Besides increasing the awareness about standardisation issues, the measure tries to disseminate information about standards and to increase participation in future development of standards.

The costs of the measure are about EUR 300 a month for communication costs and about EUR 1 000 for labour costs, which correspondent to 0.5 full time equivalents. So the overall annual budget is about EUR 15 000. These costs are borne by the Institute (IPQ is funded by the government budget, subsidies and own income, the latter being mostly derived from services rendered to third parties and the sale of publications, including the Portuguese Standards)<sup>1</sup>. The participants do not have to pay for the calls or further information. It is a general measure without a focus on a specific sector.

The measure is both focused on the development and use of new standards. When dealing with the development of new standards, contacts are made with sectoral industrial associations (which represent most SMEs in Portugal). When dealing with the use of existing standards the measure is directed at enterprises.

### *C. Results*

Instituto Portugues da Qualidade is of the opinion that the measure is both effective and important, and that the measure should be continued. The measure scores high in terms of visibility, content and delivery to target group. Though there are no formal objectives set for the measure, the manager of the standardisation department is of the opinion that the general purpose of the activity is realised and the costs are small compared to the benefits. The major barriers that the measure overcomes are unfamiliarity and ignorance about standardisation issues; enterprises get to know more about standardisation through this measure. Another advantage of the measure is that Instituto Portuguese da Qualidade has some personal contacts with people involved with standardisation issues in practice. This helps to gather structured information and helps with involvement in future development of standards.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

IPQ is currently being restructured. There are some uncertainties, as to whether this approach could be sustained in the future. The various departments of the Institute will be fragmented and merged into different government agencies. It is likely that the standardisation department will be merged into the Directorate-General of Enterprise, a unit of the Ministry of Economy. The main uncertainty stems from the fact that this measure is an isolated initiative of the current manager who is not sure whether his future boss will have different idiosyncrasies as regards this type of contacts.

<sup>1</sup> From the 2004 budget of IPQ (total income of about EUR 10 million):

Public funds (both government and EU subsidies)	13.5 %
Taxes and fines	36.1 %
Sale of publications	15.0 %
Provision of services	32.2 %
Other income	3.3 %

The main advantages of the direct phone contact approach are.

- It increases the motivation of contacted persons to participate in the events as most of them appreciate this kind of personalised contact;
- It is a better means to convey the message to the contacted person, allowing for a more comprehensive discussion and helping to identify obstructions and barriers and in persuading positive reactions to standardisation;
- It provides immediate feedback to the department facilitating the identification of the needs of the contacted persons and helping in developing the means to meet such needs;
- It offers an opportunity to create industry/regulator direct links.

There are two main disadvantages (when compared with mass communication mechanisms like circular mailing or e-mailing):

- It is a more expensive and time consuming;
- It increases the burden of the staff,

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

This should be viewed as a standard practice of getting in touch with a more interested audience to disseminate new training or information workshops concerning standardisation. As more than 100 enterprises are contacted each year this can be seen as a good and successful element of the measure.

It is a measure quite easy to plan and straightforward to implement. Thus it is fully transferable to other countries. Its success depends basically on 3 critical elements:

- (1) a good database with personalised contacts;
- (2) a thorough planning phase, including the preparation of write-ups of the message to put across, the arguments to put forward and other tick-off lists;
- (3) the creation of a feedback form to be filled-up during all phone contacts to annotate.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

Interviews with:

- Head of the Standardisation Department, PIQ.
- President of APFAC (a vertical industrial association member of a 'technical committee').
- Informant from the Technical Secretary of ANIPC (a vertical industrial association and a sectoral standards body).



## 6.18 Slovakia - Direct support

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### *A. Background*

The history of Slovak SMEs is quite short. The first private SMEs started at the beginning of the nineties as spin-offs from large privatised enterprises or newly established small companies. In 2006 they form an important part of Slovak economy. Therefore it was necessary to support their competitiveness during accession process and joining EU. Technical standards are important for increasing quality of production and its establishment on the European market. The support of SMEs is responsibility of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic (MoE SR).

MoE SR is active in the field of standardisation in several ways. The Ministry is involved in the legislation harmonization in Slovak Republic and Europe concerning entrepreneurship; it manages activities in the area of increasing competitiveness and diminishing regional disparities and provides direct and indirect support to SMEs. The Ministry has responsibility for SME and craft enterprises active in all industry sectors except food industry. The most important industry sectors for the Slovak economy are machinery, electrical engineering industry, foundry and chemical industry, and energy industry. The Ministry of Economy aims to support overall economic growth mainly by creating better conditions for foreign direct investments, tourism, research and development, and renewable energy resources.

The main body responsible for standards is the Slovak Office for Standardisation, Metrology and Testing (SOSMT). It co-operates with entrepreneurial associations in different sectors in developing specific standards and distributing information related to standardisation. The Ministry co-operates with partner institutions of employers, professional associations, chambers, entrepreneurial organisations and implementing agencies to support all these activities. Therefore SOSMT co-operates with associations and entrepreneurs in all aspects of standard creation while MoE SR has a supportive role in creation and using standards.

MoE SR is responsible for Operation Programme Industry and Services financed from structural funds. Priority 1 is the increase of industry and services competitiveness through the development of domestic growth potential. This priority includes measure 1.3: Support of entrepreneurship, innovations, and R&D where there is the Grant scheme supporting implementation of technical standards into industrial production and services.

The Ministry launched this programme in 2004. The scheme is still active. The aim of this programme is to provide 'de minimis'<sup>1</sup> state support from EU structural funds and the state budget focused on development and increased competitiveness of SMEs in manufacturing production, trade and services. This should be done through supporting

<sup>1</sup> 'Minimis' aid is aid granted by a European Member State to an enterprise where the amount of aid involved is small.

contacts with R&D institutions, implementing quality management systems and intensively using technical standards in production and services. Support of creation and using technical standards is an important part of the complex support programme for improving SMEs competitiveness.

#### *B. General description*

Direct support refers to a 'de minimis' grant scheme that is targeted at SMEs in industry and services sectors. These activities may be in the area of R&D support, quality management, IPR protection and introduction of technical standards in production and services. Enterprises may submit their project, and based on standard selection procedures enterprises can receive a grant. The grant covers 65 % of the eligible costs of activities related to standardisation. One part of this complex programme is focused on both the development of new standards and the implementation of existing standards.

This measure directly addresses the following issues:

- 1 Professional translation of European or international standards in Slovak and providing comments
- 2 Preparation of comments to drafts of European and international standards and preparation of requests for national variation for developing European standards
- 3 Membership in technical committees of national technical standard institute
- 4 Professional assessment of translation for implemented European or international standards (each translation of standards must be assessed for its correctness from the technical viewpoint)
- 5 Activities related to creation of standards for new technologies on European and international levels.

The grant scheme main focus is oriented towards increasing competitiveness by supporting activities leading to higher quality and added value of companies' production. Only in this way can new markets and higher sales be reached. Direct consequences would be higher employment and positive effects on GDP growth. Activities covered by the grant scheme are predominantly out of scope of loans provided by commercial banks; therefore grants can have an important impact on developing concerned areas.

Awareness raising activities related to the calls for projects for this programme has brought greater attention among entrepreneurs also to new standards, existing standards, standards in general and difficulties in compliance with standards. The information has been provided through publications, mass media (mainly economic newspapers, but also short announcements in radio and TV) and websites (<http://www.economy.gov.sk/> and <http://www.sea.gov.sk/>). In this way the awareness on standardisation and use of standards is increased.

In accordance with article 18(2.d) of the Council Regulation No. 1260/1999/EC the Slovak Government's Resolution No. 133/2002 appointed Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic as the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Program - Industry and Services. MoE SR designated Slovak Energy Agency (SEA) as an implementing agency for the measure 1.3: 'Support of entrepreneurship, innovations, and R&D'. It means that SEA is responsible for all administration concerning calls for proposal, collecting projects, organizing selection procedures, contracts with successful applicants, monitoring projects, payments for performed activities and final evaluation. There is no specific relation to energy sector.

Grants for this measure range from SKK 10 000 to 4 million (EUR 250 to EUR 100 000) and can cover only up to 65 % of eligible costs. Therefore, successful applicant must

provide more than 35 % of eligible costs. This programme is implemented by the Slovak Energy Agency. For the contracting period 2004-2006 there is available EUR 14.4 million for grants from public resources (European Regional Development Fund and the state budget). However, it depends on demand what part of this amount will be used for standards related projects.

