“European Standards provide stability in the market and this is what industry needs to sustain its competitiveness.”

Mr David Dossett, CENELEC President
1/ How can standardization help position Europe in a globalized economy and contribute to the EU 2020 strategy: sustainable growth, ageing population, converging technologies?

The standardization community continuously analyses, looks for solutions and evolves in addressing the challenge of new converging technologies and innovation such as smart meters, green data centres, smart grids, sustainable building design, renewable energies, electric vehicles, co-generation, just to mention a few. Most of these areas show that European standardization has put energy efficiency and sustainability at the heart of its agenda. By doing so, this proves its firm commitment to contribute to the EU 2020 targets to reduce low-gas carbon emissions.

“Standards allow you to ensure sustainability, which is the reason why you standardise.”

Ing. Anton Marschall
Head of the Schindler Austria – Fahrtreppen und Aufzüge GmbH, former head of the lift engineering department of TÜV Austria

The European Commission’s “EU 2020 Strategy” highlighted that demographic ageing is accelerating: “The number of people aged over 60 is now increasing twice as fast as it did before 2007 – by about two million every year compared to one million previously”. Standardization can be a powerful tool to integrate and strengthen accessibility.

For many years, the European Standardization Organizations (ESOs: CEN, CENELEC and ETSI) have addressed the needs of persons with disabilities through the development of specific standards in the areas of assistive technology and accessible building design. Standards can play a significant role in helping industry, which is generally inadequately informed about the requirements of disabled and elderly users, by providing developers with guidance and a clear framework. (Source: The European Standardization Organizations’ brochure on Accessibility)
2/ Standardization disseminates innovative solutions and fosters global competitiveness – or doesn’t it?

European industry competitiveness is boosted via the consolidation of the European Single Market, which creates flexibility and growth, and opens the door to the international market. For European businesses, standards have become a strategic management tool to increase their competitive edge. Standardization contributes an average of nearly 1% per year, or almost 25% of GDP growth. More and more businesses realize the benefits of the strategic use of standards to achieve measurable improvements in their competitiveness.

The ESOs strive to identify and anticipate technological needs. The close cooperation between the three ESOs addresses cross-sectoral standardization and provides a system approach to new areas of standardization. Indeed, standardization channels innovation thereby increasing industry’s competitiveness, bringing new export opportunities and economic growth and hence contributes to the recovery of Europe’s economy.

CEN and CENELEC are enhancing their links with Research & Development (R&D) in order to reinforce the role of standards as a tool for market penetration of R&D results through the development of an integrated strategy, better promotion of the benefits of standardization to relevant R&D partners, and active involvement in EU-funded research and innovation projects.

SMEs are at the heart of innovation in Europe and European standardization commits to secure and boost their growth through the dissemination of innovative technology in Europe.

"We do not want to be taken by surprise. Therefore, we prefer to contribute to the development of standards. By actively participating in standardisation, we can have a positive influence on developments and know about new focal issues before other competitors."

Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Peter Jauschowitz
Berndorf Bäderbau Group
Berndorf Bäderbau has been a leading swimming pool manufacturer since 1960.
"We represent the entrepreneurs of the most developed area in Italy and strongly believe that standardization – by itself or together with regulation – has always helped our industries to innovate and develop products and processes, which fostered the business growth and the commercial success in the years 2000’.

Our members, who have always been leaders in the Italian economic system and "early adopters” of new organizational models and innovations, have been supporting standardization for a long time because they believe standards are part of every entrepreneurial strategy for business growth.”

Mr Eugenio Guagnini
Manager for ICT and Quality Management, Assolombarda (the largest territorial - Milan area - association of the entire industrial system in Italy)

“Standards help protecting innovation and are a means to confirm competitiveness of companies worldwide. For nanotechnologies innovation and standardization will be on the same track.”

Mr Daniel Bernard
Scientific Director - ARKEMA
Source: AFNOR - Association Française de Normalisation
3/ European Standardization Network: one European Standard for 31 countries and beyond

Market relevance and national delegation are the pillars of the standardization process. European Standards exist primarily to support and serve the competitiveness of European Industry.

The European Standardization System is in line with the EU principles and values, resting on the principle of national delegation (with a weighted vote system and an appeal procedure) as well as with the World Trade Organisation Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO TBT) code of conduct.

"We are alarmed by the report that the European Commission is considering abolishing the national delegation principle. We do not see the need for such a move, and it must be prevented at all costs. The development of international standards is very important to us and would be bound to be affected in a negative way. The national standards bodies are essential for ensuring effective involvement in international standardization. They must be retained and made stronger. Europe’s considerable influence on international standardization is founded on the efficiency of national standardization, and this is manifested in the independence of the national standards bodies."

Mr Roland v. Oeynhausen
Otterbach Medien KG GmbH & Co.
120 employees

With European standardization, European industries can access 31 countries and reach over 490 million consumers who benefit from healthy, safe and environment-friendly products and services.

The national delegation principle is essential in maintaining Europe’s strong position in international standardization: European countries’ interests are aligned and reflected to the outside world, thus helping Europe’s effectiveness on the international stage.

"In DS2 we need and use the standards not only in our daily work; being a high technology company and given the continuous innovation we're applying to our products, we feel the need to actively participate in the developing of new standards, along with national and international standards bodies. Creating and
updating standards, the new products we’re putting into the market are able to reach consumers with required features and the highest quality, and at the same time reducing efforts”.

