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Brussels, 28 May 2021

SMEs and standards are key for a successful green transition

Brussels, 28 May 2021 – Under the theme "SMEs as drivers of green growth: Turning challenges into opportunities with standards", the seventh edition of Small Business Standards' annual event, which was held online on Wednesday 26 May, stressed that policies, legislation and standards must provide the right framework for SMEs so that they can contribute to and reap the benefits of green growth.

The conference, partner event of the [EU Green Week 2021](#), discussed the opportunities and challenges for SMEs in achieving the EU Green Deal and circular economy goals and the role of standards in this context.

One of the main outcomes of the conference is that SMEs, recognised as the driving force of EU's economy, are key to a successful EU green transition. The discussions, which fronted speakers from diverse business sectors, SMEs, policy makers, representatives of environmental NGOs and standardisation organisations, showed that SMEs are increasingly aware of the benefits of closing the loop and improving resource efficiency.

However, while the green transition offers numerous opportunities for SMEs, in practice, it also yields a series of challenges.

"Standards may probably not be the first thing that comes to mind to most people! Nevertheless, they play an essential role when addressing some of these challenges", said SBS President Gunilla Almgren. Standards provide methods to measure and assess whether products comply with energy efficiency, reparability, or durability requirements, supporting the access to clear and comparable information on the benefits related to green goods. Standards can also promote the uptake of new more sustainable technologies. They are also essential to foster the market for secondary raw materials and reused/remanufactured products by establishing quality, safety and other criteria that help to overcome the misperception customers have sometimes that green goods and services are of lower quality than the traditional ones.

However, standards can only support SMEs in the transition to a circular economy if they fit their needs and specificities. Standards that do not meet their needs can place disproportionate burdens on them. A better uptake of standards amongst smaller businesses can therefore be achieved by ensuring that SMEs have a stronger voice in standardisation.

Another element that emerged from the discussions is the strong link between the green and the digital transition. Digital technologies are key to face the new challenges of a circular model. They can help to track items, know their history, and maintain them.

Finally, speakers highlighted the importance of ensuring transparency and access to all the necessary information about products and services to prevent obstacles to repair, refurbishment, upgrading for independent suppliers and service providers.

Underlining the constructive atmosphere of the discussions and the Standardisation Strategy announced by the Commission in the updated Industrial Strategy published in May, SBS Director Maitane Olabarria stated: "I am convinced that if the future strategy fully considers SMEs, it will help to strengthen the European standardisation system, make our SMEs more competitive and support the green transition."

>> [Recording of the conference](#)

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EDITORS' NOTES: Small Business Standards (SBS) is the association representing European SMEs in standardisation. SBS is co-financed by the European Commission and EFTA. Its 21 members are national and European sectoral and inter-professional associations representing SMEs in 32 European countries.

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Co-financed by the European Commission & EFTA



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