#### *C. Results*

The Ministry of Economy is of the opinion that the direct support measure is quite effective, although the implementation of the measure has been very time demanding. Objectives have been realised to a large extent and the measure scores high in terms of content, visibility and delivery to target group mainly due to promotion activities related to calls for projects. The promotion also made the issue of standards more visible. The costs of the measure seem to be more or less adequate to the benefits. By addressing the problem of 'a lack of financial resources', this measure helps by increasing the competitiveness of SMEs that can have positive effects in long-run on the economic power of Slovakia, growth in GDP and growth in living standards.

For the first call launched in 2004 with the deadline on August 31, 2004, there were 15 projects related to standards awarded. These projects concerned mainly using European standards in development of very specific products. In some cases it could lead also to the development of new standards. Later calls have not been evaluated yet.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

The measure of the programme related to standards improves access of Slovak entrepreneurs to the full range of European standards and helps to overcome the hurdle of the language barrier. Moreover it also allows entrepreneurs to participate directly in the process of standards development.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The contribution of this measure is to support using standards and also to help to participate in their development and creation. This is very general and can be used in other countries. It provides financial resources for company activities that are not directly related to production but are necessary for its quality and competitiveness.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- <http://www.economy.gov.sk/> - the website of the Ministry of Economy.
- [http://www.sea.gov.sk/strukturalne\\_fondy/subory/schema\\_dm\\_13.pdf](http://www.sea.gov.sk/strukturalne_fondy/subory/schema_dm_13.pdf).
- [http://www.sea.gov.sk/strukturalne\\_fondy/rady/13\\_dm.pdf](http://www.sea.gov.sk/strukturalne_fondy/rady/13_dm.pdf).

## 6.19 Slovenia - Seminar and workshop

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### *A. Background*

OZS is a supporting organisation for implementing the goals of Ministry of Economy, e.g. accelerating growth of SMEs and crafts, helping to solve problems. It is financed only through membership fees and does not receive any government funding. OZS is one of the organisations, which also contributes suggestions to government.

OZS is a national organisation that is looking after the interests of small and craft enterprises in civil engineering, construction, electronics, business and personal services (e.g. opticians, hair-dresser, etc.). OZS has 62 regional offices. There are 48 000 enterprises registered with the OZS, of which 83 % are SMEs and 67 % craft enterprises. OZS provides its members among others with advisory services e.g. bookkeeping and accounting services and organising training seminars. The OZS also performs certain public authorisations like issuing of craft permits, registration of craft enterprises and supervising craftsmen exams. The general objective of OZS in the field of standardisation is to inform members about (new) technical legislation and standards for particular activities. OZS points out the benefits of using the standards to small firms.

The Slovenian Institute for Standardisation (SIST) is the national standards body of Slovenia. The SIST is an important source of information for OZS. Other sources of information for OZS are NORMAPME (The European Office of Crafts, Trades and SMEs for Standardisation) and the web pages of other standards institutes, both national and European, such as BSI, DIN, CEN and CENELEC.

OZS started in 2003 by organising seminars and workshops because there was interest from SMEs and crafts in standardisation. OZS was at that time also included in the project Phare Business Support Programme (BSP) II of UEAPME. UEAPME's BSP II project provided help to Small Enterprises and SMEs organisations in the CEECs countries to familiarise themselves with the community acquis that would regulate their markets once these countries join the EU. UEAPME's BSP II project brings together a unique consortium of 24 SME associations from the new Member States, the EU-15 and the Candidate Countries, including Slovenia, whereby the Slovenian Partner is OZS. The aim of this project is thus to strengthen the SME organisations in candidate countries or new Member States and also to provide information and raise awareness in the fields of standardisation, certification, quality management, safety at work, environment, social affairs and employment.

OZS also followed examples in EU, where Chambers of craft were already performing such seminars and workshops.

### *B. General description*

OZS organises seminars/workshops mainly for SME and craft enterprises. During these seminars/workshops, information is provided on existing national and European standards that have to be met and how these standards may be implemented. Generally the seminars/workshops cover the standard of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. When a standard

concerns a particular sector of industry, a separate seminar/workshop is held for that sector.

The benefits of these seminars/workshops are the increase in awareness on standardisation and the increase in the use of standards.

SME and craft enterprises may have personal contact with a special advisor in a particular area. The advisor helps with the implementation of standards, advises on conformity, assessment of products and helps with the preparation of the required technical documentation.

The parties that are involved in the seminars/workshops are OZS, with an organiser/project leader and secretaries on particular sectors, entrepreneurs and external institutions like the national standards body. The entrepreneurs participate in the seminars and discuss their problems and needs. The national standards body provides information to OZS, which provides the seminars. If the participants, after the seminar, are interested in the introduction of a specific standard, all further information is available at the national standards body which provides additional services (e.g. all standards are available there, help at standard's implementation), which are not provided by OZS.

Other activities that have been done in the framework of this measure are the provision of information on the seminars/workshops through the website ([www.ozs.si](http://www.ozs.si)) and mass media like monthly review 'Obrtnik' (craftsman) and its addition 'Svetovalec' (adviser), issued by OZS; and local TV 'PIKA'.

The costs of this measure amount to EUR 25037 in 2005. It is an annual budget of execution of all workshops and seminars, including material expenses and salaries of lecturers and advisers. These costs are financed from obligatory OZS membership fees<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, enterprises do not have to pay separately to participate in the seminars.

### *C. Results*

According to OZS the measure is effective. Objectives have been realised to a large extent and costs are really small compared to the benefits. There is a greater interest, understanding and use of standardisation. The measure scores high in terms of content and delivery to target group but low on visibility. Participants were satisfied with the contents of seminars and with the execution, especially on areas of standardisation by other organisations. Visibility was estimated as low, because only a small proportion of all members participated at seminars (there are approximately 50 000 members of OZS, but only 1 500 participated at seminars).

Through this measure entrepreneurs are supported. Entrepreneurs often do not have a lot of time to be involved in standardisation. They have to take general and sector specific standards into account. For them it is difficult and time consuming to select information that is of interest to them. Other barriers that are overcome:

- Not enough IT equipment in enterprises, by this is meant that small enterprises do not use IT equipment continuously, e.g. e-mails and internet, but only occasionally; Thus small enterprises are better reached through a seminar/workshop than through an e-mail or a website.

<sup>1</sup> For some time there has been some additional finance from the PHARE programme.

- National institution does not have enough interest in the protection of interests of SMEs compared to large companies. SMEs are special, but are not treated that way. Additionally, SMEs often do not have large budgets for standards implementation and suffer from human resource restrictions.
- Too low education level. Crafts are often specialised and possess particular knowledge, but lack knowledge about legislation, standardisation, market, and new ways of management missing. Craftsmen are, on average, older and with lower educational level.

Yearly, about 9 seminars/workshops are given and about 100 individual advice discussions. The number of enterprises that have participated in the seminars/workshops is 1 500. Indirectly about 10 000 enterprises and crafts, have visited website (<http://www.ozs.si/>) or/and read monthly magazine 'Obrtnik', issued by OZS.

OZS is issuing a short questionnaire at every seminar to examine participants' satisfaction, addressing following issues:

- Appropriateness of the lecturer,
- Appropriateness of the subject,
- Fulfilment of customers' expectations and acquiring answers on questions,
- Appropriateness of time and duration of the seminar,
- Appropriateness of material,
- Acquiring suggestions to improve seminars,
- Acquiring suggestions for the next seminars' topics.

The questionnaire is analysed only for OZS to ascertain some issues about seminars/workshops listed above, and to determine future development of seminars/workshops. There are not used for any sophisticated statistical analysis.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Seminars are successful because the area of standardisation is becoming a more and more important issue for crafts and SMEs; especially if they are operating internationally.

The low usage of IT equipment by craftsmen is seen as a bottleneck. Also the entrepreneurs and directors of the enterprises are too heavily involved in the day-to-day running of the enterprise to give sufficient time to standardisation.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

This measure could be considered as good practice because it really improves awareness of standardisation and of its importance among crafts and SMEs. The OZS provides fundamental information on standards and helps to better understand particular standards (ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001). It is used among different sectors. Crafts and SMEs get different information on standards, i.e. on different kinds of standards, why they are important, how to implement them, initial information on further implementation of standards, which could provide them further information about implementation etc. Therefore it is easier for crafts and SMEs to make the decision on implementation of particular standard, the workshops help to accelerate the implementation of standards in crafts and SMEs in the future.