Mr Mario B. Navarro
DS2 (High Tech SME, chip maker for net systems)
Source: AENOR - Spanish Standards Institute
The European system is the only system in the world that allows direct involvement of all stakeholders such as industry, trade associations, SMEs, environmental and consumer protection organisations, academia, research, and other interest groups. This involvement in standardization takes place through the national platforms for standards work (NSBs - National Standards Bodies), which offer a work environment in the stakeholders own national language. Through this system, stakeholders participate in the standardization work at national level, and can be represented at European and international level. This, therefore, contributes to the reduction of the administrative burden, notably for SMEs and helps disseminate innovation at national level.

"Europe’s decentralized standardization system with strong national standards organizations must remain in place. National organizations facilitate SMEs and NGO involvement in the standards process. Consensus discussions can be held in experts’ own languages.”

Dr. Wolfgang Kaerkes
General Manager
German Society for Quality

However, a clear distinction should be made between societal stakeholders and any other economic stakeholders such as SMEs who are driven by economic interests. Each category of stakeholders has very distinct (sometimes even divergent) interests. For this reason, a tailor-made solution should be found for each of them.

In July, CEN and CENELEC launched a survey to its standardization community. The result showed that the majority of NSBs grant to societal stakeholders free access to the National Mirror Committees. For the participation in the European Technical Committees (TCs), most NSBs also do not charge any fee to societal stakeholders.

CEN and CENELEC have acknowledged the need to improve “weaker” stakeholders’ access to the standardization process. National Standards Bodies (NSBs) are the platform par excellence for weaker stakeholders to be fairly and fully represented, offering geographical proximity, language facilities and tailor-made solutions. Adequate support to European Associations representing societal interests is required in order to strengthen and optimize their participation in standardization at national level.
5/ European positioning and leadership in the global market

Europe is the region that has the largest implementation percentage of international standards. Standards grant access to the global market and are an important asset in contributing to the international dimension of Europe. CEN and CENELEC’s ties with the International Standardization Bodies, ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Committee), are settled through the Vienna and Dresden Agreements. These agreements allow the widening of trade borders of the European Union, and guarantee a strong European presence at international level. Through the involvement of experts in Technical Committees, European and national expertise is being developed and recognised globally.

Besides the affiliate status, CEN and CENELEC have developed cooperation agreements with third countries and regions, and are promoting the European Standardization model worldwide amongst liaison officers in China and in India.

"The implementation of standards has benefited Stramit International through opening doors to business on an international scale, active participation in the standardization process and maintaining the company’s intellectual property."

Mr John Mosession
Chief Executive, Stramit International
Source: BSI - British Standards Institution
6/ Does standardization supports Better Regulation?

Standardization supports European legislation, under the New Legislative Framework, and is an essential tool to deliver policy goals. Harmonised Standards have proved to be an effective co-regulation tool and enable manufacturers to comply with European legislation, which in return grants them an easier and cheaper access to Europe’s internal market. CEN and CENELEC contribute to European regulation and have always supported, and always will support, EU policies, including the Lisbon Agenda and the new "EU 2020 Strategy".
However, some improvements can still be made between standards organizations and public authorities, at national level and European level, as the following statements demonstrate:

**ROMTELECOM** (Romania) recommends that "national public agencies should work more closely with ASRO [Romanian Standards Association] for the adoption and enforcement of requirements and related standards used in different fields. This should include the potential involvement of financial organizations in developing standards, communication and information about news in standardization activity, new revisions and adoptions, and developing a compliance framework in each organization (internal audits of compliance) in relation to specified minimum standards.”

**Paint Industry Association of Romania - AIVR**

"We have a very good collaboration with ASRO for many years. We want the proceedings commenced recently regarding the information to continue as well as the possibility to forward our opinion on the revision of standards applicable in our field of activity.

We can say however that in practical terms we have sometimes faced difficulties due to a mismatch or a weak correlation between European legislative requirements and standards that it made reference to.

In this context, it might be useful in future to have a better collaboration between standards bodies and legislative authorities in drafting European Standards. Revising a directive or regulation may take several years, a period in which confusion and difficulties in unitary implementing the legislation may persist (as the case presented above).”
7/ SMEs – Drivers of the European economy – are they aware of the standardization benefits?

Standardization allows SMEs to increase productivity and reach wider markets. Initiatives for SMEs have been taken at national and European level to join the standardization process, but also to facilitate identification and use of the appropriate standard for their business. A CEN-CENELEC SME helpdesk is at their disposal with national contact points to respond to their specific requests, and a dedicated SME web portal (http://sme.cencenelec.eu).

A survey directed to SMEs demonstrated that 2/3 of National Standards Bodies have specific arrangements to facilitate the participation of SMEs in their National Mirror Committees.

"My initiative and commitment paid off in many respects. The price for participating in standardisation comprised three things: My work, my time and my travels. Not taking part would have cost me my company and my livelihood...Without standards I would have had to close down."

**Mr Martin Denison**
Managing Director of Scuba Schools GmbH initialised in the mid of the 1990s the first (pure Austrian) standards for the training of diving instructors

"To take part in standardization work on nanotechnologies allows our company to have access to standardization developments at the same time they’re being generated. More, it makes us possible to take part and defend current and future interests of Spanish industry."

**Mr Julio Gómez Avanzare**
SME supplier of nanomaterials and nanotechnology based solutions
Source: AENOR - Spanish Standards Institute