



European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Standardisation
Bureau Européen de l'Artisanat et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises pour la Normalisation
Europäisches Büro des Handwerks und der Klein- und Mittelbetriebe für die Normung

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SME involvement is a cornerstone for an effective European standards-making process

- **NORMAPME presents a new guideline on SME participation in standardisation to CEN**

Brussels, 17 May 2006. The role of European SMEs in the standardisation process needs to be fostered and strengthened, according to NORMAPME, the European Office of Crafts, Trades and SMEs for Standardisation. Mr Hermann Ahls, Secretary General of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), received a NORMAPME document containing guidelines for SME involvement in standards-making during the NORMAPME Board Meeting yesterday (Tuesday).

According to the guideline, SMEs should be involved at national level from the early stages of standards planning, whenever their interests and skills are at stake. As work on standards is by nature technical and complex, SMEs should be given guidance and training in a timely and affordable manner, in order to continuously improve their standardisation knowledge base. Actions should also be taken at European level, where NORMAPME could act as a relay between CEN, CENELEC (the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation), ETSI (the European Telecommunications Standards Institute) and SMEs. An SME representative should be given the right to vote in the CEN European Technical Committees.

“Similar guidelines are already in place when it comes to issues such as environmental or consumer protection standards”, said **Loucas Gourtsyannis**, NORMAPME Director. “We think it is both fair and desirable to extend this approach to the SME sector. Our specific goal in suggesting these guidelines is to make concrete recommendations on SME participation, both at national and European level, to enhance the role of SMEs in the standardisation process.”

“European competitiveness would definitely benefit from a better involvement of SMEs in the standardisation process”, said **Hans-Werner Müller**, UEAPME Secretary General and NORMAPME President. “Standards would not be perceived as imposed rules anymore, and regulators would be constantly reminded of the ‘SME dimension’ of their work. We call upon CEN and its national members to take stock of our document so as to achieve a set of shared, coherent and strong standards, designed as a strategic tool for the uniform application of technical legislation in the internal market.”

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EDITORS' NOTE: NORMAPME is an international non-profit association created in 1996. NORMAPME is the unique European organisation focused on small enterprise interests in the European standardisation system. Its members represent over 11 million enterprises in all European countries, including all EU and EFTA member states. NORMAPME is an associate member of CEN, the European Committee for Standardisation.

The guideline on “SME interests and the preparation of standards” can be requested by email: info@normapme.com

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