The practice of OZS could be transferred into other supportive organisations in other countries (e.g. Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) who still are not as developed and do

not provide such a support. It will be possible, because OZS is co-operating with some supporting organisations in the above mentioned countries.

*F. Literature and other references*

- Information on UEAPME's BSP II project, available online:  
[http://www.ueapme.com/business-support %20II/index.htm](http://www.ueapme.com/business-support%20II/index.htm).
- Interview with a special adviser for technical legislation and standardisation at OZS.

## 6.20 Spain - Promotion of Working Groups

Asociación Multisectorial de Empresas Españolas de Electrónica y Comunicaciones (Asimelec, Spanish Association of Electronic and Communication Enterprises)  
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### *A. Background*

This measure can be placed in the framework of the policy of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce.

The main functions of the Spanish Ministry of Industry as far as the Electronics and Communication sector are the following:

- a. To arrange, promote and develop the telecommunications infrastructure and services
- b. To control the service quality levels and propose improvements
- c. To elaborate standardisation proposals and co-ordinate the internal management, control and monitoring procedures.

In this sense, the Comisión del Mercado de las Comunicaciones (Commission of the Telecommunications Market, belonging to the Spanish Ministry of Industry), as well as the National Standards body (Asociación Española de Normalización y Certificación, AENOR) and the National Accreditation body (ENAC) are the three main organisations concerned with Asimelec in the fulfilment of this measure.

Meanwhile, the Spanish association of enterprises in electronics and communication (Asimelec) represents Spanish enterprises active in ICT and electronic sectors. The services provided by Asimelec include the promotion of the sector enterprises' interests, as well as lobbying and training activities. There are in total about 1 500 enterprises in this sector. Nearly 200 enterprises member of Asimelec, of which two thirds are SMEs. Its prestige has made it possible to develop an intermediary role between associated members and public institutions and organisations, in Spain and world-wide. In this context, the main objectives of Asimelec are the following:

- a. To represent the common interests of its members
- b. To create and promote the electronic sector within the national economy
- c. To co-operate with the public and private institutions, both national and world-wide, to develop the national economy
- d. To assist its members in all their activities
- e. Collaborate with its members offering all kind of services and assistance, trying to contribute to increasing member's benefit.

Among the services offered by Asimelec, this organisation aims to promote ICT certification and the use of digital standards. In this sector, the Spanish Ministry of Industry, the national Standards body (AENOR) and the National Accreditation Body (ENAC) are an important source of information about standardisation issues for Asimelec.

Since 1984, Asimelec has acted as a promoter of group actions. These group actions have been initiated to raise the awareness amongst enterprises of the importance, for them, of standards and quality assurance issues, especially amongst SMEs.



### *B. General description*

Asimelec supports the creation of work groups from the sector in order to:

- a. Assess information on various standards;
- b. Develop a master document on these standards;
- c. Disseminate this documentation to all enterprises in the sectors concerned, irrespective of the fact that they belong or not to Asimelec.

The measure is expected to bring at least three types of benefit:

- (i) To help define working standards (product specifications, quality standards, service standards, environmental policies, sustainable development action plans, waste management...),
- (ii) To create opportunities to open new business channels (analysing the market created via new international standards, looking for business opportunities derived from new standards,...) and
- (iii) To improve competitiveness.

These working groups are mainly set-up for member enterprises (mainly SMEs) and relate to using and creating various types of new standards in the different sectors of activity. These sectors are represented on the following 14 committees:

- Digital printing technologies (19)
- Batteries and accumulators (18)
- Radio communications (10)
- Mobile phones (17)
- Recording devices (20)
- Internet and telecommunications (45)
- Information technology products wholesalers (12)
- Recording mediums wholesalers (5)
- Mobile phones technical advise services (6)
- Audio-visual multimedia (8)
- Confidence and security on the net (31)
- Digital home (30)
- Corporate Member Fenitel
- Corporate Member Aotep

Note: () In brackets: number of member enterprises on each sector.

Within each committee there are several working groups organised depending on the topic.

The group actions are instrumental in disseminating information about which standards have to be met. In addition, these group actions have a positive effect on the participation of enterprises in standardisation committees and increase the actual use of standards. The measure is co-ordinated by Asimelec but enterprises from the sector play a major role.

Several tools are used in the framework of this measure, such as a website, coaching in applying standards, seminars, etc. Enterprises may also receive a financial contribution in the form of a tax incentive or subsidy from government through Asimelec, helping the enterprises by subsidising the costs associated with participation in these activities. Asimelec helps enterprises to manage these subsidies.

The cost for such a working group may vary from as little as EUR 12 000 to as much as EUR 1 million for a year. These costs are shared between public subsidies (50 %) and contributions from the industry (a levy). It is a quarterly payable levy depending on the

turnover level of the member enterprises (5 categories). The members' levy range from EUR 409 for those members whose turnovers are up to EUR 900 000, to EUR 970 for members whose turnovers are higher than EUR 18 million. There is also an incorporation instalment which varies from EUR 818 to EUR 1 940.

### *C. Results*

According to Asimelec the measure is both effective and important and it scores highly in terms of visibility, content and delivery to target group.

Generally speaking, around 20 meetings per year are organised in which 20 to 50 enterprises participate, so 700 enterprises may be reached in one year. A substantial number of these enterprises are SMEs.

As a result of these groups, the conclusions of each working group within a particular sector are distributed, depending on its importance, via different ways and considering if the enterprises are members or not. Therefore, more and better information is distributed to enterprises, so the awareness of the importance of standardisation is raised amongst enterprises.

In this way, the conclusions of the working groups are communicated to its sector committee, so the information arrives to all the members who compose the committee. After that, Asimelec's communication service is responsible to distribute the information to the rest of the members and other interested parties. This is done in the following way:

- Quarterly bulletin: is distributed free of charge to more than 1 000 enterprises and organisations.
- Monthly bulletin: the bulletin is made available only to members.
- Weekly bulletin: the distribution of the bulletin is limited to members and is sent by e-mail.
- Annual report: is a summary of the activity of the Association during the year and it is available on the website.

Additionally, the website is an excellent information source for anyone interested on the results of the different committees.

As the objectives are largely met and the costs are considered to be rather low compared to the benefits brought about, the measure should be continued.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

The main cause for the success of this measure relates to the involvement level shown by the enterprises in participating in the working groups, where the support of Asimelec is relevant to co-ordinate the interests of the sector enterprises.

Asimelec plays an important role, because its opinions carry weight in the group, but the real decisions fall on the group itself (sector committee).

As an association, Asimelec takes the responsibility to initiate the process (create the working groups) by contacting the enterprises interested on a particular topic within a sector. It has also a facilitator role, by providing the information, offering its infrastructure to organise the meetings, offering its services for other subjects, etc.

### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The main reason to consider this measure a good practice is due to the large representation of the enterprises that compose the association. It reaches all the different sectors of activity represented by Asimelec and to a large number of enterprises. Thus, it is a very efficient way to spread the information to all the enterprises of the sector.

In addition, it is a measure that can be easily replicated in other countries.

### *F. Literature and other references*

#### *Interviews:*

- Interviews with Director of Promotion and Expansion of Asimelec.

#### *Websites:*

- [www.asimelec.es](http://www.asimelec.es) ; website of Asimelec.
- [www.mityc.es](http://www.mityc.es); website of Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce.
- [www.cmt.es](http://www.cmt.es); website of Telecommunications Market Commission.
- [www.etsi.org](http://www.etsi.org); website of European Telecommunications Standard Institute.
- [www.cdti.es](http://www.cdti.es); website of Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI).

#### *Publications:*

- Asimelec 2004-2005 activity report.
- Asimelec, 'The confidence in the Information Society in Spain: A Challenge for the Administration and the Enterprises', Madrid, 2006.

## 6.21 Spain - Grants for attending European meetings

Asociación Española de Normalización y Certificación (AENOR)  
Spanish Organisation for standardisation and certification (AENOR)  
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### *A. Background*

AENOR, a private, independent, non-profit making Spanish organisation, recognised nationally and internationally, contributes to the improvement of quality in the Spanish enterprises and products/services, as well as to the promotion of environmental protection, basically through the development of standardisation and certification (S + C) activities.

