



## Faces of Standardization

INTERVIEW WITH

### DINESH CHAND SHARMA

Director of Standards and Public Policy at SESEI,  
the Seconded European Standardization Expert for India.

'Faces of standardization' is a series of monthly interviews to celebrate the 60th anniversary of CEN and CENELEC's collaboration. The objective is to give an overview of European standardization's successes through the people who made it possible.

This month's interview is with **DINESH CHAND SHARMA**, Director of Standards and Public Policy at SESEI, the Seconded European Standardization Expert for India.

#### 1. Please, present yourself. To what extent are you involved in standardization?

My name is Dinesh Chand Sharma and is currently associated with the European Standardization Project SESEI as Director of Standards and Public Policy. In this role as Seconded European Standardization Expert in India, I am acting as the focal point in the country representing European Standards Organizations (ETSI, CEN, CENELEC), the European Commission (EC) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The project, focussing in particular on areas such as Automotive, Electrical Equipment including Consumer Electronics, ICT, Smart Cities, Railways and the Environment, aims to facilitate EU-India cooperation in standardization matters, as well as to support regulatory dialogue activities to favour an increase of trade flows.

#### 2. What are the benefits of European standardization?

The process of "Standards Development" has evolved greatly in Europe over the years and in my opinion, while the European Standardization System is transparent, stable and predictable, one of its greatest benefits is the Harmonisation of Standards throughout the whole Single Market. This essentially means, one standard applicable among all EU members, replacing 34 different national standards. In other words, one product-one standard, with the priority towards international ones.

#### 3. Which are the main evolutions and milestones that you saw happen in the European Standardization System over the years?

As stated above, European Standardization has evolved greatly over the years. Some of the key milestones in European Standardization are:

- **Vienna & Frankfurt Agreements:** In order to avoid duplication between standardization at international and European levels, to the benefit of contributors and users of standards, as well as to increase the efficiency of standardization at European and international level, setting out the rules governing co-operation, the agreements signed, respectively, by CEN with the International Standardization Organisation (ISO), the Vienna Agreement, and by CENELEC with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the Frankfurt Agreement, are a significant milestone.

- **New Approach:** Standardization has been a driving factor in the creation of the EU Single Market. The European Union directives, known as the "New Approach Directives", define "essential requirements" related to health, safety and environmental issues. Products must meet these requirements in order to be placed in the European market. Through this approach, EU legislative harmonization is limited to the essential requirements (safety requirements of general interest) needed to ensure the free movement of products throughout the Single Market and the task of drawing up the corresponding technical specifications is entrusted to the standardization bodies CEN, CENELEC and ETSI. European standards replace national technical specifications and help to eliminate technical barriers to trade.

• **Regulation 1025:** This regulation is an important step taken by the European Commission to provide a legal basis to use European standards for products and services, finance the European standardization process, and set basic rules for co-operation between standards organisations, EC and Member States. To summarise a few of its key provisions:

- Standardization processes shall be inclusive and allow the participation of all relevant stakeholders;
- European standardization is confirmed as a policy tool to support EU legislation and policies on services;
- Harmonised principles for the use of harmonised standards supporting EU harmonisation legislation;
- European standardization organisations and national standardization bodies need to be transparent and publicly available.

## 4. How do you believe standardization will evolve in the next 60 years?

Going forward, standardization will have an important role not only for Europe, but for the entire world. As trade is going to become more and more global, exchanges of services, goods and products will increase. As a consequence, the need will arise to address issues such as innovation, environment, resource efficiency, digitisation of services and products, smart and intelligent applications.

With the markets attaining maturity and global trade becoming more and more prevalent, we will witness:

- Increased use of standards & Standardization activities for products, services and new technologies;
- Areas such as Services, Sustainable and Resource Efficiency (Circular Economy), Societal needs, are increasingly key for standards development;
- Research & Innovation will be more integrated in Standardization;
- Increased engagement of stakeholders in the development of standards: not only big corporates and organisations, but young entrepreneurs and SMEs will be able to benefit from standards for increased trade and opportunities;
- National and regional standardization bodies will be collaborating more closely globally towards the harmonisation of standards for new technologies and services.

## 5. Could you please tell us an anecdote from your career in standardization that you believe is indicative?

Being a standardization expert, I come across many people who are of the view that standardization is an extremely technical, complex, time consuming, expensive and unnecessary activity.

I often tell them that every day we touch, feel and come across products and services which are all based on standards. Standards are fundamental to deliver quality and address human health, safety and security and are basically

agreed, documented, specifications made by stakeholders based on consensus.

Awareness on the importance of standards and active participation need further support and push, especially to bring on board the new and young breed of entrepreneurs and the start-up community.

## 6. Can you give us your perspective as to how presence of European Standardization Bodies in India through Project SESEI has benefited both Europe and India?

India has continued, over the past years, to further strengthen and position itself as an upcoming economic and trade power that cannot be ignored. Harmonisation and standards were identified as the key tool to reduce technical barriers to trade between India and Europe and to increase trade and exchange of goods and services between the two regions.

The SESEI Project and all its partners unanimously saw the benefits of raising awareness in India on the European standardization system and of receiving structured and focused information on Indian standardization and regulatory initiatives around priority sectors. The permanent presence of SESEI on-site in India has a clear added value: it notably enables partners to anticipate developments requiring an action/reaction. Some of the immediate and tangible benefits which resulted from Project SESEI are:

- **Project Awareness:** One of the greatest benefits that SESEI has created for the project and for the project partners is to build awareness about European standards and standardization bodies. An extensive database of contacts has been built by SESEI through various meetings, deliberations, participation in workshops and seminars.
- **Dissemination of European Standards:** SESEI has carved a niche in the Indian standardization arena as an important proponent of European standards. As such, it is invited regularly to share its experience and knowledge on standards, innovation, R&D and new technology.
- **Specialised Reports by SESEI:** SESEI prepares specialised reports on the key focus areas in line with the Project's strategy, which have helped its partners and stakeholder immensely by providing deep market insight.
- **Facilitating the adoption or upgrade** of many European standards in India, such as EN115, EN 301549, and OneM2M.
- **MoUs and Establishment of Close Working Relationship with Indian Stakeholders:** SESEI has played a crucial role in the signing of MoU's between Project partners and key Indian organisations.
- **Events & Workshop:** EU-India Dialogue on Standards and Emerging Technologies is a platform built by SESEI to create synergies between EU and India on standards-focused issues.