AENOR's main activities include:

- Develop Spanish technical standards with the open participation of all interested parties and collaborate in promoting the Spanish contribution to the development of European and International Standards;
- Certify products, services and companies (systems), thereby providing a differential competitive factor (it's a product/service/company certified by a national organisation, in a better competitive position against non certified companies) that favours international trade and co-operation;
- Focus management on their customers' satisfaction and the active participation of their human resources, following total quality management criteria, thus obtaining results that guarantee competitive development;
- Promote the dissemination of a culture that relates AENOR to quality and identifies it as a key place for support to those who seek excellence.

AENOR was established in 1986 and was recognised as the standards body and certification body in 1995. Any public or private organisation or enterprise that is interested in standardisation and certification may become an AENOR member. In 2006 there are around 1 000 members from almost all sectors of Spanish industry.

AENOR's presence at international fora, both European and American, guarantees Spanish participation in the development of standards and the international recognition of AENOR certification.

In this sense, standards are defined as documents developed by consensus among all interested parties. A technical committee (TC) is a group responsible for developing and drafting standards, which are then ratified by European Standards Organisations. In the AENOR structure, there are technical bodies, known as standardisation technical committees that study and present the needs of each sector, and develop and approve standard drafts, which are later published as UNE standards.

The International Technical Committees consist of a chairman, a secretary belonging to a business association, and a series of spokespeople for all those bodies that have an interest in the standardisation of a particular area (manufacturers, public administration, consumers, laboratories, research centres, AENOR, etc). Only representatives of national standards bodies (or other agents to whom rights have been delegated, such as private enterprises) have the right to vote in the International Technical Committees. Enterprises are the main 'determining' factors in the creation of standards and their

needs are defended by these national standards bodies in the International Technical Committees.

Each committee has an approved number, title, composition and scope, and is composed of experts who are familiar with the area being studied. Members provide inputs and feedback based on their professional knowledge and experience.

With the aim of representing enterprises' interests in standardisation, AENOR participates in European and International TCs. Therefore they recruit experts of different subjects and they create ad-hoc working groups to provide each one of them with technical knowledge and feedback.

The Grant for attending European meetings (technical committees, subcommittees or working groups in Europe and worldwide) addresses the economic constraints of enterprises in general and SMEs in particular, and strengthens their commitment to standardisation due to the financial link established to AENOR by receiving the grant.

### *B. General description*

From 1999 onwards, grants have been distributed for attending international meetings in Europe and beyond to increase the participation of Spanish enterprises in the development of European standards. Due to increased exposure, also the general awareness of enterprises on the importance of standardisation and the use of standards are believed to be positively affected.

The subsidy covers the journey and allowances for subsistence expenses related to visit international standardisation committee meetings abroad (technical committees, subcommittees or working groups in Europe and worldwide), but not including general conferences on standardisation. The measure is available for all types of enterprises in all types of sectors. The main objective is to defend Spanish interests by participation in international fora. The participation of enterprises in general and SMEs in particular in international fora is seen as instrumental for this.

The actual grant - the percentage of costs covered - depends on the total volume of applications and the annual budget of AENOR. It is paid at the end of the year, so it fosters enterprises to spend their money in really useful journeys for them.

The total annual budget is about EUR 600 000 for about 600 persons travelling to standardisation meetings abroad, that is about EUR 1 000 on average per participant. It is necessary to consider that the average grant is dependant on the number of demands, because the annual budget of AENOR reserved for this measure stays fairly constant.

This contribution enables enterprises to participate in such meetings, where this participation helps to improve their competitiveness by providing them with similar opportunities as large companies.

Attending these committees, enterprises have the opportunity to:

- Defend the legitimate interests of the sector involved on the creation of the standards. In this sense, enterprises can defend specific problematic national issues in these fora.
- Get valuable information to be prepared and anticipate to the new standards affecting their sector.

From an enterprise size perspective, large enterprises have normally no problems to attend the meetings, but SMEs have usually to face economic barriers (high economic expenses to attend a meeting), so very often SMEs communicate their needs regarding standardisation in writing. This way is not as effective as attending the meetings. In this sense, this measure is very valuable for SMEs.

There are three main actors in the process:

- The standardisation committees who designate the delegates/experts going to the meetings;
- AENOR, who accredits the delegates/experts and, finally,
- The enterprises' delegates/experts who actually participate in the meetings and receive the grants.

The measure is focussed on drafting new standards (and revising existing standards).

### *C. Results*

The measure is believed to score relatively high in terms of visibility, content and delivery to target group. It is perceived to be a very important and cost effective measure that should be continued as the objectives are generally met. From an enterprise size perspective, the measure helps SMEs to overcome their financial constraints for participation in standardisation by using this subsidy.

In general, the existence of the grant for attending this kind of meetings has no relevant impact on the number of large enterprises involved on the meetings because they would be participating in them anyway, as they find them very valuable for defending their interests. But, the AENOR expert suggests that the grants have a very important and positive effect, in the sense that a large number of SMEs, and particularly the smallest ones, would not participate in such meetings if the grant was not available for them.

### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

On the one hand, the increasing interest of the enterprises to defend their interests in these fora is a high determinant for the success of the measure. On the other hand, and as already mentioned before, the grants have a very important and positive effect on SMEs (specifically on the smallest ones), as they would not participate in such meetings if the grant was not available for them.

By way of contrast, there are two aspects that can be considered as bottlenecks: (i) the temporary gap, because the SMEs receive the pay of the grant the subsequent year they carry out the expenses and (ii) the budget limit, because the number of requests for grants determines the final amount of money received by enterprises.

### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

This measure is a very interesting one because its focus is to increase the participation of Spanish SMEs in the development of European standards, trying to facilitate the participation of enterprises in general and small enterprises in particular, so this last group may have equal opportunities to large companies.

The main condition for the success of this measure is the maintaining or even increase of the available budgets to support the grants, so more enterprises may be benefited with more money each.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

##### *Interviews:*

- Interview with the Director of the Standardisation Division on AENOR.

##### *Websites:*

- [www.aenor.es](http://www.aenor.es); website of AENOR.
- [www.cenorm.be](http://www.cenorm.be); website of European Committee for Standardisation (CEN).
- [www.cenelec.org](http://www.cenelec.org); website of European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC).
- [www.etsi.org](http://www.etsi.org); website of European Telecommunications Standard institute.
- [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org); website of International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).
- [www.iec.ch](http://www.iec.ch); website of International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).
- [www.itu.int](http://www.itu.int); website of International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- [www.normapme.com](http://www.normapme.com); website of the European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Standardisation.

## 6.22 Sweden - Travel allowance for Standardisation Meetings

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### *A. Background*

The Swedish Electrotechnical Commission (SEK) is responsible for standardisation in Sweden in the field of electricity. SEK is a non-profit making organisation operating with the voluntary participation of Swedish authorities, companies and organisations interested in participating in - and influencing - the work on technical regulations in the area of electrotechnology<sup>1</sup>. The organisation is financed through general revenue of SEK originating from sales of publications, contribution by government, member fees and contributions from other stakeholders.

SEK also co-ordinates Swedish participation in European and other international standardisation work and as the national committee of IEC and CENELEC, SEK is also responsible for its participation in IEC and CENELEC's technical work. To complete this task, national technical committees are established, consisting of representatives appointed by enterprises, authorities, government agencies and other stakeholders. Membership of any of SEK's technical committees makes it possible to participate in ongoing work. Standardisation is an open process targeted at mutual understanding and open dissemination of the results obtained. One of the participants in the technical committees is the Swedish National Electrical Safety Board (an authority under the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communication). The Swedish National Electrical Safety Board is also represented on SEK's board. This indicates co-operation between SEK and the national authority at several levels.

In addition to participating in the work on International and European standards, SEK also manages work on purely national standards. SEK provides information about standards and ongoing projects, and the results are available through SEK's network of retailers. To support the application of standards, SEK also publishes handbooks and technical reports. Four times a year SEK distributes a magazine to its members and stakeholders with updated information and news in their field of standards.

SEK mainly works for the manufacturing industry, the electrical power industry and installation services (in the construction industry). SEK pays attention to both craft and SME enterprises, but its activities are also aimed at large enterprises. About 400 enterprises are registered with SEK, almost all of them are SMEs (98 %).

### *B. General description*

Since 2003, SEK has given enterprises and representatives from committees an allowance to cover the costs of the travel to participate in standardisation meetings. In return the participant writes a report about the meeting and the report is published in the SEK magazine.

<sup>1</sup> Standards in the field of electrotechnology may have to do with terminology, documentation, classification and other general issues. They can also involve requirements for measurement, safety, performance or other properties. Finally, they may deal with the performance, testing or use of various kinds of electrical products or systems.



This measure was developed to

- Increase participation in the development of standards, e.g. participate in committees and meetings;
- Share information about the meetings;
- Provide information on standardisation in general;
- Increase the awareness about the importance of standardisation.

This measure focuses both on the development of new and on changing, i.e. updating existing standards, but primarily on the latter since the number of new standards in the field of electricity is limited.

The people that have been invited by SEK to attend national or international standardisation meetings can receive an allowance to cover travel costs. It is usually members of the technical committees who are invited to attend, but also other stakeholders. The invited persons are informed about the travel allowance at the time of the invitation.

There are three categories of allowances, one for national trips, one for trips within Europe and one for trips outside of Europe. The allowance is a fixed amount, i.e. the participant does not have to account for his/her expenditures. The allowance does not always cover all costs associated with the trip, hence it shall be seen as an encouragement to participate and give an indication of that their participation is appreciated. The maximum someone can get is approximately EUR 1 270, and that is for trips outside Europe. The only criterion to qualify for the allowance is that you have to represent an enterprise, authority or other organisation, i.e. private persons do not qualify. Furthermore, to receive the allowance, the participant is obligated to submit a report that describes the meeting. The participant decides what to cover in the report, i.e. there are no guidelines other than it shall be possible to publish the report. Once the report is submitted, the participant receives his/her allowance. The report is published in the SEK magazine that is distributed to members and stakeholders, it can also be downloaded at SEK's website. Since the measure is connected with the submission of contributions to the magazine, it is the editorial staff of the magazine that administers it.

The budget for the travel subsidy was nearly 127 000 EUR in 2005, of which approximately 106 000 EUR was used (about 83 %). The main reason why the whole budget was not used is that there were fewer meetings that year than initially anticipated.

### *C. Results*

The measure has been successful and is still active. The objectives of the measure are largely met and SEK believes that costs are relatively small compared to the benefits brought about; therefore SEK expresses the opinion to continue offering the travel allowance. There is no evaluation study available of the measure but an evaluation initiative was taken about two to three years ago. The first results from this evaluation will be available in the autumn of 2006. However three types of short-term effects have been identified:

- Broader participation in standardisation meetings;
- Increasing participation in international projects;
- Better feedback from meetings.

It is believed that the allowance encourages enterprises to participate that would not have participated without the measure. However it is estimated that the increase by new participants is modest. Hence, it is primarily stakeholders that would participate anyway who make use of the travel allowance. In that sense the measure could be con-

sidered to have a deadweight loss. However, since SEK in return for giving the allowance receives a report, the measure has an added value, since the information from the meeting is distributed to their stakeholders, which in turn increases awareness about developments in the field of standards and draws more attention to the work in the standardisation process. SEK feels that the measure is very effective. Next to making it easier for people to attend standardisation meetings, an additional benefit for the people attending is the (business) contacts that can be made.

Information about the measure is primarily given on the invitation to take part in a meeting. Hence, the visibility of the measure is limited, that is if you have not received an invitation you might not be aware of the measure. On the other hand, the measure is aimed at potential participants, which are the target group of the invitation.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

No bottlenecks have been identified; however results of the evaluation of the measure are yet to be published. If the interest for the measure increases, one possible bottleneck could be the administration of the measure since today the editorial staff of the SEK magazine handles this.

Furthermore, there is a trade-off for the participants between the time spent on writing the reports versus money received, i.e. for people with time constraints it might be too time consuming writing reports.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

The measure has to some extent resulted in a broader participation in the work with standards since new representatives are taking part in meetings. The reports that the participants have to write are a very useful tool when it comes to informing other stakeholders about the latest developments in the field and in that sense more enterprises are able to keep up to date on the latest developments.

Since the reports are an important product of the measure it is important that channels exist where they can be spread, if it shall be possible to transfer the measure to other countries successfully.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- Interview with staff of SEK.
- [www.sekom.se](http://www.sekom.se).
- [www.elsakerhetsverket.se](http://www.elsakerhetsverket.se).

## 6.23 UK - Meetings and Newsletters

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### *A. Background*

Gambica is the Trade Association for Instrumentation, Control, Automation and Laboratory Technology in the UK.

Gambica members play a key role in the preparation of national, European and international standards. Gambica has a membership of over 300 companies including the major multinationals in the sector and over hundred SMEs. National Statistics Office data shows that the output from companies covered by Gambica is nearly EUR 9 000 million with exports equal to over EUR 5 000 million.

Many issues are addressed at a European level, which requires close links with similar associations within the European Union. Gambica achieves this through Orgalime<sup>1</sup>, the West European Federation of major trade associations and through membership of product-specific European Sector Committees covering industrial automation products, power electronics and laboratory technology. Orgalime provides Gambica with a key mechanism to keep member companies aware of developments in Europe and to influence those issues, which affect the industry. Apart from co-operation with Orgalime, Gambica works with the UK Government and BSI British Standards. The aim of this co-operation is to promote the benefits of participation in standardisation issues, especially if that participation extends to participation in European standardisation issues.

Gambica Association Ltd. represents five industry sectors:

- Industrial Automation Products and Systems
- Process Measurement and Control Equipment and Systems
- Environmental Analysis and Monitoring Equipment
- Laboratory Technology
- Test and Measurement Equipment for Electrical and Electronics Industries.

### *B. General description*

The meetings and newsletters published try to support participation in standardisation and to increase the awareness about standardisation issues. These activities started in 1982 and are ongoing. Large multinationals tend to dominate standardisation meetings and SMEs can often not afford to participate in a way that would influence important issues.

Some financial support to people attending standardisation meetings may be available to Chairmen and Convenors of committees as well as committee members. The exact procedure varies a little between the five industrial sectors mentioned above due to

<sup>1</sup> Orgalime -The European Engineering Industries Association representing the interests of the mechanical, electrical, electronic and metalworking industries.

their historic evolution and internal rules (this applies to the funding from Gambica itself<sup>1</sup>).

Through this support SMEs can participate in meetings and have a chance to influence important standardisation issues. Discussions with Gambica confirm that there are certainly cases where representation at committees would not take place if the grants were not available<sup>2</sup>. Gambica members are represented on around 120 committees. Gambica states that there is a decline in the number of people prepared to become committee members as employers probably feel that the relationship between influencing standards by committee work and 'bottom line' financial return is too remote.

Gambica also provides a forum for inputs for those who are unable to contribute directly to standards making. At Gambica's website it is possible to subscribe for this forum.

Source of funding for Gambica activities in the area of standardisation is membership subscriptions. The subscription charges at Gambica range from EUR 1200 for companies with a turnover of up to EUR 362 000 up to EUR 46 000 for companies with a turnover in excess of EUR 217 million. Gambica estimates that the cost of providing the newsletter services and the coordination of standardisation activities for members to be in the region of EUR 44 000 per annum.

For each industrial sector, there are usually two international committee meetings per year, one in Europe and one outside Europe. The meetings would normally last for about 4-5 days. Unless there happens to be a Chairman or Convenor as well as a committee member from Gambica then only one representative may claim any financial support. Due to the very diverse nature of the standards committee structure, it was not possible to establish the cost of attending meetings but travel and subsistence are the only costs covered by the grants. Through this measure SMEs are encouraged to participate in the process of standards making. Information is provided on various standardisation issues, awareness raised and the use of standards increased. Finally also difficulties related to compliance with standards are addressed.

### *C. Results*

Individual members of the Gambica Association have a relatively easy access to the standardisation process if they wish to be involved. They may comment on issues highlighted by Gambica (or any other involved body) and see the results of the Gambica lobbying from the regular reports made available. This process is not too expensive and could be deemed cost efficient. Deeper involvement in the procedure (committee membership) would involve time to attend UK and possibly overseas meetings, which, for the SME could be an unacceptable burden. In addition time would have to be spent on preparation in readiness for meetings.

Gambica is of the opinion that these activities are quite effective as objectives are to a large extent realized. The measure scores high in terms of visibility, content and delivery

<sup>1</sup> Funding grants for the other situations are provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) via the BSI. Applications for grants are sent by the committee member /Chairmen or Convenors directly to the Committee Secretary at BSI who will endorse the application and forward it to the DTI. The rules for recovering expenses are quite complex but are published by the DTI.

<sup>2</sup> There is also a BSI initiative to try to get more financial support for committee members to attend international standardisation meetings but so far – time of writing July 2006 - there has been no final decision.

to the target group. Gambica is of the opinion that this is a very important measure and that it should be continued.

#### *D. Determinants of success and bottlenecks*

Convergence of technologies is seen as a problem area as many sub-committees have been removed from the standardisation structure, which has meant that committee members may have to cover more than one speciality. Clearly, if a sub-committee member has to deal with issues which are not within his/her direct sphere of expertise the process of understanding and discussing the issues will be protracted.

Through the medium of the Gambica Trade Association, many large and small enterprises are able to access and input into the standardisation process, in the UK, Europe and internationally. This is possible because Gambica is able to keep members informed of impending changes and developments at the same time giving them the opportunity to comment on the drafts of new and modified standards. Examples of the process can be seen in the review of the Low Voltage Directive. Gambica's position was expressed through Orgalime and their lobby, combined with the Commission's impact assessment, has resulted in the deferment of a decision on its adoption until at least 2007. Members contributed extensively to the draft guidelines for the new EMC (Electromagnetic compatibility) directive and continued to lobby on the revision of the Machinery Directive (MD). They also input to the development of the guidelines on Pressure Equipment guideline.

#### *E. Elements of good practice and transferability*

Good practice and transferability will depend to a large extent on the structures, which may exist in other countries in respect of trade associations or similar organisations. The key element in this case is the strong position of Gambica within the industrial sectors covered by the Association.

#### *F. Literature and other references*

- DTI paper 'DTI Economic Paper Number 12, Empirical Economics of Standards, dated June 2005, calculates that the contribution of standards to the UK GDP is of the order of EUR 3700 million (source: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file9655.pdf>).
- National Standardisation Strategic Framework - Shaping the future of standards in the UK. Established by the government in 2003. <http://www.nssf.info/index.xalter>.
- Best Practice - Next Practice, How to survive, innovate and grow in an ever changing world. Published by the NSSF. [http://www.nssf.info/resources/documents/NSSF\\_Best\\_Practice.pdf](http://www.nssf.info/resources/documents/NSSF_Best_Practice.pdf).
- The small business guide to making standards work. Published by the British Standards Institution. [http://www.bsi-global.com/Small\\_Business/Publications/SME\\_Guide.xalter](http://www.bsi-global.com/Small_Business/Publications/SME_Guide.xalter).
- The Public Policy Interest in the UK in Standardisation. <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file11318.pdf>.
- A joint DTI - BSI statement dated 24th October 2000.

## Annex I List of abbreviations and organisations, Europe and standardisation

ANEC	ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the process of standardisation and certification. <a href="http://www.anec.org">http://www.anec.org</a>
BT	Bureau Technique
CE Marking	The CE marking was created with the aim to guarantee conformity between European products and to remove trade barriers owing to disparities in standards between Member States. The CE marking symbolises the conformity of the product with the applicable Community requirements imposed on the manufacturer. (CE marking was added to the New Approach Directives through Directive 93/68/EEC). See for example <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/index_en.htm</a> ; or <a href="http://www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/strd/cemark/page11646.html">http://www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/strd/cemark/page11646.html</a>
CEN	Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), or European Committee for Standardisation produces technical specifications called standards (recognised under Directive 98/34/EC) CEN was founded in 1961 by the national standard bodies in the European Economic Community and EFTA countries. CEN is contributing to the objectives of the European Union and European Economic Area with voluntary technical standards which promote free trade, the safety of workers and consumers, interoperability of networks, environmental protection, exploitation of research and development programmes, and public procurement. <a href="http://www.cenorm.be">http://www.cenorm.be</a>
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization. Comité Européen de Normalisation Electrotechnique. Europäisches Komitee für elektrotechnische Normung. (Recognised under Directive 98/34/EC) <a href="http://www.cenelec.org">http://www.cenelec.org</a>
COM(2003) 27 final, etc.	COM refers to a communication from the EC (communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee).
EBC	The European Builders Confederation is a European professional organisation, which represents national organisations that represent craftsmen and SMEs from the construction sector. <a href="http://www.eubuilders.org">http://www.eubuilders.org</a>
EC	European Commission, before EC referred to European Community. Now this is called European Union, see EU. <a href="http://europa.eu">http://europa.eu</a>
ECAP	ECAP is the Consortium of European Small and Middle-sized Anchors Producers, and it represents and safeguards their common interests legally, technically and on a services front. ECAP is a member of NORMAPME. <a href="http://www.ecap-sme.org">http://www.ecap-sme.org</a>
ECOS	<a href="http://www.ecostandard.org">http://www.ecostandard.org</a>
EEA	The European Economic Area (EEA) unites from (the 1 May 2004) the 25 EU Member States and the three EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) into an Internal Market governed by the same basic rules. <a href="http://secretariat.efta.int/Web/EuropeanEconomicArea/introduction">http://secretariat.efta.int/Web/EuropeanEconomicArea/introduction</a>
EEC	The European Economic Community (EEC), was established by The Treaty of Rome 1957 and entered into force on 1 January 1958. Now called European Union, see EU. EEC is still used to refer to directives such as Directive 98/34 EEC laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations (revision 1998).

EFTA	The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was founded in 1960 on the premise of free trade as a means of achieving growth and prosperity amongst its Member States as well as promoting closer economic co-operation between the Western European countries. Furthermore, the EFTA countries wished to contribute to the expansion of trade in the world at large. <a href="http://secretariat.efta.int">http://secretariat.efta.int</a>
EIC	Euro Info Centre (See Section 4.2 of this report). Euro Info Centres inform, advise and assist businesses in all community matters. The network consists of 267 Euro Info Centres, 24 Associate Members and 14 Correspondence Centres located in more than 45 European and Mediterranean countries. <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/networks/eic/eic.html">http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/networks/eic/eic.html</a>
EIM	EIM Business & Policy Research (EIM BV) is an independent research and consultancy organisation based in the Netherlands with about 80 regular employees. It forms part of Panteia ( <a href="http://www.panteia.nl">www.panteia.nl</a> ). <a href="http://www.eim.nl">www.eim.nl</a>
EMC	EMC stands for Electro Magnetic Compatibility, and describes the way an electric or electronic apparatus behaves (regarding EM aspects) in the presence of other equipment. The EMC directive is part of the Framework of New Approach Directives governed by the CE marking directive.
ENSR	European Network for Social and Economic Research (32 countries). <a href="http://www.ensr-net.com">www.ensr-net.com</a>
EOTA	European Organisation for Technical Approvals (EOTA), which produces technical specifications for construction products called guidelines (see ATA) for European Economic Area (See EEA). <a href="http://www.eota.be">http://www.eota.be</a>
EP	European Parliament. <a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu">http://www.europarl.europa.eu</a>
ETA	European Technical Approval (ETA) for a construction product is a favourable technical assessment of its fitness for an intended use. An ETA can be granted in special situations, for example if no relevant Harmonised Standards for the product exist and the European Commission considers that a Standard cannot be developed yet. <a href="http://www.eota.be">http://www.eota.be</a>
ETAG	An ETA Guideline (ETAG) is a document to indicate how Approval Bodies should evaluate the specific characteristics of a (family of) products. See also ETA and EOTA <a href="http://www.eota.be">http://www.eota.be</a>
ETSI	The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) is an independent, non-profit organization, whose mission is to produce telecommunications standards for today and the future. (Recognised under Directive 98/34/EC) <a href="http://www.etsi.org">www.etsi.org</a>
EU	European Union <a href="http://europa.eu">http://europa.eu</a>
ICT	Information and Communication Technology.
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission (The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is the leading global organization that prepares and publishes international standards for all electrical, electronic and related technologies. These serve as a basis for national standardisation and as references when drafting international tenders and contracts. (International Standards and conformity assessment for government, business and society for all electrical, electronic and related technologies). <a href="http://www.iec.ch">http://www.iec.ch</a>

ISO	International Organization for Standardisation. <a href="http://www.iso.ch">www.iso.ch</a>
ITU	International Telecommunications Union. The ITU, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland is an international organisation within the United Nations System where governments and the private sector coordinate global telecom networks and services. <a href="http://www.itu.int">http://www.itu.int</a>
KAN	Kommission Arbeitsschutz und Normung (Commission pour la sécurité et santé au travail et la normalisation, Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardization), Founded in 1994, the Commission for OH&S and Standardization (KAN) has the purpose of observing the standardisation process and ensuring that standard makers devote sufficient attention to the needs of OH&S. <a href="http://www.kan.de">http://www.kan.de</a>
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation,
NORMAPME	NORMAPME is an international non-profit association created in 1996 with the support of the European Commission, under the full name of the "European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium- Sized Enterprises for Standardisation" . (See Section 4.3 of this report). <a href="http://www.normapme.com">http://www.normapme.com</a>
NSB	National Standard Body.
OJ	Official Journal of the European Union <a href="http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en">http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en</a>
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.
TC	Technical Committees of NSBs, CEN ,etc.
ETUI-REHS	The Health and Safety Department of the European Trade Union Institute - Research, Education, Health and Safety (ETUI-REHS) aims at promoting high standards of health and safety at the workplace throughout Europe. It succeeds the former European Trade Union Technical Bureau for Health and Safety (TUTB), founded in 1989 by the European Trade Union Confederation. <a href="http://www.etui-rehs.org">http://www.etui-rehs.org</a> <a href="http://www.etuc.org">http://www.etuc.org</a>
UEAPME	UEAPME: the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises is the organisation that has created NORMAPME with the support of the European Commission. <a href="http://www.ueapme.com">http://www.ueapme.com</a>





## Annex II List of EICs active in the field of CE marking and standardisation

<p><b>Austria</b>            AT601 Wien            Mr Heinz Kogler            +45 59 09 00 42 06            heinz.kogler@wko.at</p> <p><b>Belgium</b>            BE001 Namur            Mr Marc Dehareng            +32 81 71 71 44            mdh@bep.be</p> <p>BE002 Namur            Mr Luc Van Looveren            +32 22 32 22 19            luc.vanlooveren@kvkaw.voka.be</p> <p><b>Bulgaria</b>            BG 810 Stara Zagora            Mr Dimitar Atanasov            + 35 94 26 26 297            datanasov@chambersz.com</p> <p>BG811 Yambol            Ms Neli Kadieva            +35 94 66 62 939            ycci@bsbg.net</p> <p><b>Cyprus</b>            CY691 Nicosia            Ms Demetra Palaonda            + 35 72 28 89 720            demetrap@ccci.org.cy</p> <p><b>Czech Republic</b>            CZ641 Praha            Ms Marie Pavlu            +42 02 21 58 02 03            pavlu@crr.cz</p> <p><b>Denmark</b>            DK055 Taastrup            Ms Annette Borchsenius            +45 72 20 29 00            abo@eurocenter.info</p>	<p><b>Estonia</b>            EE881 Tallin            Ms Kristina Tshistova            +37 26 44 80 79            kristina@koda.ee</p> <p><b>Finland</b>            FI654 Vaasa            Mr Juha Häkkinen            +35 86 31 86 431            juha.hakkinen@ostro.chamber.fi</p> <p><b>France</b>            FR255 Strasbourg            Ms Ursula Gori-Kaminski            +33 38 87 64 235            u.gori.kaminski@strasbourg.cci.fr</p> <p>FR269 Montpellier            Ms Nathalie André            +33 46 71 36 851            n.andre@languedoc-roussillon.cci.fr</p> <p><b>Germany</b>            DE123 Nürnberg            Mr Edwin Schmitt            +49 91 16 55 49 33            edwin.schmitt@lga.de</p> <p><b>Greece</b>            GR152 Athens            Ms Aspra Brati            +20 17 79 07 13            eicgr152@eommex.gr</p> <p><b>Hungary</b>            HU727 Budapest            Ms Erzsebet Dobos            +36 14 73 82 53            dobos@itd.hu</p> <p><b>Ireland</b>            IR307 Dublin            Mr John Whelan            +35 31 66 12 182            iea@irishexporters.ie</p>
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<p><b>Italy</b>  IT375 Torino  Mr Paolo Veneruso  +39 01 15 71 63 40  p.veneruso@to.camcom.it</p> <p><b>Latvia</b>  LV902 Daugavpils  Ms Lolita Cepurnaja  +37 15 44 08 01  lolita@latgale.lv</p> <p><b>Lithuania</b>  LT803 Kaunas  Ms Gintare Blaziene  + 37 03 72 01 491  eic@chamber.lt</p> <p><b>Luxembourg</b>  LU401 Luxembourg  Ms Sabrina Sagramola  +35 24 23 93 93 34  sabrina.sagramola@cc.lu</p> <p><b>Norway</b>  NO624 Kristiansand  Mr Frode Braadland  +47 48 01 05 28  frode.braadland@agderforskning.no</p> <p><b>Netherlands</b>  NL452 Boxtel  Mr Oyono Vlijter  +31 73 68 06 617  oyonovlijter@eganed.nl</p> <p><b>Poland</b>  PL415 Gdansk  Ms Anna Hutyra  +48 58 34 70 340  hutyra@euroinfo.gda.pl</p> <p><b>Portugal</b>  PT505 Evora  Ms Vanda Narciso  +35 12 66 73 97 51  vanda.narciso@iapmei.pt</p>	<p><b>Romania</b>  RO828 Valcea  Ms Lidia-Giorgeta Giosan  +40 25 07 33 449  euroinfo@ccivl.ro</p> <p><b>Slovakia</b>  SK673 Presov  Ms Mariana Radvanska  +42 15 17 56 03 30  mradvanska@rpicpo.sk</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b>  SI753 Koper  Mr Ales Lipnik  +38 65 66 37 738  ales.lipnik@zrs-kp.si</p> <p><b>Spain</b>  ES218 Llanera-Asturias  Ms Paz Palacio-Fernandez  +34 98 59 80 020  euro@idepa.es</p> <p><b>Sweden</b>  SE636 Vaxjö  Ms Ulla Rolf  +46 47 02 30 44  ulla.rolf@almi.se</p> <p><b>Turkey</b>  TR701 Ankara  Mr Erkan Tuncer  +90 31 23 68 87 00  etuncer@kosgeb.gov.tr</p>
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## Annex III      Research Partners in 32 countries

<b>ENSR - European Network for Social and Economic Research, see also <a href="http://www.ensr-net.com">www.ensr-net.com</a></b> The list does not show 32 countries as all three Baltic countries were covered by the partner from Latvia and the Czech Republic was covered by the partner from Slovakia.			
Organisation	Address	Telephone Telefax	Contact person
<b>Austria</b> Austrian Institute for SME Research	Gusshausstrasse 8 1040 VIENNA <a href="http://www.kmuforschung.ac.at/">http://www.kmuforschung.ac.at/</a>	43 1 5059761 43 1 5034660	Thomas Oberholzner <a href="mailto:t.oberholzner@kmuforschung.ac.at">t.oberholzner@kmuforschung.ac.at</a>
<b>Belgium</b> Research Centre for Entrepreneurship, EHSAL-K.U. Brussels	Stormstraat 2 1000 BRUSSELS <a href="http://www.svobrussel.be">http://www.svobrussel.be</a>	32 2 2101602 32 2 2101603	Professor Johan Lambrecht <a href="mailto:johan.lambrecht@ehsal.be">johan.lambrecht@ehsal.be</a>
<b>Bulgaria</b> Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development FED	18 Doukatska Planina Str. fl. 3 1606 SOFIA <a href="http://www.fed-bg.org">http://www.fed-bg.org</a>	359 2 9525758 359 2 9525783	Elena Krastenova <a href="mailto:krastenova@ttm.bg">krastenova@ttm.bg</a>
<b>Cyprus</b> Economarket Bureau of Economic and Market Research Ltd.	P.O. Box 23901 1687 NICOSIA <a href="http://www.economarket.biz/">http://www.economarket.biz/</a>	357 22757311 357 22767209	Anthi Ieridou <a href="mailto:anthi@economarket.biz">anthi@economarket.biz</a>
<b>Denmark</b> Oxford Group	Amagertorv 19 1160 COPENHAGEN <a href="http://www.oxfordgroup.dk/">http://www.oxfordgroup.dk/</a>	45 33 691369 45 33 691333	Dr. Kim Møller <a href="mailto:kim@oxfordgroup.dk">kim@oxfordgroup.dk</a>
<b>Finland</b> Small Business Institute, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration	Rehtorinpellonkatu 3, 20500 TURKU <a href="http://www.tukkk.fi/sbi">http://www.tukkk.fi/sbi</a>	358 2 4814514 358 2 4814393	Dr. Ulla Hytti <a href="mailto:ulla.hytti@tukkk.fi">ulla.hytti@tukkk.fi</a>
<b>France</b> Citia	10-14 rue Audubon 75012 PARIS <a href="http://www.citia.fr">http://www.citia.fr</a>	33 1 43416611 33 1 43413636	Arielle Feuillas <a href="mailto:arielle.feuillas@citia.fr">arielle.feuillas@citia.fr</a>
<b>Germany</b> Institut für Mittelstandsforschung (IfM)	Maximilianstrasse 20 53111 BONN 1 <a href="http://www.ifm-bonn.org">http://www.ifm-bonn.org</a>	49 228 729970 49 228 7299734	Michael Holz <a href="mailto:holz@ifm-bonn.org">holz@ifm-bonn.org</a>
<b>Greece</b> University of Piraeus Research Centre	Ipsilantou 130 PIRAEUS 185 32 <a href="http://www.kep.unipi.gr">http://www.kep.unipi.gr</a>	30 1 4142280 30 1 4142629	Professor Petros Livas <a href="mailto:plivas@unipi.gr">plivas@unipi.gr</a>
<b>Hungary</b> Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies, West Hungarian Research Institute	P.O. Box 420 9002 GYÖR <a href="http://www.rkk.hu/nyuti/indexen.html">http://www.rkk.hu/nyuti/indexen.html</a>	36 96 516578 36 96 516579	András Grosz <a href="mailto:grosza@rkk.hu">grosza@rkk.hu</a>
<b>Iceland</b> Institute for Business Research, University of Iceland	Oddi, Sturlugötu 101 REYKJAVIK <a href="http://www.felags.hi.is/Apps/WebObjects/HI.woa/wa/dp?id=1000156">http://www.felags.hi.is/Apps/WebObjects/HI.woa/wa/dp?id=1000156</a>	354 5254500 354 5526806	Kristján Jóhannsson <a href="mailto:kristjoh@hi.is">kristjoh@hi.is</a>

Organisation	Address	Telephone Telefax	Contact person
<b>Italy</b> IULM University, Economics and Marketing Institute	Via Carlo Bo 8 20143 MILAN <a href="http://www.iulm.it/">http://www.iulm.it/</a>	39 02 891412395 39 02 891412770	Raffaella Angelucci Raffaella.Angelucci@iulm.it
<b>Latvia</b> Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies BICEPS (covering Estonia and Lithuania as well)	Alberta iela 13 RIGA 1010 <a href="http://www.biceps.org">http://www.biceps.org</a>	371 7039317 371 7039318	Alf Vanags alf@biceps.org
<b>Liechtenstein</b> Swiss Research Institute of Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Gallen (KMU-HSG)	Dufourstrasse 40a 9000 St. GALLEN <a href="http://www.kmu.unisg.ch">http://www.kmu.unisg.ch</a>	41 71 2247147 41 71 2247101	Walter Weber walter.weber@unisg.ch
<b>Luxembourg</b> Chambre des Métiers du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg	Boîte Postale 1604 1016 LUXEMBOURG <a href="http://www.chambre-des-metiers.lu">http://www.chambre-des-metiers.lu</a>	352 4267671 352 426787	Marc Gross marc.gross@chambre-des-metiers.lu
<b>The Netherlands</b> EIM Business & Policy Research	P.O. Box 7001 2701 AA ZOETERMEER <a href="http://www.eim.nl/">http://www.eim.nl/</a>	31 79 3430200 31 79 3430204	Jacqueline Snijders jsn@eim.nl
<b>Malta</b> Economic & Management Consultancy Services Ltd	Level 3, Regional Business Centre University of Heights MSIDA MSD04 <a href="http://www.emcs.com.mt">http://www.emcs.com.mt</a>	356 21341848 356 21318677	Stefano Mallia stefano.mallia@emcs.com.mt
<b>Norway</b> Agderforskning/Agder Research	Serviceboks 415 Gimlemoen 4604 KRISTIANSAND <a href="http://www.agderforskning.no">http://www.agderforskning.no</a>	47 48 01 05 32 47 38 14 22 01	Dr. Per-Anders Havnes per.a.havnes@agderforskning.no.
<b>Poland</b> EEDRI, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Research Institute, Academy of Management	Ul Gdanska 121 90-519 LÓDZ <a href="http://www.eedri.pl/">http://www.eedri.pl/</a>	48 42 636 53 00 48 42 635 62 98	Dr. Anna Rogut arogut@eedri.pl
<b>Portugal</b> Tecninvest	R. Poeta Bocage, 6A - E/F 1600-581 LISBON <a href="http://www.tecninvest.com">http://www.tecninvest.com</a>	351 217 159482 351 217 159486	Antonio Coimbra antonio.coimbra@tecninvest.pt
<b>Slovenia</b> Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management, University of Maribor, Faculty of Economics and Business	Razlagova 14, 2000 MARIBOR <a href="http://epfip.uni-mb.si">http://epfip.uni-mb.si</a>	386 2 2290254 386 2 2516681	Professor Miroslav Rebernik rebernik@uni-mb.si
<b>Slovak Republic</b> Peritus (Covering Czech Republic as well)	Kuklovska 19 84105 BRATISLAVA <a href="http://www.peritus.sk/">http://www.peritus.sk/</a>	421 2 65420701	Juraj Poledna juraj.poledna@peritus.sk

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<b>Spain</b> Ikei Research & Consultancy	Parque Empresarial Zuatzu Edificio Urumea Planta 1º Zubiberri Bidea nº 31 20018 DONOSTIA-SAN SEBASTIAN <a href="http://www.ikei.es">http://www.ikei.es</a>	34 943 426610 34 943 423501	Iñigo Isusi <a href="mailto:iisusi@ikei.es">iisusi@ikei.es</a>
<b>Sweden</b> Oxford Sweden	c/o Oxford Group Amagertorv 19 1160 COPENHAGEN, Denmark	45 33 691335 45 33 691333	Mrs. Jenny Lundberg <a href="mailto:jel@oxfordresearch.dk">jel@oxfordresearch.dk</a>
<b>Turkey</b> SIBAREN (Systems Sciences Research Centre), Industrial En- gineering Department, Middle East Technical University	Inonu Bulvari 06531 ANKARA <a href="http://www.ie.metu.edu.tr">http://www.ie.metu.edu.tr</a>	90 312 2102288 90 312 2101268	Professor Erol R. Sayin <a href="mailto:sayin@ie.metu.edu.tr">sayin@ie.metu.edu.tr</a>
<b>United Kingdom</b> SME Research Services	55, Coventry Road DUNCHURCH Warwickshire, CV22 6NH	44 1788 815079	Julian Hancock <a href="mailto:julian.h@ncock.org">julian.h@ncock.org</a>
Candidate-members of the ENSR			
Organisation	Address	Telephone Telefax	Contact person
<b>Croatia</b> CEPOR, SME Policy Think Tank	Trg J.F.Kennedy 7 10000 ZAGREB <a href="http://www.cepor.hr">http://www.cepor.hr</a>	385 1 2305 363 385 1 2345 577	<a href="mailto:singer@efos.hr">singer@efos.hr</a>
<b>Ireland</b> Tom Martin & Associates/TMA	Priory House 19 Priory Hall Stillorgan Co. Dublin Ireland <a href="http://www.tma.ie">http://www.tma.ie</a>	353 1 283 5252 353 1 283 5251	Mr. Tom Martin <a href="mailto:info@tma.ie">info@tma.ie</a>
<b>Romania</b> Chamber of Commerce and In- dustry of Romania	2, Octavian Goga Blvd, sector 3, 74244 BUCHAREST <a href="http://www.ccir.ro">http://www.ccir.ro</a>	40 21 3190171 40 21 3190152 40 21 3190165	Mariana Florescu <a href="mailto:mariana.florescu@ccir.ro">mariana.florescu@ccir.ro</a>